

## The Foreign Learners and the Teaching Strategies of Classical Chinese

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### Abstract

Based on teaching experience abroad and domestic, the authors aim to discuss the division of students who learn classical Chinese, as well as their unique characteristics and the relevant teaching methods accordingly. Students learning classical Chinese can be divided into two categories or four types (two types in each category) according to their native language and major: (1) non-major students whose native language is Chinese; (2) major students whose native language is non-Chinese; (3) non-major students whose native language is Chinese; (4) major students whose language is non-Chinese. Depending on their unique characteristics, students of different types should have different class-languages, follow different study processes, and use different teaching materials and different teaching methods. This paper, through a case study 《左傳·子產不毀鄉校》, illustrates these principles.

*Keywords:* classical Chinese, division of students, teaching methodology, chronological sequence, linguistic approach, paraphrastic approach

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## 0 INTRODUCTION

To scholars studying Chinese language teaching, how to teach classical Chinese remains as an unsolved problem that has received increasing attention. A few insightful papers have addressed this problem (Thompson 1966; Shadick 1969; Wang 1970; Kent 1976; Chen 1982; Chou 1997; Ashmore 2003; Fuller 2003; Liu 2003b; Zhang and Song 2005; Wang 2014, and Yang 2014). Following these previous studies, this paper intends to further discuss the different types of learners of classical Chinese as well as the related teaching strategies, in order to find a solution on certain aspects of the problem. This paper will focus on the following issues: (1) a classification of the students who are learning classical Chinese and thus the target of the teaching in question; (2) the relationship between modern Chinese and classical Chinese, its significance in designing teaching methods; (3) the differences between different types of learners of classical Chinese and the related teaching strategies; and (4) a case study of 《左傳·子產不毀鄉校》 (“Zichan does not destroy the local schools”) as an example, illustrating the teaching strategies. The last part of the paper will discuss the related problems, such as different pronunciations of the same characters, tone sandhi, the neutral tone, etc.

## 1 THE CLASSIFICATION OF THE STUDENTS

Students learning classical Chinese can be divided into two types, each of which are further divided into two subtypes, according to their different native languages and majors: (1) non-major students whose first language is Chinese; (2) major students whose first language is Chinese; (3) non-major students whose first language is not Chinese; (4) major students whose first language is not Chinese. In order to meet the needs of the students of different types or subtypes, the classroom language, the learning process, the teaching methods and the arrangement of texts should all be considered separately.

As Liu (2003b) pointed out, to Chinese people, classical Chinese is the

predecessor of their mother tongue, yet it is not only the source of Putonghua but also the origin of other dialects of Chinese. For Chinese people, Classical Chinese falls into the realm of first language education rather than second language education. However, since classical Chinese originated about two thousand years ago and the Chinese language has undergone many major changes thereafter, even a native speaker of Chinese today must still go through specific training, or at least some self-study, before he/she can understand classical Chinese. This makes the process of learning classical Chinese different from the natural acquisition of any first language. Therefore, even when the learners are native speakers of Chinese, the teaching of classical Chinese, for the most part, shares some properties of teaching a second language. Moreover, the aim of teaching classical Chinese usually will not go beyond the vocabulary, the grammar, and reading ability in classical Chinese. It is neither feasible nor necessary to set the goal for students to speak and to write in classical Chinese. Thus, the learning process activates only the “decoding” function of the language faculty, not its “coding” function. For the non-major students who are native speakers of Chinese (type 1 students), only reading ability and comprehension of the texts are required. Due to all the differences between modern Chinese and classical Chinese, many of them will not affect input or decoding, but only output or coding. For example, in classical Chinese, between numeral words and the nouns, there is no *liàngcí* (量詞 “classifier”), which is obligatory in modern Chinese. In writing classical Chinese, a native speaker of modern Chinese may add such classifiers and therefore make mistakes. However, in the reading process such a difference will not change the meaning of the numeral-classifier-noun structure. In the Pre-Qin Chinese, there was no “verb-resultative” structure such as *sī pò* (撕破 “tear-broken”) or *nòng hútu* (弄糊塗 “make-confused”). Therefore, in writing, one has to consider carefully how to express the same meaning without such structure. However, to a reader of classical Chinese, whether or not there is such a structure presents no obstacle at all. Unfortunately, there are some differences that will change people’s understanding

of the content to different degrees. For example, *yú* ( 於 ) is a preposition in classical Chinese that has multiple meanings. With the help of some linguistic rules, one is able to recognize the specific meaning in a certain sentence. It can be put in front of or after the verb, as illustrated in (1a) and (1b).

