

Teaching advanced spoken Chinese

Integration of accuracy and cultural awareness in word choice

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1. Introduction

As defined by the guidelines of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 1999:3-4), second language (L2) learners at advanced levels can perform a variety of communicative tasks with ease, confidence, and competence. Their vocabulary is fairly extensive but primarily generic in nature. In addition, advanced L2 learners usually possess some amount of knowledge relative to Chinese culture, such as history, cultural practice, and art. With such speaking skills and knowledge of Chinese language and culture, advanced Chinese speakers, including heritage speakers, are often not concerned with getting meaning across. However, they are likely to use words and structures in a rather undiscerning fashion, without realizing themselves being awkward. As a result of being imprecise, not necessarily being wrong, utterances of advanced Chinese learners can be grammatically correct but idiomatically or culturally infelicitous. As learners of Chinese progress through advanced levels, the development in their verbal skills aiming at preciseness in word choice pertaining to cultural appropriateness is urged to be one of the goals in advanced Chinese curricula.

This paper¹ first offers a sketch of linguistically erroneous or culturally unacceptable word choices made by advanced learners who were enrolled in the author's classes when the data were collected. Following this, an array of pedagogical activities is presented to Chinese language instructors as alternatives in accommodating advanced learners with their knowledge in vocabulary and social uses of Modern Standard Chinese, namely pragmatic competence.

2. Examples of erroneous or inappropriate sentences

The linguistic properties of misused words, as illustrated below, are often similar with those of correct usages. Here are two examples.

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- When student A was asked “從台灣到哥斯大黎加大概要坐多久的飛機？” in a conversation, A answered “從台灣到哥斯大黎加應該要坐二十五個小時的飛機。” A used 應該 when he was supposed to use 必須.
- When in a role-play student B was requested to make a phone call to her boss regarding a company visitor, she said: “老闆，你是要自己走出來接王先生呢？還是要王先生自己走進去你的辦公室？” This was later on improved by her classmates during group discussions as follows: “請問董事長，您要親自出來接王先生嗎？還是讓我請王先生進去呢？”

The nuances between the learners' inappropriate or erroneous expressions and what most native speakers would possibly say given the same contexts can be subtle. Therefore, it may be challenging for instructors to attend to the systematic explanations for why the learners' misuses are considered inappropriate while the misuses do not necessarily impede the course and outcome of communication. More examples analogous to those above are provided below, ordered into three types of errors from a pedagogical perspective. Some examples may be categorized across the board.

Type 1: Collocation

1. *昨晚，我陪我母親在陽台上賞月，看著月出那淡黃的顏色，我和我母親頓時間心都感到暖暖的。
Revision: 昨晚，我陪我母親在陽台上賞月，看著月亮剛升上來那淡黃的顏色，我和我母親頓時間都感到很愉快。
2. *為了深刻了解華人社會的變遷過程，我設計了幾個問題，訪問當地的華僑，並且請他們對提出的問題說明自己好的見解。
Revision: 為了深入了解華人社會的變遷過程，我設計了幾個問題，訪問當地的華僑，並且請他們就提出的問題發表自己獨到的見解。
3. *她說得道理很簡易，一聽就全明白了
Revision: 她說得道理很簡單，一聽就全明白了。

Examples 1-3 present a common problem in advanced Chinese classrooms: what goes with what? Learners need more experience in *using* the language being studied to know the relationship between words that are "glued" together in native speakers' minds. The glued groups of words have formed common expressions in the communities of the natives, and these collocations of phrases are not necessarily included in classroom instruction. For example, when 深刻 as in 深刻了解 is introduced to learners, the instructors usually explain its meanings and ways to use it

in sentences. However, instructors may not discuss the specificity of its contexts including when not to use this word. As a result, the learners may know when to use 深刻 and are able to apply it to sentences grammatically. However, more noteworthy is that the learners do not know when not to use 深刻. They do not know what vocabulary terms do not go with 深刻, as in *深刻的知識, until they use the phrase in a wrong way and receive corrections.

Another example above, 見解 as in 獨到的見解, also lays out the importance of learners' knowledge in collocations at discourse levels. Without knowing that 見解 is often modified using 獨到 and takes the verb 發表 to form a common expression used when speakers invite opinions from others, the learners more often than not use a generic adjective, such as 好的 or 特別的 to constitute the noun phrase and apply the frequently used verb 說明 to go with it. When learners' knowledge of collocations is at a premium, communicative inefficiency can be forthcoming.

Moreover, overgeneralization can also contribute to the problem. For instance, *月出 as opposed to 日出 and *日色 as opposed to 月色 are observed in learners' utterances. Grammatically, both *月出 and *日色 are fine; however, these two terms do not exist in Chinese. The learners who coined these two expressions must have not heard any native speaker saying the terms. However, for some learners, a lack of positive evidence in input for *月出 and *日色 does not directly exclude the possibility of their occurrence.

