



Research of Language Learning Strategies in the Context of Learning Chinese as a Foreign/Second Language

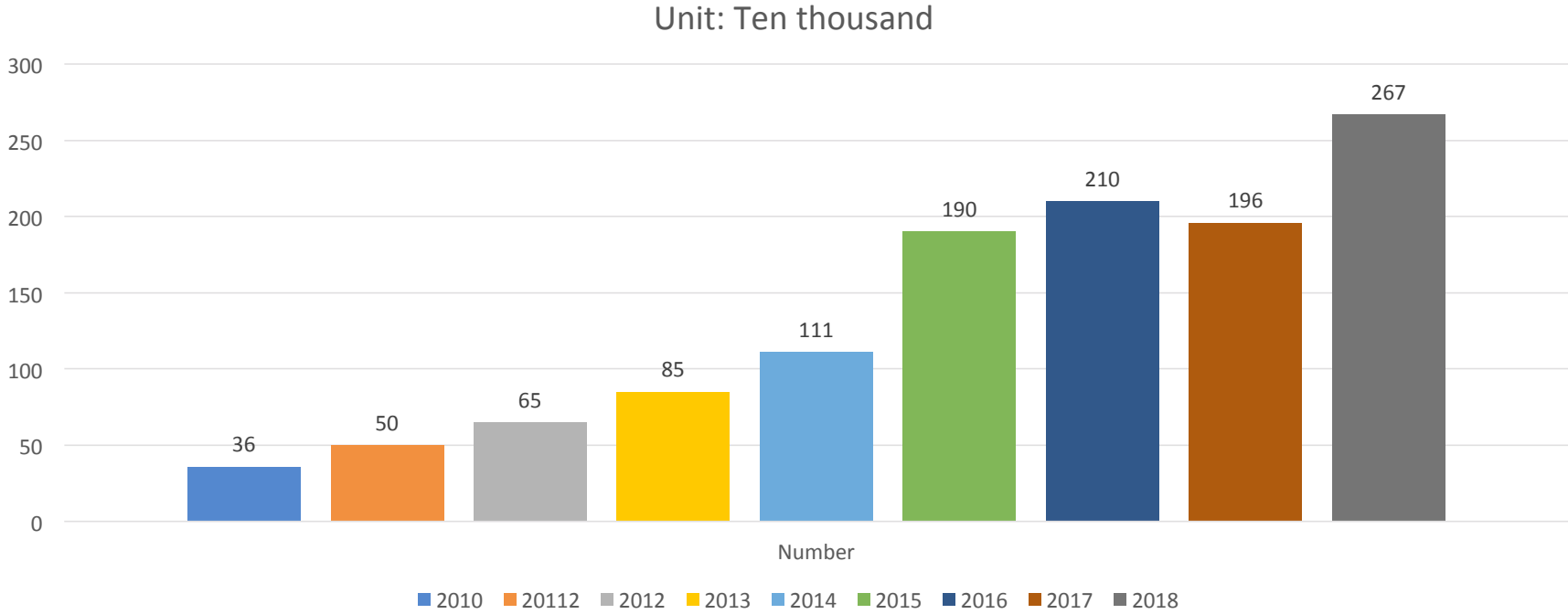
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The number of learners of Chinese as a foreign/second language



Basic features of Chinese language

- A tonal language: four tones in standard Chinese Mandarin
- Writing system: logographic, strokes, and integral and compound characters
- Characters, words, and vocabulary are different concepts
- Syntactic relations: word order and functional words

(Gong, Lyu, & Gao, 2018; Ma, Gong, Gao, & Xiang, 2017)

Categories of research on teaching and learning Chinese as a foreign/ second language

(Gong, Gao, & Lyu, forthcoming; Gong, Lyu, & Gao, 2018; Ma, Gong, Gao, & Xiang, 2017)

1. Language pedagogy: curriculum development, classroom teaching practices, and textbooks, dictionaries and other teaching materials

2. Language learning and use: learners' Chinese character, phonetic, lexical and grammatical development, features of learner Chinese, and learning attitudes, motivation, awareness and strategies

3. Language policy and planning

4. Language testing

5. Teacher development

Methodological trends

Table 2. Methodological trends (2005–2015) (*N* = 909).