- (1) a. ……於趙則有功矣，於魏則未爲忠臣也。（《史記·信陵君傳》）  
b. 子擊磬於衛。（《論語·憲問》）

But, when it introduces a target or it is in the comparative or passive structure, it can be put only after the verb, as shown in (2a), (2b), and (2c).

- (2) a. 始吾於人也，聽其言而信其行。（《論語·公冶長》） ---- introducing  
a target  
b. 今吳不如過，而越大於少康。（《左傳·哀公元年》） ---- comparative  
c. 內困於父母，外困於諸侯。（《國語·晉語》） ---- passive

When it is in “之於” phrases, then it only appears before the verb, as shown in (3).

- (3) 麒麟之於走獸，鳳凰之於飛鳥……類也。（《孟子·公孫丑上》）

Therefore, when teaching non-major native speakers of Chinese, the focus should be on grammar points that might influence their understanding, putting those that influence their production aside. The teaching could be carried out in the form of comparing relevant points in the ancient and modern languages, rather than explaining the entire language systems.

To those who will rely on the knowledge of classical Chinese in their professions (type 2 students, native speakers major in Chinese), such as ancient text documentation, classical literature, ancient history, or archaeology, the need for classical Chinese education varies. Systematic knowledge of classical Chinese or even history of the Chinese language is indispensable. The classical Chinese,

represented by the Pre-Qin Chinese, is distinctive from modern Chinese as a system and on numerous details of the language. As a system, classical Chinese does not have complements that are already grammaticalized structures, such as *kàn shàngqù* (看上去) and *shuō qǐlái* (說起來). It also lacks the compulsory classifiers such as *zhāng* (張) or *tiáo* (條); as well as the compulsory direction functional words such as in *wūli* (屋裏 “in the room”) or *chuángshàng* (床上 “on bed”). Classical Chinese does not have the *bǎ* (把) structure, or the aspect markers such as *le* (了), *zhe* (着) and *guo* (過), or verb reduplication such as *zǒuzou* (走走 “walk-walk”). On the other hand, classical Chinese has some properties that cannot be found in its modern counterpart. In classical Chinese, prepositional phrases are usually put after the verb<sup>1</sup>. Classical Chinese also conditionally allows certain objects to be put before the verb<sup>2</sup>. As for the detailed differences between classical Chinese and modern Chinese, then it is not difficult to find that many functional words and specific structures do not share exactly the same usage in the two languages. Therefore, we should incorporate the results from previous research done on the differences between the two languages into classical Chinese teaching of the major students whose native language is Chinese. It will prove to be beneficial and necessary.

To type 1 and type 2 students, the classroom language used when teaching classical Chinese should undoubtedly be Chinese. Disputes arise when we come to type 3 and type 4 students, namely the students whose native language is not Chinese. Traditionally, in North America, classical Chinese is taught in English, which has been criticized by some scholars (Chou 1997: 57–64). Such criticism is accurate to a certain extent; however, we propose that to the non-major, non-native speakers of Chinese (type 3), classical Chinese should be taught mainly in Chinese, with some English. Thus, classical Chinese is treated as a language course. However, to non-native speakers of Chinese who choose Chinese as their

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1 For example, “荆國有餘地，而不足於民” versus “荆國地有餘，而於民不足”。

2 Such as in “宋何罪之有” and “不吾知也”。

major (type 4), we suggest that the class should be categorized as a content course, and thus the class should be taught mainly in English, with some Chinese, or at least a combination of the two. Students of this type should already have reached a high proficiency level in Chinese. They are or will be playing an important role in introducing and promoting Chinese culture in the West. Just as most Chinese translations of Shakespeare's dramas were done by native speakers of Chinese, the task of translating Chinese texts into English should largely fall on the shoulder of western scholars whose native language is English.

## 2 THE RELATION BETWEEN MODERN CHINESE AND CLASSICAL CHINESE AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE TO THE DESIGN OF TEACHING METHODS

The relationship between modern Chinese and classical Chinese is not as simple as that of a descendent and a predecessor. Instead, it is full of mismatches. The distinction between the written language and the vernacular form exists not only now but has been present throughout the history. As early as in the Pre-Qin era, there was the contrast between *yǎyán* (雅言) and *non-yǎyán* (非雅言). In Zhōu Déqīng's (周德清 1277–1365) *Zhōngyuán yīnyùn* (《中原音韻》), Zhōu differentiated *yuèfǔ yǔ* (樂府語)、*jīngshǐ yǔ* (經史語) from *sú yǔ* (俗語) and *shì yǔ* (市語)<sup>3</sup>.

However, what needs to be pointed out is that the written form of modern Chinese did not come directly from the written form of classical Chinese, and the vernacular form of modern Chinese did not develop directly from the vernacular classical Chinese either. (4) illustrates the complicated relation of the two languages.