The problems described above have a pedagogical implication that if there is no negative evidence or feedback in advanced Chinese instruction, how do the learners know that sentences like * 她說的道理很簡易, 一聽就全明白了. are not possible sentences? Ellis (2002:435) pointed out that with insufficient positive evidence and no negative evidence, some learners "act in accordance with indirect negative evidence". In other words, learners intentionally avoid certain kinds of usages as they never hear native speakers saying them. But is avoidance the best strategy for L2 learners? How do we educators expose advanced learners to both positive and negative evidence during classroom instruction so the instances of usages that are not possible are made available to the learners? More often than not, advanced L2 learners' incorrect utterances go uncorrected in natural outside-of-classroom conversations because their interlocutors respond to the L2 learners' inferred intent rather than the forms. Consequently, the learners miss out on an opportunity to learn from their authentic "personalized" mistakes. To compensate for this particular drawback in non-institutional conversational settings, feedback, correction, and negotiation of meanings should be accorded a privileged role in addition to enormous input during classroom instruction (Doughty/Varela 1998:

136-137). Pedagogically, language educators strive to prepare their learners with consistent trends of correct usages, rather than chance occurrences of them.

Type II: Words with similar linguistic properties

4. *如果你想比較不同筆記型電腦的功能和價格，你可以到這個網站上來看看，這裡提供的資訊很完全。
Revision: 如果你想比較不同筆記型電腦的功能和價格，你可以到這個網站上來看看，這裡提供的資訊很完整。
5. *大家好，我是馬來西亞的僑生，我長大的小村莊，人很少，那裡的田園很寬敞，我們常在那兒玩。
Revision: 大家好，我是馬來西亞的僑生，我長大的小村莊，人很少，那裡的田園很寬廣，我們常在那兒玩。
6. *我趁著上次在底特律轉機的時候，就順便到免稅店裡處處走走看看，剛好看到這瓶香水，因為我一直很想要，所以我就買了。
Revision: 我趁著上次在底特律轉機的時候，就順便到免稅店裡到處走走看看，剛好看到這瓶香水，因為我一直很想要，所以我就買了。
7. *老師，您要我們一字不差地背出胡適寫的背影，這幾乎是天方夜譚，不可能的任務嘛！
Revision: 老師，您要我們一字不差地背出胡適寫的背影，這簡直是天方夜譚，不可能的任務嘛！
8. *這次我們可以順利地辦成園遊會，都是幸虧院長您的幫助，真是非常謝謝院長。
Revision: 這次我們可以順利地辦成園遊會，都是多虧院長您的幫助，真是非常謝謝院長。
9. *上次回瑞典時，因為是臨時決定的，所以買票買得很著急，沒有時間好好比較機票價格。
Revision: 上次回瑞典時，因為是臨時決定的，所以買票買得很急，沒有時間好好比較機票價格。
10. *學期末的小劇演出，你是編劇，所以應該你來寫劇本，但不是我。
Revision: 學期末的小劇演出，你是編劇，所以應該你來寫劇本，而不是我。
11. *你如果想要變瘦，你一定不可以常常吃巧克力。
Revision: 如果你想變瘦，那你應該少吃點巧克力。

12.*在巴西，如果男朋友或女朋友劈腿，我們不會覺得難過，而且會覺得很高興，不是在結婚後才發現。

Revision: 在巴西，如果男朋友或女朋友劈腿，我們不但不會覺得難過，反而會覺得很慶幸，不是在結婚後才發現。

The mistakes in this category can be attributed to the similarities in linguistic properties and usages between two or more terms. For instance, 簡直 and 幾乎 share some semantic properties as both can be used as an adverb to refer to "something being close to a certain condition, degree, or state" (Lu 2008:297). The cases where 簡直 and 幾乎 are interchangeable are:

他簡直/幾乎不敢直視她的眼睛。

當他知道他家已經燒成灰燼，他簡直/幾乎要瘋了。

However, there are situations where the two vocabulary terms cannot replace with each other:

*這幾乎是天方夜譚。

*他家亂得幾乎跟狗窩一樣。

The sentences above are incorrect because 幾乎 is usually used to modify objective situations and structurally followed by actual facts. Here is an example of this usage:

他胖得幾乎都走不動了。

On the other hand, 簡直 can introduce a metaphor or comparison (Lu 2008:297). Two examples are:

他的處境簡直連狗都不如。

他的臉上的青春痘簡直像彈珠一樣大。

Native speakers' intuition renders their correct use of these two ambiguous phrases possible while this does not necessarily hold true for them when it comes to metalinguistic explanations of the underlying grammar rules. That is to say, the required metalinguistic knowledge is not always readily available for Chinese language teachers if they are not extensively prepared in advance. In classroom instruction, the detailed linguistic analysis of the differences between 簡直 and 幾乎 or between other phrases with comparable qualities is not often made available for the learners. The availability is contingent on pedagogical resources, stages in learners' cognitive development, time constraints, and so forth. Irrespective of the reality in classrooms, can explicit explanations and comparisons serve as a solution to the

problem? What kinds of pedagogical tasks can classroom instruction offer so the instructional content is beneficial to our advanced learners in this regard?