	Non-empirical studies	Quantitative studies	Qualitative studies	Mix-method studies
2005	38 (52.1%)	32 (43.8%)	3 (4.1%)	0
2006	47 (57.3%)	30 (36.7%)	3 (3.7%)	2 (2.4%)
2007	35 (47.3%)	34 (45.9%)	2 (2.7%)	3 (4.1%)
2008	53 (60.2%)	31 (35.2%)	1 (1.1%)	3 (3.4%)
2009	50 (57.5%)	34 (39.1%)	0	3 (3.4%)
2010	47 (55.3%)	34 (40.0%)	3 (3.5%)	1 (1.2%)
2011	42 (51.9%)	37 (45.7%)	0	2 (2.5%)
2012	33 (36.3%)	55 (60.4%)	0	3 (3.3%)
2013	29 (34.9%)	52 (62.7%)	1 (1.2%)	1 (1.2%)
2014	33 (36.7%)	51 (56.7%)	3 (3.3%)	3 (3.3%)
2015	18 (22.8%)	57 (72.2%)	2 (2.5%)	2 (2.5%)



Fundamental challenges in learning Chinese

- Lacking sound-to-grapheme correspondence
- Character identification
- Word segmentation
- Lexical access

(Shen & Jiang, 2003)

Examples

1. 鸡不吃了 (Chicks do not eat ...) and 不吃鸡了 (... do not eat chicken.)

2. 吉林省长春药店

吉林省 (Jilin Province, a place name) | 长春 (Changchun, a place name or evergreen) | 药店 (drugstore/pharmacy)

吉林 (Jilin, a place name) | 省长 (provincial governor) | 春药 (aphrodisiac/philter) | 店 (store)

Research on Chinese language learning strategies



- Mostly focuses on
- **Chinese character learning strategy** (e.g. Grenfell & Harris, 2015; Qian, Owen, & Bax, 2018; Shen, 2005, 2010)
- **Chinese reading strategy** (e.g. Lee-Thompson, 2008)
- **Individual learner variables concerning language learning strategies** (e.g. Chu et al., 2015)

Research methodology currently used

- Questionnaire survey (prevailing used)
- Verbal report (extensively in Chinese reading strategy)
- Case study (documenting individual strategy use)
- Experiments (effect of students' strategy use)

(Jiang & Cohen, 2012)



The present study

- One part of a longitudinal study to examine native-English-speaker learners' experiential accounts of learning Chinese as a foreign language over an immersion period in China
- 30 learners in a six-week exchange program in a China (15 in 2017; 15 in 2018)
- Weekly reflective journals, group interviews and online forum discussions