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3 《中原音韻·作詞十法》：“造語，可作樂府語、經史語、天下通語，不可作俗語……市語、方語、書生語。”

(4)

**Classical  
Chinese**

**Written language** (*shūmiàn yǔ* 書面語): *Yáyán* (先秦雅言) of Pre-Qin period → *Tōngyǔ* (漢代通語) of Han → *Gǔwén* (唐宋古文) of Tang & Song Dynasties → *Tóngchéng gǔwén* (桐城古文) (**Classical Chinese written form**)

**Vernacular language** (*kǒuyǔ* 口語): Novels of Wei and Jin Dynasties (魏晉小說) → Anecdotes of Zen Buddhists in Tang and the Five Dynasties/the narrative literature from Dunhuang Caves (唐五代禪宗語錄 / 敦煌變文) → *Tōngyǔ* (宋元通語) of Yuan and Song Dynasties → *Guānhuà* (明清官話) of Ming and Qing Dynasties → *Guóyǔ/Pǔtōnghuà* (國語 / 普通話) (**Modern Chinese written form**)

The written form of classical Chinese ends at *Tóngchéng gǔwén* in the Qing dynasty, while its vernacular/oral form becomes the origin of modern Chinese's written form. With this clear route of development in our mind, the question of what to teach can be answered with confidence.

It is necessary and crucial to divide the learners of classical Chinese into major and non-major categories and design different teaching approaches according to the special needs of each category. Besides using difference in the classroom language, the students of the two categories should follow different learning processes with different teaching methods, and use different learning materials. To the non-major students, their learning of classical Chinese should follow the process of “discovery”, from genre to genre. Students can contrastively learn the common characteristics of each genre as well as comparing the differences between genres. (5) shows the sample categories of texts, ranging from historical proses to short essays, from memorial to the throning to poetry.

(5)

《左傳》節選	《報任安書》節選
《國語》節選	《過秦論》節選
《戰國策》節選	《晁錯論》節選
諸子散文節選	《前出師表》節選
《史記》節選	《後出師表》節選
《漢書》節選	《詩經》節選
漢賦節選	《楚辭》節選
六朝駢體文節選	古詩十九首
唐宋八大家散文節選	唐詩節選
桐城散文節選	宋詞節選
《諫逐客書》節選	元曲節選

The materials for major students should be arranged chronologically since their learning process should trace back to the origins of various linguistic forms and follow the evolution of the language. (6) illustrates sample texts that are arranged from novels written in the Qing Dynasty back in time to the *Book of Odes*, which is the earliest Chinese poetry anthology. In this backward arrangement, students encounter the language that is closer to the modern Chinese first and then in the earlier texts they can explore the steps of linguistic changes.

(6)

《老殘遊記》節選	《二拍》節選
《兒女英雄傳》節選	《三言》節選
《儒林外史》節選	《金瓶梅》節選
《紅樓夢》節選	《清平山堂話本》節選
《西遊記》節選	明清小品節選
《水滸傳》節選	宋元筆記節選
《三國演義》節選	唐宋傳奇節選

敦煌變文節選	《戰國策》節選
《五燈會元》節選	諸子散文節選
《祖堂集》節選	《國語》節選
《百喻經》節選	《左傳》節選
《世說新語》節選	《周易》節選
唐宋八大家散文節選	《尚書》節選
六朝駢體文節選	漢賦節選
《漢書》節選	《楚辭》節選
《史記》節選	《詩經》節選

### 3 THE DIFFERENCES AMONG THE LEARNERS OF CLASSICAL CHINESE AND THE TEACHING STRATEGIES

3.1 The question of “how to teach” becomes easier to answer once we have answered the question of “what to teach.” There are now two major approaches in the teaching of classical Chinese, one called the paraphrastic approach (*chuànjǎng fǎ* 串講法), the other the linguistic approach (*yǔyán jiégòu fēnxī fǎ* 語言結構分析法). Using the paraphrastic approach, the teacher explains the meaning of phrases and sentences of the classical Chinese texts by paraphrasing them in English or modern Chinese. Then phrase by phrase, sentence by sentence, students comprehend the meaning of the entire piece. The teacher does not analyze the grammar points in the texts while students themselves may do so after they comprehend the meaning of each phrase or sentence. In contrast, the linguistic approach emphasizes the importance of grammatical forms and functions. Following the linguistic approach, the teacher analyzes and teaches students to analyze the grammar in the texts. Often time, if there are no important grammar points in a sentence, then the teacher may skip this line, leaving it to the students, who might try to comprehend it after class. If all the learners of classical Chinese are treated the same, then it is hard to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the two approaches. And to decide which one is better is hard. The paraphrastic

approach focuses on the comprehension of the texts in context, helping the students to analyze the organization of the texts. In addition, it assists the students to discover the different characteristics of various texts. More importantly, with this approach, students can work through more texts in a shorter time. Confronted with numerous pages of precious literature heritage, the more one can learn, the more benefit one will enjoy. Compared to the paraphrastic approach, the linguistic approach is more time-consuming in that, besides the comprehension of the sentences, it also requires a student to analyze the grammar structures as well as the similarities and differences of the key words in the sentences. The advantage of this approach is that a student understands the relationship between words and phrases so that the exact meaning is reached on every level. Knowledge of language structure and the usage of the functional words will enable the learners to grasp the mechanism of the language, which will help them to understand similar but unlearned structures.