Type III: Culturally inappropriate expressions

13.*系主任您好，我現在通知您，由於我要去台北參加一個研討會，所以我下星期不會來上課。

Revision: 系主任您好，非常不好意思，由於我要去台北參加一個研討會，所以想向您請一天假，不知道是否能請您准假？

14.*我告訴我婆婆，人老了就該住進養老院，別老住在我們家。

Revision: 我跟我婆婆討論，年紀大了，如果希望有專人能時時刻刻照顧，那麼養老院會是一個不錯的選擇。

15.* (電話應答) 王總經理，我們常常和你做生意，所以很想你來看我們的展覽。那，你想不想來我們公司看展覽會？

Revision: 王總經理，您好，您是我們生意往來上很重要的客戶，因此，我們很誠摯的邀請您前來參加這次的展覽活動。

Examples 13-15 are grammatically correct but culturally inappropriate utterances, given the role-play contexts when the sentences were produced. For example, the prompt for the task to elicit example 14 was:

情境: 今天妳和妳的好朋友吃中飯，席間妳提及妳和婆婆相處愉快，但是因為婆婆最近身體每下愈況，非常需要專人專業的照顧，於是妳就和婆婆討論是否必須住進養老院。

表演: 請告訴你的好朋友妳是如何和妳的婆婆溝通的。

Evidently, the speaker of example 14 lacked pragmatic competence, which refers to the social uses of language. Pragmatic competence allows speakers to communicate more than what is explicitly or directly stated by using culturally appropriate words, gestures, and taking the perspectives of the audience. In other words, the speakers in the examples 13-15 did not lend themselves well to demonstrating their internalization of the set of rules that governs Chinese to "construct discourse and to perform speech acts in socially appropriate ways" (Ellis 2002:437). The same competence also accounts for the listeners' abilities to make pragmatic inference to derive the intended meaning from the speakers' words. In examples 13-15, while the speakers got their intended meanings across, their inferred meanings could have been communicated to their audiences through, for example, mitigating their illocutionary acts to achieve rhetorical effectiveness. Pragmatic competence usually

needs to be acquired through experiences of deploying the language being studied and a greater exposure to the culture. As Kasper and Rose (2003:152) pointed out, "even the most advanced learners continue to have difficulty with the finer points of mitigating their speech acts". What can be done in classrooms to develop such competence for advanced learners, who are expected to express themselves not only grammatically correct but also in a culturally appropriate fashion?

The presentation of different types of undiscerning word choices so far offers a segue into the next section where we take up the issue of developing advanced learners' pragmatic competence through an array of classroom activities. Before we continue, it is imperative to note that the set-up of the Chinese native speaker data to embody a prescriptive norm which the L2 learners' interlanguage performance is evaluated against is to pedagogically present the discrepancy between the output of the natives and learners and warrant closer investigation into solutions in language teaching.

3. Pedagogical tasks

The preceding sections have called both advanced learners' linguistic and pragmatic competences into question. Linguistic competence, according to Chomsky (1965:3-4), refers to speakers' knowledge of the items and rules that govern the formal systems of a language. Different from linguistic competence, which seeks to account for speakers' knowledge, pragmatic competence describes speakers' social use of a language in order to appropriately engage in communication. Mistakes such as *道理很簡易, *田園很寬敞, and *幸虧院長您的幫助 reflect the advanced Chinese learners' linguistic competence and capacity to choose correct words from their mental lexicon. In what ways can classroom instruction help the learners make a correct decision in choosing, for example, 簡單 over 簡易 when modifying 道理? It is important that advanced Chinese instruction increases the level of learners' linguistic competence because second language learners cannot construct native-like, socially appropriate discourse unless they possess adequate linguistic means to do so. In other words, L2 learners' linguistic knowledge, in terms of meaning and usages of vocabulary words and grammar structures, is the cornerstone for the development of their pragmatic competence. In this section, we will discuss some in-class pedagogical tasks that are designed to improve advanced learners' linguistic knowledge and pragmatic competence.

Linguistic competence in general and vocabulary capacity in particular are the repertoire which the advanced learners who produced the erroneous utterances above are suggested to apply themselves to. McCarthy (1984, qtd. in Gu 2003:o.S.) stated that vocabulary learning tasks should help L2 learners not only to remember

words but also to develop an automaticity to use words in a variety of contexts. Two different aspects of vocabulary acquisition, knowing and using words, involve explicit and implicit learning respectively. (Ellis 1994) Explicit learning of vocabulary can be done, for example, through instructors' explaining the meanings and learners' looking up the words in a dictionary, whereas implicit learning often takes place when the learners use the words or come across the words being used in contexts. Research (e. g., Zimmerman 1994; Paribakht/Wesche 1999) has shown that a combined approach of direct instruction on and exposure to the vocabulary in contexts leads to bigger gains in learners' development in vocabulary acquisition, compared to the empirical study results of one single instruction alone. The suggestion to include both intentional and incidental learning is in particular important to advanced Chinese instruction because advanced learners often tend to guess unknown or unfamiliar meanings and usages based on contexts without taking a further step to make sure they understood the words correctly. As warned by Huckin and Coady (1999:189-190), "guessing from context has serious limitations. It is still seen as an important part of vocabulary-building, especially among advanced learners, but it requires a great deal of prior training in basic vocabulary, word recognition, metacognition, and subject matter." Therefore, to expand advanced Chinese learners' vocabulary capacity and avoid wrong understandings of words, the pedagogical tasks need to include instructional mechanisms as well as knowledge of and skills in using vocabulary.

Here are examples of speaking tasks with a focus on vocabulary development, including vocabulary knowledge and vocabulary use.

Pedagogical goal I: Development of vocabulary knowledge using semantic mapping tasks

The underlying concept for the semantic mapping tasks is to guide advanced Chinese learners to syntagmatically and paradigmatically analyze the components of and value-determining relations between vocabulary words derived from their mental lexicon (Saussure 1916:170, Chandler 2001:83-85). In other words, vocabulary words are organized and presented to the learners in groups based on grips of their interrelated semantic meaning. An example of this notion is presented graphically below.