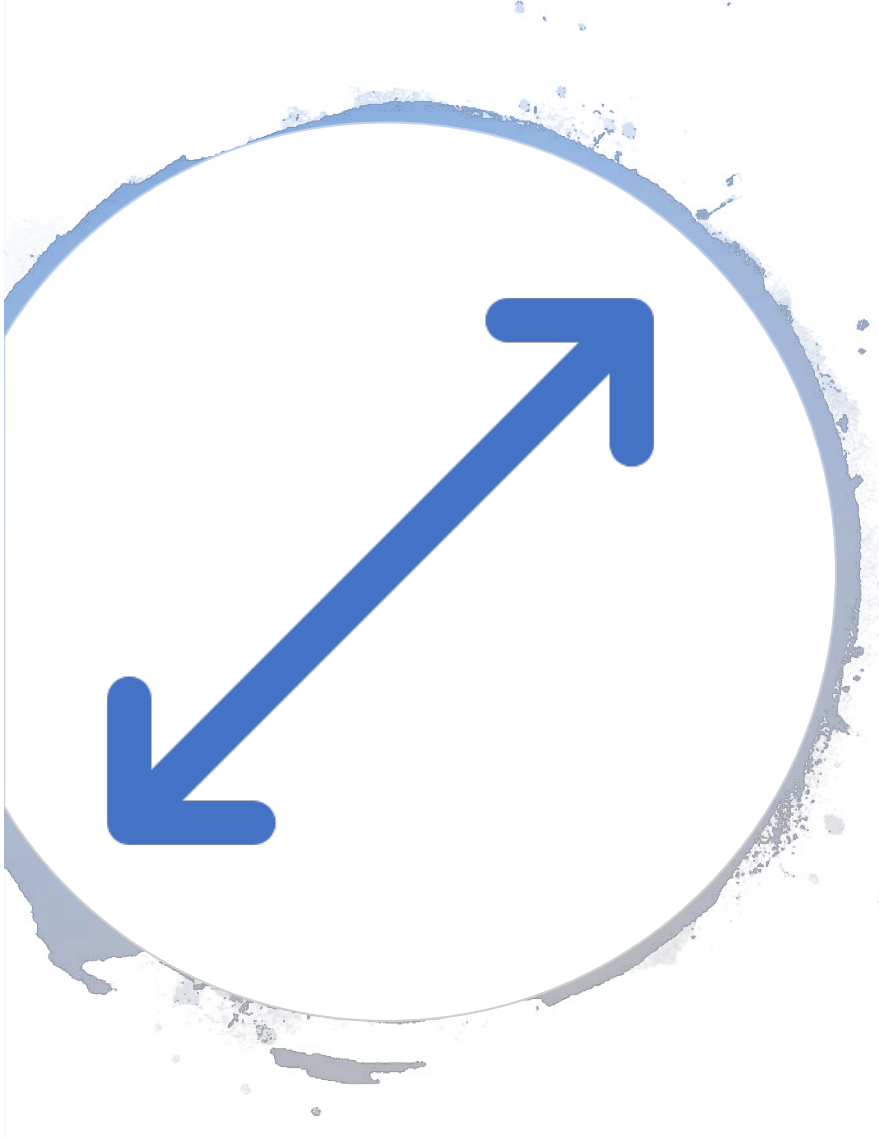
One case: Allen

- Allen (pseudonym)
- Weekly reflective journals: six entries (about one single-spaced typewritten-page in length) and 3,719 words in total
- Group interview data
- The data were coded based on Oxford's (1990) taxonomy
- Direct: 1) Memory strategies: used to store or retrieve the target language; 2) Cognitive strategies: selected by learners to better understand and produce the new language; and 3) Compensation strategies: chosen by learners to make up for lack of knowledge of the new language
- Indirect: 1) Metacognitive strategies: to regulate learners' own cognitive processes; 2) Affective strategies: to help the learner self-regulate attitudinal and emotional factors; and 3) Social strategies: to improve learners' understanding and enhance their production of the target language through interaction with others



One case: Allen

- Allen is a CEO of a small company in New Zealand. His company does business with Chinese companies and he frequently goes to China.
- In the immersion period, Allen's Chinese language proficiency improved a lot and he was a high and fast achiever.
- An account from Allen: "the PMSA program has provided an in-depth experience into China culture and society, enhancing my Chinese language skills and culture experience."



Finding

- Language learning strategy use

Week	Direct	Indirect
1	Cognitive (1)	Social (2)
2		Metacognitive (2) Social (2)
3	Memory (2) Cognitive (1) Compensation (1)	Metacognitive (1) Affective (1) Social (2)
4	Cognitive (4)	Metacognitive (3)
5		Social (1)
6		Metacognitive (1) Social (1)

Finding

- Language learning strategy use

Direct (9, 36%)	Indirect (16, 64%)
Memory (2)	Metacognitive (7)
Cognitive (6)	Affective (1)
Compensation (1)	Social (8)

Summary

- Allen had a very clear goal to improve his Chinese language proficiency and cultural understanding in the six-week immersion learning.
- Allen often evaluated and planned his learning first (metacognitive 7) and then paid efforts in the new spoken Chinese and cultural content, especially Chinese etiquette (cognitive 6; social 8).
- Allen's language learning strategy use was dynamic, and he usually changed his strategies according to learning goals, learning content, and learning process.
- Allen used few affective strategies, and he normally had a positive mind and tended to encourage himself in the learning.

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- Many thanks!

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