The choice between the two approaches will not become a dilemma if we divide the learners of classical Chinese into the four types as discussed in part 1 of this paper, because it is easy to identify which of the two approaches or their different combinations will address the special needs and characteristics of each type of learner.

**3.2** The paraphrastic approach would be a suitable teaching method for the teaching to non-major students whose native language is Chinese. These students tend to rely heavily on their first language-Chinese-as a media to understand the classical Chinese texts. Teachers could fully utilize this advantage so that readers could grasp the meaning of the content faster. Moreover, from the previous analysis in this paper, we recognized that, as non-major students, their learning materials would consist of typical works from each genre. To them, distinguishing the special features of the genre and the organization of the texts is more important than learning only the grammar. Also, as non-major students, they will not have

enough class-hours to be able to stop at every word. Therefore, the precious class time should be spent wisely on the words that have different meanings in the classical Chinese and in modern Chinese. The non-major students whose native language is not Chinese also face the same problem of limited time. Though the same teaching material and organization might be appropriate for both the native speakers and non-native speakers who are learning classical Chinese, we cannot deny that fact that these two types of students have drastically different proficiency in modern Chinese. If the same teaching approach is applied to both, then the latter will either be intimidated by the inaccessibility of the texts or will not feel a sense of satisfaction even after spending large amounts of time on them. However, if we incorporate a linguistic approach in teaching these students, especially in the beginning, then the result will be different. As second language learners, these students, while reading foreign texts, will benefit from some linguistic generalizations. Incorporating a linguistic approach into the teaching will help students to understand a general framework of the grammar, which enhances the students' ability to accept a paraphrase, and accelerates the speed of paraphrasing in the long run. Therefore, although in the beginning, it would appear that the class will have to spend more time analyzing the sentence structure, actually the loss of time can be easily made up later. When the students' comprehension ability has been improved and their sense of the language is more mature, the linguistic approach can gradually be reduced or even eliminated from the teaching.

**3.3** To students majoring in Chinese, classical Chinese grammar is essential. They have more time, both in and outside of classroom, to study classical Chinese, and they need an approach that is different from that of the non-major students. First, in order to incorporate the results from previous research done on the differences between the two languages into the teaching of classical Chinese to these students, we cannot rely only on the paraphrastic approach. Second, since their learning materials are arranged according to the development of the language, analysis of

the language should be done on each stage of development so that evolutionary trends can be understood. However, it is not the case that each sentence or each word in each text reflects the change of the language. Therefore, the paraphrastic approach is still needed occasionally in the teaching. Besides teaching the texts, some class-hours should be arranged to discuss topics concerning the change of important structures. As for non-native speakers with a Chinese major, the linguistic approach is still needed. Even though they have acquired high proficiency in modern Chinese, classical Chinese is still a “new” foreign language to them despite of its undeniable relation to modern Chinese. Expecting these students to be the media through which Chinese culture is introduced to the west, we must apply the same standards to them the same as to the native speaker learners. The criterion for a good translation is that it must be “trustworthy”, “exact”, and “elegant” (Yan 1986: 1321). A good translation comes from weighing each word and sentence. The semantic meaning, grammatical function, and part of speech of each word and phrase; the structure of each phrase, clause and sentence, should be the same in the target language as in the source language, if possible; otherwise, the meaning, style or flavor of the original text will be lost. It is hard to imagine that one can complete such a Herculean task without professional training on the specific job. Therefore, the linguistic approach should be carried out solidly.