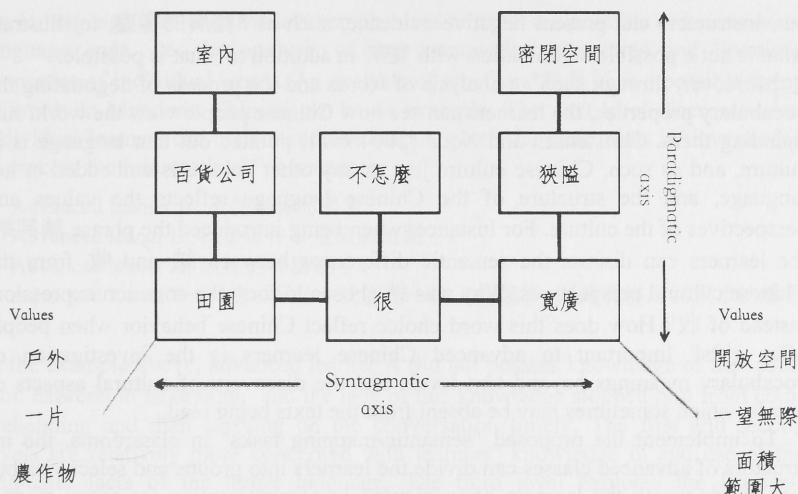


Figure 1: Semantic map

Syntagmatic relations indicate the plausible combinations of phrases, whereas paradigmatic relations are contrastive. In the example above, the values of 田園 include 農作物, 一片, 戶外, and so forth. The values of 寬廣 include 面積範圍大, 一望無際, 開放空間, and so on. The two terms, 田園 and 寬廣, have values in common, such as "an open area," and form possible combinations. On the other hand, paradigmatic relations are concerned with the values that are absent from the texts. The meaning, for instance, of 田園, is also derived from its absent, contrastive notions. 田園 is not 百貨公司, 室內, 溫室, and so forth.

The pedagogical task that encourages advanced Chinese learners to scrutinize vocabulary words as shown above is based on the reasoning that values of vocabulary words and phrases are determined by both syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations. In other words, to deepen their understanding in vocabulary, advanced learners are encouraged to investigate values of the words that are absent from the texts. For instance, to fully master the uses of the word 寬廣, the learners need to recognize its contrastive values, such as 有範圍的, 密閉 etc., so they will not use 寬廣 to modify a noun that carries, for example, 密閉空間 in its semantic value. The paradigmatic analysis of 寬廣 can afford a view on what semantically pits against it and provide an explanation for why *這間工廠很寬廣 is not a possible syntagmatic string of words. It may be added that when paradigmatic analysis is being carried

out, instructors can present negative evidence, such as *寬廣的客廳, to illustrate what is not a possible combination with 寬廣 in addition to what is possible.

Moreover, through such an analysis of words and the process of negotiating the vocabulary properties, the learners can see how Chinese people view the world surrounding them. Christensen and Noda (2004:xviii) pointed out that language is in culture, and as such, Chinese culture just as any other culture is embedded in her language, and the structure of the Chinese language reflects the values and perspectives of the culture. For instance, when being introduced the phrase 請笑納, the learners can discuss the semantic differences between 納 and 收 from the Chinese cultural perspectives. Why was 納 chosen to form the common expression, instead of 收? How does this word choice reflect Chinese behavior when people offer gifts? Important to advanced Chinese learners is the investigation of vocabulary meanings beyond text levels and the discovery of cultural aspects of words, which sometimes may be absent from the texts being read.

To implement the proposed "semantic-mapping tasks" in classrooms, the instructors of advanced classes can divide the learners into groups and select vocabulary words which the learners have misused in communication for group discussions. The topics of the discussions can be the semantic properties of, for example, 請 as in 請妳到我家吃晚飯, if the learners have produced a sentence like *我想請你做功課 in their previous utterances. Through discussions on and analysis of the semantic values of 請, the learners can re-examine their existing knowledge and gain new perspectives on the word. Moreover, it is again recommended to take the discussions on the semantic values of 請 to the level of cultural aspects in using 請.

In summary, the purposes of such a classroom task include the following. Firstly, the task is primarily geared to extend the breadth and depth of advanced learners' linguistic knowledge as opposed to the skills to use the words. Moreover, semantic mapping activities can help learners differentiate a group of similar words by looking into their individual values, such as 關心, 關懷, 關切, 關照 (Lu 2008: 276). Finally, the network of associations among words would provide advanced Chinese learners with opportunities to develop their epistemic insights in collocations and cultural perspectives on vocabulary terms.

Pedagogical goal II: Development of vocabulary using structured speaking tasks

One of the theoretical models introduced to second language acquisition is based on the theories analyzing communicative competence of individual learners. Most of the concepts of communicative language ability are inspired by Hymes's (1972) views on social use of languages, which suggested four ascending levels of analy-

ses in language use. The first level emphasizes on what are possible composition of language code, i.e. the analysis of the grammatical structures and linguistic properties of individual words. An analysis of whether *她是好 is a possible string of words in Mandarin Chinese can be an example. The next level discusses what individual learners can understand and output, given the constraints in time needed to process the information. For instance:

Advanced learner A: 這件事你怎麼看?

