Maintaining Mandarin as a Heritage Language

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Outline

- CHL and CHL learners
- The CHL developmental path
- Ten Hypotheses
- Young (birth-early teen) CHL learners
- Adolescent and college CHL learners
- Supporting CHL learners’ existing language and stimulating new language growth
- Further questions
(C)HL: a definition

- Valdés (2001): a home, non-English language that is spoken or at least understood

- an immigrant, indigenous, or ancestral language that a speaker has a personal relevance and desire to (re)connect with (Cummins 2005; Fishman, 2001; Van Deusen-Scholl, 2003; Wiley, 2005).

- He (2008): a language of not merely inheritance but also of transformation

- ‘native speakers,’ ‘quasi-native speakers,’ ‘residual speakers,’ ‘bilingual speakers,’ and ‘home-background speakers’ (Valdés, 1997); ‘false beginners’, ‘semi-natives’ (Ming & Tao 2008)
(C)HL learner characteristics

- ethnolinguistic affiliation to the heritage language with a broad range of proficiency in oral or literacy skills.
- Rampton (1995): varying expertise and allegiance
- Norton (2000): varying degrees of investment
- Hornberger (2004): a bicultural, bi-literacy continuum
- With a unique set of ambiguities and complications
- He (2006, 2008): Engaged in the symbiotic process of HL development and cultural development
CHL Learner Profiles: a synchronic view

(1) very little command of Chinese with only a few rudimentary words or phrases
(2) a smattering of speaking and listening skills but with marginal reading and writing abilities
(3) fluent or nearly fluent in a dialect of Chinese but having little knowledge of spoken Mandarin
(4) a solid command of speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills.

CHL Learner Profiles: Nancy

Hendryx, J. (2008)

- born in Hong Kong
- moved to US with her parents when she was 4
- Cantonese spoken in her home her entire life
- At 18, she decided to start taking Mandarin Chinese at college
- fairly functional in Cantonese; a few phrases of Mandarin; writes 100 Chinese characters
- qing (请) or qin (亲)?
CHI Learner Profiles: Mark

Hendryx, J. (2008)

- born in Taiwan
- came to US at 6 years old
- attended after-school Chinese classes sponsored by a local church for several years
- took 2 years of Chinese; only uses Chinese now with family, friends, and acquaintances from church
- Finds 1st semester Chinese too easy and 2nd semester too hard
CHL Learner Profiles: Steve

Hendryx, J. (2008)

- born in Indonesia to Chinese parents
- came to US at 8 years old
- Speaks English, Chinese, and Indonesian
- has advanced Chinese speaking and listening skills
- reads many characters but has a difficult time writing
- *men* (闷) or *men* (们)
- a very distinct pronunciation of Mandarin
CHI Learner Profiles: Lucy

Hendryx, J. (2008)

- born in mainland China
- came to America at age 5
- attended Chinese language programs offered on weekends up through high school
- developed fairly functional speaking and writing skills
- returns to China every summer for one month
- Has a large vocabulary
- Has accurate pronunciation
CHL Learner Profiles: Henry

Hendryx, J. (2008)

☐ born in America
☐ Both parents grew up in Taiwan
☐ Heard Mandarin and Taiwanese spoken at home his entire life
☐ With marginal skills with Taiwanese, but advanced spoken Mandarin
☐ almost no reading or writing abilities
☐ Disliked attending Chinese school when young

*Zhanglang* 蟑螂 should be *zanglang* 脏螂
CHL Learner Profiles: Tom

Hendryx, J. (2008)

- born in America
- His parents are from Hong Kong
- learned to speak Cantonese from his parents
- Learned Mandarin from a tutor
- attended an after-hour Chinese language program during high school
- Interested in culture
- Hardly able to read and write
Variability: comparing 6 profiles

Listening/Speaking

Reading

Writing
What Do CHL Learners Already Know?

- Phonology: do CHL learners have Mandarin pronunciation, or other dialectal variation and accommodation?
- Morphology: do they already understand character formations, the notion of Chinese words, phrases (字，词，短语)?
- Syntax: is grammar conscious to CHL learners or does it need to be made conscious to CHL learners?
- Pragmatics: to what extent are CHL learners aware of different speech styles, genres, speech acts, speech events, etc. and their social distributions and functions?
- In CFL or CSL, we could safely assume that everything needs to be taught; CHL learner proficiency levels are much harder to define.
Learning CHL: dialects
Christian Dior选用高雅的颜色，华丽的式样，看上去光彩夺目，是众多女士非常喜爱的时装。

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Scripts and dialects

- Classroom script same as home script
- Classroom script different from home script
- No home literacy in Chinese

Mandarin is the learner’s home dialect or is comprehensible to home dialect
Mandarin is unintelligible to home dialect
The CHL Learner: a diachronic view

- toward a quasi-ergodic model (He, 2008, in press)
- Jason’s journey

Snapshots of all CHL learners at different stages at one given time = “Jason” over 14 years
“Jason”: a CHL Learner

- Born in Guangdong, China
- At 3, immigrated with his family to Queens, New York
- At 6, started Kindergarten
- Dropped out of weekend Chinese language school
- 4th to 12th Grade, one of the highest achieving students
- In high school, took Spanish
- Currently an Economics major, taking beginning level CHL class in a university
- Best friends are Brad and Jim
- Dating a girl from a Mandarin-speaking family background
- Hopes to do business in China some day
CHL Acquisitional Characteristics