In employing the linguistic approach, one must ponder the following questions: Which analysis mode or which terminology should be used in classroom? How much analysis is most desirable? How much linguistic terminology should be employed? Answers to these questions are not definite. Generally speaking, to the non-major students, theoretical grammar is unnecessary to learning. To these students, technical terminologies should be replaced by common words, and complicated grammar should be replaced by simplified rules, thus allowing students to learn and apply the knowledge more conveniently and easily. For example, when a teacher is introducing the putative usage of intransitive verbs and adjectives, if she/he tells the students only that the function

is called “putative usage”, then most of the students will certainly feel confused or frustrated because they lack the necessary training in linguistics to understand such vocabulary. On the other hand, if the teacher tells them that the function of the verbs/adjectives gives a verb/adjective X a meaning—“to regard ... as X”, then most of the students will already know how to understand such a function based on previous knowledge. At this time, it is not necessary to introduce the term “putative” to them, especially when the students are non-majors, to whom the term might serve only as an extra burden. Moreover, when a teacher is explaining the usage and function of “causative”, especially to students whose native language has a special marker or conjugation for “causative”, then the teacher should first start the explanation from similar cases of “causative” in the students’ native language. This approach will help them comprehend what “causative” means and how a language can realize this function. For example, when explaining *bái zhī* (白之) to the American students whose native language is English, the teacher could first give students a prompt statement that adjectives cannot directly take objects in English. For example, it is ungrammatical to say “to white the wall”. Usually, students will naturally reply that it is grammatical to say “to whiten the wall”. Then, the teacher could lead the students to understand the function of “-en” as a morphological device to fulfill the “causative” function. Although causative usage in classical Chinese is not exactly the same as “-en” in English, to those who are just starting to learn classical Chinese, an explanation from the perspective of their native language could help them to understand this abstract concept. Thus, the students will remember the rule better and be able to recognize the causative structure. Moreover, this teaching method helps the students to conquer their fear of learning classical Chinese at the beginning stage, enhancing their interest in learning. Gradually, students will find out that “causative” has a bigger domain of application than the words whose English counterparts can take “-en” suffix, while “to make ... to...” is a more generic interpretation of “causative” and, therefore, can be used in most contexts. If, in some cases, terminologies are indeed

necessary, teachers could add more examples illustrating the same grammatical points, especially short and interesting sentences/phrases. Whenever the students are facing the same structure/usage in the texts, the teacher could remind the students of the short sentences/phrases. After a few of times, students will link this abstract terminology and/or grammatical point to this concrete expression in their mind, and further store the terminology/grammar form of this sentence. It has been proven that human minds remember information that makes sense far better and longer than that which does not. In fact, memory may be seen as an inevitable, albeit imperfect, by-product of normal comprehension ( Craik and Lockhart, 1972). With this method, we have seen that whenever the students see *yān* (焉), they will recall sentences such as 昔吾夫死焉，今吾子又死焉 (In the past, my husband died of it, now my son again died of it). Thereafter, they will immediately have the English explanation of this sentence. At this moment, they will know the word “焉” is a fusion form that is a combination of two elements or morphemes, a preposition “於” and a pronoun “之” here. Of course, learning some theoretical grammar is more beneficial than burdensome, because students need to have the ability to do more than just understand some essays, and remember some structures and examples.

#### 4 A CASE STUDY

This section of the paper will compare how the paraphrastic approach and the linguistic approach are applied to the same text (here 《子產不毀鄉校》). Although we have divided the learners of classical Chinese into four types and argued in the previous sections how to apply the two approaches to the four types of students, we will here show only the real paraphrastic approach and the real linguistic approach. In practice, instructors have the freedom to combine and adjust the approaches according to a natural classroom situation, as long as they consistently adhere to the principle that the advantages of different methods are advantages only when they are applied to the right target.

Case Study: *Zǐchǎn bù huǐ xiāng xiào* 《子產不毀鄉校》

鄭人遊於鄉校，以論執政。然明謂子產曰：“毀鄉校何如？”子產曰：“何爲？夫人朝夕退而遊焉，以議執政之善否。其所善者，吾則行之；其所惡者，吾則改之。是吾師也。若之何毀之？我聞忠善以損怨，不聞作威以防怨。豈不遽止？然猶防川：大決所犯，傷人必多，吾不克救也。不如小決使道；不如吾聞而藥之也。

（摘自《左傳·襄公三十一年》）

#### 4.1 Paraphrastic Approach

The paraphrastic approach consists mainly of translating/explaining the text into a language that the students can understand easily. Such translation and explanation are meant to express the meaning completely, clearly, and coherently. They are not necessarily meant to match the original text precisely—word by word, phrase by phrase—in terms of part of speech or word order. The following is the English translation of the text by paraphrastic approach.

Zhèng people have a social at local schools, and thus discuss the administration of the policy. Ránmíng talks to Zǐchǎn, “how about destroy the local schools?” Zǐchǎn says, “why? Those people every day after work have a social there, and discuss the good points and bad points of the administration. If they like something, then we shall carry it out. If they dislike something, then we shall change it. These are our teachers. Why destroy them? I heard people reduce others’ resentment with loyalty and goodness, but I have not heard them prevent resentment by performing augustness. Of course, we can stop them immediately! But it is like guarding against big rivers. What a big burst brings will certainly hurt a lot of people. We will not be able to save it. It is better to have a small opening and let it flow; it is better that we hear the complaint and take a lesson from it.