Advanced learner B: 我看這件事是破鏡難圓了。

Advanced learner A: 破掉的什麼鏡子?

Advanced learner B: 不是, 不是...就像是...破了的鏡子, 很難再拼湊回原本的樣子了。

In the example above, advanced learner A did not possess knowledge of the common expression 破鏡難圓, and the lack of this knowledge stopped him from comprehending and then carrying on the conversation timely. The first and second levels are relatively more concerned with learners' knowledge in and use of the linguistic facts of the target language. The third level explores the learners' language use in terms of cultural appropriateness, such as the following:

Supervisor: 在忙嗎? 有沒有什麼問題?

Advanced learner C: 哦, 沒有問題...我在講私人電話, 你等一下再過來。

While the utterance produced by advanced learner C per se was grammatically correct, it was not culturally appropriate or acceptable as a result of the speaker's use of Chinese not taking hierarchy into account. Finally, the fourth level discusses if the learners' output, while accurate and meaningful, conforms to the conventions of the languages in question. For instance, there are common expressions, word choices, or structural formulations that are more frequently used in some communities of speakers than others. For speakers of Chinese from Taiwan, it is common to say 她是我們部門的主管, meaning "she is the manager of our department", while it is worded differently by speakers from China as 她是我們單位的領導. For advanced Chinese learners to be able to use the language conventionally, such knowledge about what are typical phrases and what are not when speaking with different groups of native speakers is critical. The analyses at the third and fourth levels are focused more on pragmatic knowledge and actual uses of individual learners.

In the previous section, semantic mapping tasks were introduced to enrich advanced learners' knowledge about meanings of words, including both present in and absent from the texts. Such tasks are intended to help the learners explore what are possible strings of words as Hymes's (2001:65) analysis on the first level of

analysis. In this section, structured speaking tasks are proposed to improve advanced learners' comprehension and handling of similar phrases during interactions as in Hymes's (2001:66) analysis on the second level.

One feature of structured speaking tasks is the limited scope of conversational content, which allows the instructors to closely elicit and evaluate learners' knowledge of the target language's vocabulary and structures. (Luoma 2007:158-159) Structured speaking tasks can take on different formats. Here are two examples.

Example I

Objective: To evaluate learners' understanding on the target terms when the terms are used in context.

Instruction:

1. Please pair up. Each pair will receive a picture, a description of the situation, and a list of expressions pertaining to the picture.
2. Both of you will read the description of the situation together.
3. One of you will read aloud the list of answers that describe the picture, and the other will choose the grammatically and semantically correct one(s) as listening to the options read to him or her. The one who listens to the answers is required to decide if the expression is correct before the next one is read to him or her.
4. When finished, each pair will discuss how the selection of answers was done and negotiate the understandings of the target terms.

Description of the situation: You are showing your friend a picture of your home in Boston. The picture was taken last Christmas when you visited your family. How would you describe the scene in the picture to your Chinese friend?



Figure 2: Picture for a structured speaking task
(Source: New Jersey Historical Commission 2008)

List of expressions

- 在美國過聖誕節時，我們都會把房子打扮成這個樣子。
- 在美國過聖誕節時，我們都會把房子裝潢成這個樣子。
- 在美國過聖誕節時，我們都會把房子點綴成這個樣子。
- 在美國過聖誕節時，我們都會把房子佈置成這個樣子。
- 你看，點起燈以後，整個房子就亮了起來。
- 你看，開起燈以後，整個房子就亮了起來。
- 你看，裝起燈以後，整個房子就亮了起來。
- 你不覺得這樣有一種很溫暖的感覺嗎？
- 你不覺得這樣有一種很溫馨的感覺嗎？
- 你不覺得這樣有一種很溫和的感覺嗎？
- 你不覺得這樣有一種很暖和的感覺嗎？
- 因為家家戶戶都有這些聖誕燈，所以到了晚上，整個社區都還是金碧輝煌的。
- 因為家家戶戶都有這些聖誕燈，所以到了晚上，整個社區都還是金光閃閃的。
- 因為家家戶戶都有這些聖誕燈，所以到了晚上，整個社區都還是燈火通明的。
- 因為家家戶戶都有這些聖誕燈，所以到了晚上，整個社區都還是艷光四射的。

The answers from and negotiations between the learners can unfold to instructors certain amounts of information regarding the learners' "linguistic accuracy, content accuracy, and possibly appropriateness for the situation" (Luoma 2007:161). In addition, with the picture visualizing the scene, instructors can pose questions such as why Chinese native speakers would most likely use 燈火通明 to describe the lighting and 溫暖 to express themselves towards the perceived atmosphere in the picture. The discussions are not only intended to reach agreement in correct answers as a product but more importantly, to incrementally enrich learners' understanding of Chinese native speakers' points of view which determine their word choices.

Example II

Objective: To evaluate learners' production using the target terms when the terms are used in context.

Instruction: You are asked for the information on hotel room rates. First, please read the price table on the following projection slide. You will then be asked the question. The prices are in New Taiwanese Dollars.

Room Style:	Garden View King	Pool View Double	Lake View King	Regency Club Double	Executive Suite	VIP Suite
Prices:	4999	5499	6999	9999	12999	17999

Time limit: 30 seconds

Instructor: 請問, 今天晚上的房間, 有哪些選擇? 各是多少錢呢?