- Partial, discontinuous exposure (cf. L1)
- Cultural familiarity; phonological, grammatical and orthographic intuition (cf. L2) (Koda et al. 2008)
- Domain-specificity (cf. bilingualism)
- High variability
- A tendency of attrition or decline in language skills and morpho-syntactic knowledge
- Sometimes plateau, sometimes exponential
- Changing motivations, changing social networks, changing opportunities
- Changing competencies, changing choices, and changing ideologies
- A socialization process with multiple agencies, multiple directions, and multiple goals
CHL developmental path

Birth place
- Sustained exposure/use
- Explicit (partial) learning

Early exposure To CHL

CHL learning

? CFL learning
- Attrition / decline
- Discontinued / incomplete native linguistic system
Hypotheses:
Along the temporal dimension

- The Rootedness Hypothesis
- The Benefits Hypothesis
- The Interaction Hypothesis

CHL development

the learner’s desire to communicate successfully in a moment-by-moment fashion
Hypotheses:
Along the spatial dimension

- The Positive-Stance Hypothesis
- The By-Choice Hypothesis
- The Diverse-Input Hypothesis
- The Discourse-Norms Hypothesis

CHL development

the extent to which the CHL discourse norms are sensitive to English discourse norms
Hypotheses:  
Along the identity dimension

- The Enrichment Hypothesis
- The Multiplicity Hypothesis
- The Transformation Hypothesis

CHL development ↔ both inheritance and transformation of heritage practices
Hypotheses summary

- **Temporal**
  - The Rootedness Hypothesis
  - The Benefits Hypothesis
  - The Interaction Hypothesis

- **Spatial**
  - The Positive-Stance Hypothesis
  - The By-Choice Hypothesis
  - The Diverse-Input Hypothesis
  - The Discourse-Norms Hypothesis

- **Identity**
  - The Enrichment Hypothesis
  - The Multiplicity Hypothesis
  - The Transformation Hypothesis
Nurturing Young CHL Learners

- CHL as integral part of life and learning
- Building bridges and continuity
- Character before *pinyin* 先认字后学拼音
- Recognition of characters before production of characters 先认后写，多认少写
- Reading before writing 先读后写，多读少写

马立平，斯坦福中文学校
爷爷奶奶节日好！

今天是2008年最后一天。今年发生了很多事情。我学到很多东西，我还见到了很多的新的想法。今天一定是一个很重要的一天。今天不之是新年前夜，但我们这里几分钟前，刚刚一边下雪一边打雷。爷爷奶奶在中国听说过有这种事吗？

今年，我赢了一个数学比赛；我写了个纪念六年级的诗；我从小学毕业了；我开始上初中了；我过了我的12岁生日；我还做了一个机器人。每一次，你们都给我发短行，你们都夸我，说我好。我每次受到你们的短行，都会想起你们宽大的心和暖和的爱。可惜，我的中文还不够好，写的不够快，平常没有时间跟你们谈话。这几天是节日，我们放一个多星期假，终于可以跟你们写信了。

.........................
数学课教的知识比以前难，可是老师教的很好。大多数的时候，我还没有事情可做了，因为我有几个同学常常一开始搞不懂，要问很多问题才搞懂。我常常看懂了，就没事干了。知识还挺难的，但是我自己那几个同学很多时候会过好长时间才会搞懂。在学校外我参加了一个Mandelbrot的比赛。这个比赛是给高中生的，但是有一个人突然走了。我们的队最好有八个人才行。这个比赛很难，我是队上最强的。我还要记叙努力，比赛还没有完呢，以后还会有。

我已经又给机器人加了改进了。到了二月份，我要带着它跟别人比赛。在三分钟以内，我要把好多电池，高尔夫球，硬币，和Lego都装进两个合资里。我是跟我的朋友一起要做的。但是，我们那一天还要参加另一个比赛。我们要用一个机器把四网球扔到两个地方去。两个球要扔到一个又离我们很近的地方，但是又很高。两个球要扔到一个离我们很远的地方，但是不能打倒更近的地方。

祝爷爷奶奶2009年健康快乐！
College CHL Learner Errors

- Script (character) errors (SPE)
- Errors on verbs or verb phrases (VBE)
- Nominal errors (NNE)
- Classifier errors (CLE)
- Errors related to preposition phrases (PPE)
- Errors on word order (WOE)
- Adjective errors (AJE)
- Adverb errors (ADE)
- Errors on pronouns (PRE)
- Sentential errors (SCE)

(Ming & Tao, 2008)
Engaging Adolescent and College CHL Learners

第一课 你好！
第二课 今天几号？
第三课 图书馆在哪里？
第四课 你去过北京吗？

第一课 百家姓
第二课 什么是农历？
第三课 谁是东方人？
第四课 你以前学过中文吗？
Validating existing knowledge; stimulating further growth

- Inquiry-based learning: begin with CHL student’s needs and questions (rather than a full four skill area 听说读写 approach)
- A problem-posing and problem-solving pedagogy: focus on the identification, analysis and resolution of problems in learners’ worlds
- Reactivating latent/tacit knowledge in character/orthography
- Building vocabulary in extended contexts
- Raising consciousness in grammar
Some examples

- “Oh yeah I’ve seen that character before, but I forgot...”
  病: radical, phonetic-semantic principle, related characters, collocations

- “What does it mean here?”
  假in狐假虎威: polysemy, new contexts

- “No, that doesn’t sound right, but I’m not sure why.”
  他没来过了: tense-aspect marker, current state relevance token
Further and Urgent Questions

☐ Different trajectories for CHL learners of different dialect backgrounds?
☐ Different trajectories for CHL learners at different ages / phases of life?
☐ Different trajectories for continuous CHL learning vs. intermittent CHL learning?
☐ Different trajectories for CHL learners vs. CFL learners?
Most recent on CHL


- 312 pp. April 2008
Thank You  谢谢