## 4.2 Linguistic Approach

The form of translation done in the linguistic approach has different requirements. In translation, the structures used need to be the same as the structure in the source text, or at least comparable to it. Similarly, the choice of words needs to carefully consider the semantic meaning as well as the part of speech, transitivity, etc. Unfortunately, due to the difference between the target and the source language, it is very difficult and often impossible to reach the perfect match. Therefore, it is not surprising that sometimes such translation has to sacrifice the coherence and natural flow of the language to convey the structural correspondence. The following is an English translation of the text by linguistic approach. Please pay attention to its differences from the translation in section 4.1.

Zhèng people make friends at local schools, thereby to discuss the administrating of the policy. Ránmíng talks to Zǐchǎn, saying, “to destroy the local schools, how is it like?” Zǐchǎn says, “for what? Those people in the morning and at sunset come back from work and make friends at there, thereby to discuss whether the administrating of the government is good or bad. The thing which they regard as good, then we should carry it out; the thing that they regard as bad, then we shall change it. These are our teachers. Why destroy them? I heard (people) by being loyal and good reduce resentment; have not heard (people) by performing augustness prevent resentment. How can't it be immediately stopped? (However things) Being so, it is like guarding a big river: (as for) what a big burst attacks, hurting people will certainly be many, (and) we will not be able to save them. It is not as good as to (have) small burst letting (the water) be dredged; not as good as I hear them and regard them as medicine.

The underlined parts of the translation show the major differences of the linguistic approach from the paraphrastic approach. Notes from (a) through (j) are the explanation for the differences.

- a. *zhí zhèng* ( 執政 ) is verb-object structure. Even though the gerund form sounds unnatural in the translation, it reveals the original structural relation in the source text;
- b. *XX hé rú* (... 何如 ) is a form to inquire the other party's opinion. It is appropriate to translate this form as "how (about)...". Yet, in order to match the exact word order of the source text, in the linguistic approach, "how" is put after the verb phrase.
- c. *hé wèi* ( 何爲 ) has an inverted word order in that the object *hé* ( 何 ) is before the preposition *wèi* ( 爲 ). "Why" is enough to express the semantic meaning of this structure, but if the translation needs to be faithful to the systematic grammar of classical Chinese, then "for what?" is better, since "for what" follows the "one word for one word", and keep the same part of speech. Also, students will be able to notice that the word order is reversed, and consequently get a better idea an important phenomenon---irregular word order in classical Chinese. The teachers could use this opportunity to introduce the rule that only when a "wh-word" is the object, then the word order of a verb/preposition-object structure is reversed.
- d. *zhí zhèng zhī shàn fǒu* ( 執政之善否 ) equals *zhí zhèng de hǎo yǔ bù hǎo?* ( 執政的好與不好 ? )<sup>4</sup>. It is an embedded clause in the whole sentence rather than a phrase. To those whose native language is Chinese, we can paraphrase the sentence in modern Chinese, and certainly the students will understand it, because it is still almost word for word, and students can figure out the correspondence right away thanks to the similar function of the *de* ( 的 ) structure in the modern Chinese. Yet to those whose native language is English, it is better to clarify the difference between the possessive *zhī* ( 之 ) and the *zhī* ( 之 ) that marks such an embedded clause. Although in some sentences either of the meanings is acceptable, in other sentences, especially in longer expressions, only the latter is grammatical. So, using the linguistic approach,

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4 We are treating *zhí zhèng* ( 執政 ) here as a complex nominal subject.

we translate it to “whether + embedded clause”.

- e. *qí suǒ shàn zhě* (其所善者) is immediately followed by a *zé... (則 ...)* structure. In English they form an “if...then” pair. However, *qí suǒ shàn zhě* is a NP, which cannot be the clause introduced by “if” in English. So in the paraphrastic translation, we change it to “they like something” (*qí shàn... 其善 ...*). In the second translation, we can not afford to leave some of the words in this expression untranslated, because the students need to have a consistent view of the *suǒ...zhě* (所 ... 者) structure, which is so important that all the students majoring in Chinese must know its nature as a NP.
- f. *zhōng* (忠) and *shàn* (善) are both adjectives, and the phrase in the texts is the same as *yǐ zhōng shàn sǔn yuàn* (以忠善損怨). The first translation changes the part of speech of these two words to nouns, which is required in English as the object of a preposition. The second translation tries to keep the part of the speech in accordance with the source text.
- g. *qǐ* (豈) is used in rhetorical sentences, and *qǐ bù* (豈不) is comparable to a double negation. The students whose native language is not Chinese often have a hard time understanding double negation at first. So in the first translation, we just need to treat the two words together as strong affirmative. In the second translation, “how” plus negation seems to be awkward but it keeps the form of a rhetorical sentence and the negation.
- h. *rán* (然) usually imply an adversative relationship, which in English is often expressed by “but” or “however”. Yet, *rán* (然) does not mean “but” or equal to “but”. By checking all of the meanings of *rán* (然) in standard classical Chinese, we can find that one of *rán* (然)’s meaning-“it is so”-gives the rise to its function as usually introducing a compound sentence, in which two clauses are in adversative relationship. For instance, in writing an argument, people usually would say “(even though) it is so, (but still)...”. Gradually this expression has become fossilized. In the second translation, “it is so” is still used to translate *rán* (然), because this piece of text is composed in standard