Learner: _____

Advanced Chinese learners' strategic deployment and mental lexicon of generic vocabulary words probably enable them to respond to the questions. However, the preciseness in the combinations of their word selections and effectiveness in their speech acts can be called into question. Example II aims to enable advanced learners to map the target language structures to socially appropriate forms.

In summary, example I and II confine the scope of practice within the designated groups of vocabulary words, and therefore, instructors are able to evaluate the learners' command of the target vocabulary and offer specific feedback. The advantage of short tasks like examples I and II over longer ones is that the instructors can get a more versatile impression of the learners' skills as short tasks can "fit a range of language-use situations into a couple of minutes" (Luoma 2007:158). Three different exemplary tasks that are intended to develop advanced learners' knowledge and skills in vocabulary were introduced in this section. In the next part of the paper, we will discuss the tasks that are designed to help learners to gain pragmatic competence.

Pedagogical goal III: Development of pragmatic competence

Austin's (1962) speech act theory proposed three types of acts in speech performance: a locutionary act, an illocutionary act, and a perlocutionary act. The study of second language learners' speech acts has primarily focused on illocutionary aspects and investigated the following research questions: 1) To what extent and in what ways does L2 learners' performance in illocutionary acts differ from that of native speakers' of the languages in question?, and 2) how do L2 learners learn to perform a variety of illocutionary acts? (Ellis 2002:160) Three commonly used instruments to study these two questions are 1) questionnaires, such as discourse completion tasks (for example, Blum-Kulka/House/Kasper 1989:40; Beebe/Takahashi/Uliss-Weltz 1990) and multiple choice tasks (for example, Rose/Ono 1995), 2) spoken discourse tasks, such as role play (for example, Walters 1980:337-345), and 3) oral and written self-reports (Robinson 1992:52-53). This section will start by sketching some of the many ways in which L2 learners can participate during class hours or at institutions to reinforce their language skills to speak in a culturally appropriate manner.

a. Discourse completion tasks

A discourse completion task typically starts with a situational description followed by a brief dialogue with one or more turns as open slots for L2 learners to fill in. Specific contexts are designed to accurately elicit the target communicative acts. A sample item aiming at a compliment speech act is as follows:

今天張耀明要去台北 101 大樓的 IBM 總公司面試，因此他特地將自己打扮得西裝筆挺，有別於平常的樣子。你是張耀明的鄰居，看到張耀明這身打扮走進電梯，你會怎麼稱讚他？你覺得他又會怎麼回應你的讚美呢？

鄰居: _____

張耀明: _____

(adapted from Kasper/Rose 2003:91)

b. Multiple choice

Questionnaires are deployed to elicit L2 learners' intuitions about the degrees of, for example, politeness on a three-point scale in order to investigate how the learners perform a specific act in a given situation. Questionnaires can also be in a format of multiple choice. One example is:

現在是星期天的早晨，你正準備到捷運芝山站和朋友碰面吃中飯。你看了一下時間之後發現如果你走到最近的永春捷運站再搭乘捷運到芝山站，那麼自己很可能會遲到。這時你撇頭看見爸爸正坐在客廳裡喝茶，翻閱著報紙。

現在你會怎麼說或怎麼做？

- 我會說：爸爸，請你載我到永春站，謝謝。
- 我會說：爸爸，我可以麻煩你載我到永春站嗎？因為我快要遲到了。
- 我會說：爸爸，你現在有空嗎？可不可以請你載我到永春站坐捷運？我和我的朋友約在芝山站，我已經快要遲到了。
- 我什麼都不說，趕快加快腳步跑到捷運站坐車。

(adapted from Rose/Ono 1995:220-221)

The items above challenge learners' pragmatic use of Chinese in relation to the combination of directness degrees with mitigation when making a request to their close relatives. Such a task requires advanced Chinese learners to evaluate a set of alternatives against what they would say when in a free-recall task. During the process of evaluation, the learners can explore their pragmatic production and the reasons for it. The alternatives in multiple choice can be generated from the pool of

learners' speeches previously observed by the instructors. It is also possible and encouraged that the advanced learners can further mitigate or aggravate the presented alternatives and propose their modified alternatives with their rationales.

c. Role play

Crookall and Saunders (1989:15) defined role play in L2 instruction as "a social or human activity in which participants take on and act out specified roles, often within a predefined social framework or situational blueprint". An example of role play with a thematic behavior in apologizing is provided below.

上星期你向你的教授了一片電影光碟，並且答應今天歸還。當你在教授辦公室正要將光碟片從包裡拿出來時才發現，你竟然將光碟片放在家裡書桌上，忘了帶出來了。

請問這時你將如何向你的教授道歉並解釋原委呢？

(adapted from Blum-Kulka/House/Kasper 1989:14)

Another example in which L2 learners will perform a speech act of requesting is as follows.

兩週後的生物課輪到你整理使用後的實驗室。但很不湊巧的，兩週後的實驗課內容正好是解剖青蛙。你從小就很害怕屍體，生物組織，以及血腥之類的東西。因此你準備和你的生物課教授討論，希望他能讓你調到別週擔任整理實驗室的工作。

現在你剛走進教授的辦公室裡，請問你將如何提出你的請求？

Learners' performance of role-plays can offer instructors a lot of information about their speaking skills and ability to construct culturally appropriate discourse for the specific assigned speech act, such as information pertaining to learners' pragmatic competence in apologizing, arguing, and making requests. While role-plays can be used effectively for advanced learners to hone their speaking skills and for instructors to evaluate their learners' social use of Chinese, the activities can be taxing for the learners. Some common difficulties in administering role-plays include the following. First, from the perspective of the learners' cognitive processing, in addition to the language abilities per se required to carry on the role-play tasks, the learners have to create and maintain an imagined conversational context, which may not be familiar to them. (Kasper/Rose 2003:27) Moreover, from a pedagogical point of view, advanced speakers participating in one role play might not possess the same

level of speaking proficiency, which can result in asymmetric and frustrating interaction. Therefore, how to group learners so that a smooth and symmetric flow of the interactions is maintained can be a critical task for the instructor.

d. Elicited conversation tasks

Elicited conversation tasks are different from role plays in that advanced Chinese learners do not need to take on social roles other than being themselves. However, to elicit the target interaction, the instructors would assign a discourse role to each learner. (Kasper/Rose 2003:85) For example, if the target speech act is to deliver sympathy, the instructor can request the learners to present sympathy-inducing objects, such as a test with a failing grade and perform trouble tellings. The instructor can first observe how advanced learners put their situations in words and body language to evoke sympathy. Then, the instructor can study if and how the learners respond to the sympathy-inducing conversation by offering advice or expressions of sympathy. (Kerekes 1992) Instructions on elicited conversation tasks can be as vague as the following example. The sample task has an unsaid goal for the speakers to make a complaint and for the addressees to put forward suggestions.

Instruction: 請兩個人一組。請彼此聊聊一件曾經令你煩心或倒楣的事情。

Different cultures have different expectations of, for example, how personal achievements should be addressed and compliments be offered. Elicited conversation tasks can, within a relatively short time, offer instructors with the information regarding how learners use culturally acknowledged language and strategic moves to achieve the goals of the tasks. Here is another example.

Instruction: 請兩個人一組。請談談一件令你驕傲或很有成就感的事情。

The two elicited conversation tasks described above both involve highly emotional experiences of the participants. It is assumed that touching upon such experiences will relatively easily trigger vernacular speech events (Labov 1984:29). In addition, through tasks like these, advanced Chinese learners can practice conversational organization, the expression of reference, and narrative structures in an array of discourses (Kasper/Rose 2003:86).

e. Authentic discourse tasks

Authentic discourse tasks refer to genuine speech events that take place in reality. Authentic language samples of advanced Chinese learners can be obtained during, for example, advising sessions and class hours, when L2 learners interact with

native speakers or not. The utterances of the learners can be electronically recorded and then compared with the samples of the same illocutionary acts performed by Chinese native speakers. The instructors and the advanced learners can compare and discuss the differences in pragmatic aspects between natives and L2 learners in order to raise the learners' cultural awareness in communication. Kasper and Rose (2003:80) state that authentic institutional talk has the advantage of "being more highly structured, routinized, and recurrent". Recorded authentic discourse tasks allow both instructors and Chinese learners to evaluate and improve the learners' skills in speaking appropriately within school settings. Here is an example of recorded interaction between an advanced Chinese learner and her instructor.

老師：怎麼樣？有什麼事嗎？

學生：有…關於你的中文寫作課。

老師：嗯，怎麼了？

學生：你的課作業太多，我不想再繼續上了，想退掉。

老師：_____

學生：(拿出退選單)請幫我簽名。

The learner's directness is manifested in her word choice and sentence structures, which do not conform to the expectations most native speakers would have in the same conversational situation. Recorded clips of interactions like the one above can serve as material for discussions of social uses of Chinese.

Below is an example of the role-play between two native speakers of Chinese who were provided with the same objective of the conversation as the first conversation above, which is, to withdraw from the Chinese writing class.

老師：怎麼了？有什麼事嗎？

學生：老師，真不好意思打擾您了，是這樣的。關於這學期的中文寫作課，我有點問題想跟老師請教一下。

老師：怎麼了？你說…

學生：我覺得自己的中文程度好像不夠好，試了很多次，總覺得自己跟不太上進度，感覺有點吃力，所以想請問老師，我是不是該等自己中文程度比較好的時候，再來修您的課呢？

老師：這樣子啊？那你打算現在先退選，以後在回來上，是嗎？

學生：嗯…如果老師准許的話，那我這學期先退選，然後明年再回來上。

老師：那，好吧。你有帶退選單來嗎？

學生：嗯…在這裡。麻煩老師幫我簽個名。

When comparing the clips of the two conversations, the instructor is suggested to focus on the pragmatic aspects of the utterances. For instance, the student from the

second conversation apologized for taking up the teacher's time before he started to explain why he was in the office. Another example that is worth advanced learners' awareness is that the student from the first conversation criticized the Chinese writing class to rationalize his withdrawal from the class while the student from the second conversation placed responsibility on his poor Chinese proficiency and hoped the instructor would understand his situation.