classical Chinese.

- i. *dà jué suǒ fàn, shāng rén bì duō* (大決所犯，傷人必多) has a complicated structure. *dà jué suǒ fàn* is the topic of the sentence, while *shāng rén bì duō* is a comment. In *shāng rén bì duō, shāng rén*---a verb object structure is the topic, and *bì duō* is a comment. In English, we would never find a sentence using such a structure. So in the first translation, we have to treat the sentence as if it was *dà jué suǒ fàn, bì shāng duō rén* (大決所犯，必傷多人), making the verb *shāng* (傷) the main verb of the sentence, the *rén* (人) the object of the whole sentence and the *duō* (多) the modifier of *rén* (人). In the second translation, “*as for*” changes *dà jué suǒ fàn* (大決所犯) to a topic. Although, “*hurting people*” does not match the predicate “*is many*”, we still formally make it so.
- j. In *yào zhī* (藥之), the verb is in its putative usage. In the second translation, we choose the generic form “to regard ...as...”. However, *yào zhī* (藥之) here is also metaphorical. Metaphor is specific in each language and in each culture. In other words, if one word has a metaphorical meaning in one language, it is not guaranteed that the word’s counterpart in another language would have the same metaphorical meaning. So, word for word translation of such words will often end up failing to convey the right meaning. Thus, in the first translation, we choose another expression which has a similar metaphorical meaning to *yào* (藥) in Chinese.

The comparison above outlines the major differences between the two approaches. The linguistic approach aims at revealing the structures and grammar of classical Chinese, and English translation is not much more than a medium through which the learners can observe the structures and grammar. In contrast, the paraphrastic approach emphasizes the accessibility of meaning and flow of ideas. This paper, rather than trying to decide which one is better, intends to show the advantages and the application of these advantages in the teaching classical Chinese to learners of different types.

## 5 SOME OTHER ISSUES

Besides the division of learners, the classroom language, the learning process, the selection and arrangement of the teaching materials, and the teaching strategies, determining the pronunciation of certain characters is also a controversial issue in teaching classical Chinese. Should the 葉 in 葉公好龍 be read as [yè]<sup>5</sup> or [shè]? Should the 車 in 閉門造車 be read as [chē] or [jū]? Should the 臭 in 遺臭萬年 be read as [chòu] or [xiù]? Is the 艾 in 自怨自艾 [yì] or [ài]? Should the 危 in 危在旦夕 and the 期 in 期期艾艾 be read as first tone or second tone? If the tone of 示 in 告示 is a neutral tone, then how about the 示 in 安民告示? All of these questions here are issues related to standardization of language usage. There are also other problems such as tone sandhi and different pronunciations of the same characters. Ironically, these problems have never received any serious attention. In our teaching practice, we have tried to standardize the pronunciations of characters in classical Chinese texts according to some basic principles. Here we would like to introduce these principles.

First, there are characters that have multiple pronunciations. Characters having multiple pronunciations usually refer to those characters that have multiple meanings, each of which has its own pronunciation. But the so-called multiple meanings of these characters in Chinese are of two types: (1) these meanings are different lexically. For example 好, when read as [hǎo], is an adjective, and means the antonym of *huài* (壞); when read as [hào], is a verb, meaning “to like”. Likewise, 中, when read as [zhōng], is an adjective, meaning “the center” or “in the middle”; when read as [zhòng], it is a verb, meaning “fit exactly, hit”. (2) specific pronunciation is used for only one specific usage. For example, all the meanings of 葉 should be read as [yè] except for when 葉 is in 葉公好龍-read as [shè]. Another example is 車 whose modern pronunciation is [chē], but whose ancient pronunciation [jū] is kept only in Chinese chess. Our suggestion for this issue is

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5 The forms in the square brackets are Pinyin forms.

that characters of type (1) be read according to their meaning in the context. Thus, the 好 in 好大喜功 should be read as [hào]; the 中 in 中流砥柱 should be read as [zhōng]; and the 中 in 百發百中 should be read as [zhòng]. If the character of type (1) is pronounced incorrectly, then listeners will get the wrong meaning. As for characters of type (2), we propose that the ancient pronunciation for only a specific usage should be abandoned, and in all cases the character should be using its modern pronunciation according to the rule of sound change. So 葉 in 葉公好龍 should be read as [yè]; while 車 in 閉門造車 should be read as [chē]. 葉 is an ancient name for a place. Therefore, the meaning of this character will not be changed regardless of whether it is read as [yè] or [shè]. The same is true for 車. Whether 車 is read as [chē] or [jū] will not change the meaning of 車 in 閉門造車. From the argument above, we conclude that “whether or not the pronunciation distinguishes the meaning of the same character” is the principle in deciding which pronunciation should be chosen in certain words if the character has more than one pronunciation. According to this principle, 臭 in 遺臭萬年 should be read as [chòu] instead of [xiù], while 艾 in 期期艾艾 should be read as [yì], rather than [ài].

The multiple pronunciations of a single character are sometimes due to historical reasons, and in other instances are geographical variants. 危 in 危在旦夕 and 期 in 期期艾艾, are both read as the second tone in Tái wān Guó yǔ (臺灣國語), but are read as the first tone in Běi jīng Pǔ tōng huà (北京普通話). Which pronunciation is correct? The problem has nothing to do with correctness. The difference in tone comes from the criteria that each side of the strait takes. The second tone of these characters in Tái wān Guó yǔ is chosen according to the rule of historical sound change, which predicts even tone characters with a voiced consonant onset change to second tone in Mandarin. Běi jīng Pǔ tōng huà's choice of the first tone for these characters is based on the ground of synchronic standard (most native Běi jīng people read these characters in first tone). As for these characters' pronunciation, our point of view is that both of them are acceptable as long as the teacher tells the students that the second tone reading is Tái wān Guó yǔ,

and the first tone reading is Běijīng Pǔtōnghuà.

Finally, we would like to discuss sandhi, concentrating mainly on neutral tone sandhi. Neutral tone reading, which is discussed frequently by scholars, is very common in Putonghua, but neutral tone in classical Chinese, as mainly kept in idioms, receives little attention till today. What are the differences and similarities between the neutral tones in classical Chinese and that in modern Chinese? Generally speaking, all of the structural particles, such as *de* ( 的 ), *de* ( 地 ), *de* ( 得 ), *le* ( 了 ), *zhe* ( 看 ), and *ne* ( 呢 ) are read in neutral tone in modern Chinese. Nonetheless, these particles might not all be read as neutral tone in classical Chinese. For example, the *zhi* ( 之 ) in *tiān rǎng zhī bié* ( 天壤之別 ), *yì qiū zhī hé* ( 一丘之貉 ), *bú yì zhī lùn* ( 不易之論 ) cannot be read in neutral tone even though it is a particle in all of the idioms. The neutral tone in Chinese is also controlled by rhythm. The *zhī* ( 之 ) in *tiān zhī jiāo zǐ* ( 天之驕子 ) could be read in neutral tone, while the *zhī* ( 之 ) in *yì qiū zhī hé* ( 一丘之貉 ) should not.

In sum, the above has been an attempt to convey some of our opinions on teaching classical Chinese. The ideas presented here are far from being able to solve all of the practical problems faced by instructors in the classroom, yet we hope that these thoughts/opinions will provoke further discussions on this topic, which might eventually lead us to agree on the major issues in teaching methodologies.

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## 對外文言文教學策略平議

### 摘要

根據作者在海內外執教的多年經驗，本文着重探討文言文教學對象的分類、性質及相應的講授策略等問題，以冀對文言文教學的基本問題獲得一些共識。文言文教學對象因語種和專業不同而應分為兩大類、四小類：（一）母語為中文的非專業學生，（二）母語為中文的專業學生，（三）母語為非中文的非專業學生，（四）母語為非中文的專業學生。不同類別的學生，其教學語言、學習程式、教學方法、教材編排均應有所不同。專業學生與非專業學生在海外的教學除了使用的語言不同，其學習程序、教學方法、教材編撰等都有異。前者是發生學程序，依年代順序施教。後者注重文體差異，適合用對比法施教；前者教材編撰以語言結構上的追流溯源為主，後者教材編撰以文體分類為主。至於講授方法，專業學生以語言結構分析法為主，非專業學生以串講法為主。本文以《左傳·子產不毀鄉校》為例，通過例證分析來驗證上述看法。最後，我們還討論了與文言文教學相關的異音、變調、輕聲等問題，提出了相應的處理原則。

**關鍵詞：**文言文、教學對象分類、講授策略、發生學程序、語言結構分析法、串講法