An authentic task of this kind that engages not only L2 learners but natives of the languages in question has one additional attendant advantage. As Shea (1994: 378) commented on Vygotsky's notion on the zone of proximal development (1978: 85-86) and Rogoff's guided participation (1990), "native speaker's response is a critical means of constructing the nonnative speaker's discourse". Native speakers can lead the way to form the picture of the contiguous turns in their joint conversations with L2 learners or set an example for learners to refer to regarding the pragmatics of Chinese.

f. Think aloud tasks

Think aloud protocols (TAP) are often used in second language research to study L2 learners' thought process when engaged in a task, and TAP can be reported in learners' first (L1) or second languages. TAP can also be employed as in-class activities for both instructors and learners to understand the details of the reasoning underlying the learners' planning moves in communication and the sources of the learners' L1 and L2's pragmatic knowledge they draw on. (Kasper/Rose 2003:107-108) Think aloud tasks can be used in combination with role plays, which will cast light on the response alternatives that learners choose from during speech acts. (Robinson 1992:52-53) The following example is a concurrent verbal report when the learner, Jess, acted to refuse a request from her friend, Lucy, who wanted to borrow some money. However, because Lucy had not yet returned the money she had borrowed from another friend the week before, Jess hesitated to lend her any money.

Well um...I am not sure how to tell her that I don't want to loan her any money because she never returns money...I think it is rude in Chinese culture to say things like this to her face...but what should I say...should I lie to be polite? I am not sure...maybe I can tell her that I don't have any money...but she will know when I pay my lunch later...or maybe I can tell her that I only have my lunch money...but I think this is not enough...she will probably ask again...or just tell her to borrow from someone else...is it ok to tell her not to borrow from me...it is a Chinese class...are Chinese people going to think that I am mean...

A report like the above can disclose options that L2 learners have when formulating refusals and reveal L2 learners' perspectives towards social relationships that lead them to make decisions in social activities. (Kasper/Rose 2003:107-108)

In this section, we have introduced several pedagogical tasks which focus on advanced Chinese learners' development of vocabulary knowledge, vocabulary uses, and pragmatic competence. The primary goals for these tasks are to 1) enrich advanced Chinese learners' knowledge of the values of vocabulary words so they can speak with semantically precise word choice, and 2) to raise advanced learners' awareness of the social uses of Chinese words and structures; that is, to enhance their pragmatic competence so that advanced learners eventually will not only speak Chinese fluently, but more importantly, speak Chinese appropriately.

4. Conclusion

To help advanced Chinese learners achieve accuracy and cultural awareness in word choice, classroom instruction has to capitalize on learners' strengths, most often demonstrated in fluent delivery, and address less developed aspects, which are often preciseness and social uses of language entities in their speech. In the paper, I have presented different classroom tasks designed to improve learners' vocabulary knowledge and pragmatic competence. I argued that it is imperative that advanced Chinese instruction guides advanced learners to analyze the values of vocabulary words so learners have a better opportunity to use these words correctly in appropriate contexts. Also, the semantic mapping tasks not only present syntagmatic and paradigmatic values of certain words in class but introduce a new perspective of viewing vocabulary words for advanced learners, which they can use when they continue their Chinese education outside of institutional settings.

Communication is acknowledged as the primary goal of language learning. (Nunan 1989:27) However, getting one's meaning across while being incorrectly fluent is certainly not the proficiency level at which L2 learners' instruction should stop or which instructors should take as a desirable learning result. Advanced Chinese learners are strongly encouraged to continuously hone their language skills, specifically accurate wording and social uses. It is also recommended that advanced Chinese programs and their faculty be committed to graduating students who speak Chinese accurately and appropriately.

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摘要

對於高級中文的學習者來說，要達到與別人溝通的目的通常不是件難事。然而，在溝通的過程當中能夠運用精準的辭彙卻不是每位高級中文學習者都能做到的。用詞缺乏有效的精準度不一定表示學習者的用語發生語法錯誤；有時文法明明正確，但用法卻儼然不符合中華文化的習慣用語。舉例來說，曾有位高級中文的學生在扮演一位董事長秘書時，做了以下的電話應答：“老闆，你是要自己走出來接王先生呢？還是要他自己走進去？”針對此類不適當的用詞遣字問題，教師可將課堂教學活動同時著重於以下兩方面來幫助學生整合辭彙精準度及文化合宜之用語：（一）加強高級中文學習者的辭彙語言學知識；（二）提高學生對中文用語學的敏感度。

本論文首先分析高級中文學習者的錯誤範例；其次提出並討論能改善此類用語學問題的課堂教學活動。

Summary

Advanced Chinese learners, in general, are able to verbally express themselves and communicate with others on a variety of topics. In addition, they usually possess knowledge, to a certain extent, with respect to Chinese culture, such as history, cultural practice, and art. With such speaking skills and knowledge in Chinese language and culture, advanced Chinese speakers are not often concerned with getting meaning across. However, they can find it challenging to be precise in word choice, including both structural patterns and vocabulary. As a result of being imprecise, not necessarily being wrong, utterances of advanced Chinese learners can be grammatically correct but idiomatically or culturally inappropriate.

Indiscriminate use of words is not uncommon and in most cases not predictable as the range of conversation topics among advanced Chinese learners is widened rapidly as they progress daily. Therefore, the emphasis of pedagogical teaching approaches to treat this type of intricate problem needs to be placed not only on the introduction of linguistic properties of certain vocabulary or structures, but, more

importantly, on effective allocation of second language learners' attentional resources towards how native speakers of Chinese perform pragmatically.

In the paper, a collection of common mistakes regarding word choice made by advanced Chinese speakers is presented. Following the discussions on these mistakes, pedagogical tasks are introduced which can be utilized in Chinese classrooms to promote grammatically correct and culturally appropriate speech.