



JIA XU

Columbia University

Presentation Title: Teaching strategies for supporting intermediate Chinese heritage learners

Short Bio:

Before Jia Xu joined the Columbia faculty in 2012, she had taught all levels of Chinese at BLCU. She served as program coordinator and language instructor in the foreign diplomats program of the Confucius Institute and Columbia University's Summer Program in Beijing. She also set up and taught in the Chinese program at Bentley School in California. She has either authored or co-authored the Chinese Textbook for Foreign Diplomats, the Great Wall Chinese series, Medical Chinese books, and all levels of the new HSK and YCT. Jia Xu currently teaches first-year and second-year Chinese in EALAC.

Abstract:

The presentation details an investigation into Chinese heritage learners' characteristics and an analysis of teaching strategies for supporting intermediate Chinese heritage students at Columbia University. Research was conducted using questionnaires, one-on-one interviews, and in-class observations.

Part One of the presentation explores the background of and the rationale for pursuing this topic. Part Two presents comparative statistics from survey respondents, analyzes language backgrounds and learning motivation and characteristics from a macroscopic perspective, and compares and analyzes their differences. Part Three compares the characteristics between Chinese heritage learners and non-heritage learners, then classifies the learning advantages and disadvantages for Chinese heritage learners in four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Part Four summarizes the teaching methods which were effective with intermediate Chinese heritage students based upon their surveys, class evaluations, one-on-one interviews and test scores with both students and teachers. Part Five suggests some practical strategies for teaching heritage learners and shows examples of students' homework, dictations, essays, oral reports, class activities, and other projects. Part Six summarizes areas which must be clarified and focused upon in teaching intermediate Chinese heritage learners as well as reflections on this topic for future research, for compiling case studies to form a theoretical basis for teachers of Chinese language programs, and for providing a reference for Chinese teacher training.



CHENYU LIU

TCSOL Certificate Program (2016), Teachers College
Online Chinese Tutor

Presentation Title: A case study of Chinese heritage learners

Short Bio:

Chenyu Liu is a graduate of the 2016 TCSOL program at Teachers College, Columbia University. As a former Chinese teacher at the CIS (Columbia in Shanghai) program at Shanghai Jiaotong University, she developed proficiency in teaching Business Chinese for advanced level students. Now working as a Chinese teacher for after-school Chinese programs and as an online Chinese teacher, she currently devotes her time providing quality Chinese language training for students.

Abstract:

During my presentation, I will first identify the various challenges heritage learners meet, accompanied by recommending relevant learning materials.

First, compared with non-heritage learners, most young heritage learners may suffer psychological conflicts between parents' expectations and prevalent English-speaking culture. On one side, they do not feel close to China or Chinese culture compared to their parents, while their parents impart high expectations of them to learn Chinese and assimilate into the Chinese culture. On the other side, while living in the western culture, heritage speakers tend to find little value in learning the language that is unrelated to the mainstream cultural around them. So they are sandwiched between the parental expectations and environmental influence. To help them raise their interest in Chinese culture, one may choose to participate in programs such as summer/winter camp in China, visit a Chinese-speaking country, interact with Chinese local students, etc. Such endeavors to encourage learning for these heritage learners is an essential task for both Chinese teachers and parents.

In comparison, the situations of adult heritage learners are more diverse. Comparing to young learners, many adults willingly choose to learn Chinese due to a specific need. Some tend to choose learning because of work requirements or personal relationships. For example, adult learners may choose to familiarize with Chinese language/culture as a business strategy to win more Chinese customers. In personal relationships, learners may win 'points' in many social situations revolving around people of Chinese-speaking descent.

Choosing suitable teaching material is very crucial for successfully teaching to heritage learners. According to various educational data and experience, books written by educators born and raised in China but who has lived in a western country/culture for at least 5 years (such as the USA) are able to create more of an impact.



KAYLEE FERNANDEZ

Teachers College, Columbia University

Presentation Title: Repeated-reading-based instructional strategy with heritage and second language learners: A partial replication of Han and Chen (2010)

Short Bio:

Kaylee Fernandez began her Ed.M. in Applied Linguistics at Teachers College, Columbia University in 2016 and is currently an Ed.D. student in Applied Linguistics (Second Language Acquisition Track). She graduated from the University of Florida with a B.A. in Spanish and minors in English and Education. She also holds an M.A. in Teaching Spanish and English as Foreign Languages from the University of Seville, Spain. For her Master's thesis, Kaylee compared heritage speakers' and second language learners' acquisition of the subjunctive mood in Spanish. Prior to coming to TC, she taught EFL classes in Spain for four years. Her research interests include instructed second language acquisition, Task-Based Language Teaching, bi/multilingualism, and heritage language acquisition.

Abstract:

Repeated reading is an instructional strategy which aims to improve readers' fluency and comprehension through the repeated reading of a given text. While the strategy was originally designed with first language (L1) readers in mind, more recently it has been employed and researched in the context of second language (L2) acquisition. While studies investigating repeated reading in L2 rather than L1 acquisition are limited, studies examining the potential benefits of using this instructional strategy with heritage speakers, a particular subset of L2 learners, are even more limited.

"Repeated-reading-based instructional strategy: A partial replication of Han and Chen" (2010) investigated vocabulary gains in a heritage speaker and adult second language learner of Spanish after implementing repeated reading-based pedagogical procedures that closely followed those employed in Han and Chen's (2010) case study of a heritage speaker of Mandarin Chinese. Five sessions of audio-assisted repeated reading – a particular form of assisted repeated reading involving phonological support – were administered to each participant over three weeks. Results indicated both intentional and incidental vocabulary gains, supporting Han and Chen's (2010) findings.



YUAN-YUAN MENG

Columbia University

Presentation Title: Literacy in Chinese – The case of the heritage language learners

Short Bio:

Yuan-Yuan Meng is a senior lecturer in Chinese at Columbia University's Chinese Language Program. She is also a certified tester of the Chinese Oral Proficiency Interview with the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). Her research interests include formulaic language, second language reading, second language writing, second language vocabulary development, and stylistic features of Chinese journalistic language.

Abstract:

Chinese heritage language (CHL) learners come in all shapes and sizes. They show great diversity in at least four aspects: early-life experiences with the Chinese language (exposure to print, for example); proficiency in standard spoken Mandarin; familiarity with the Chinese writing system; and emotional connection to their ancestral language. Their literacy skills also run along a continuum from complete illiteracy to high proficiency. Using Columbia University's Chinese Language Program as an example, this presentation first defines "CHL learners" and shows how the program addresses the literacy needs of these students. Next, it presents the findings of several interviews with experienced Chinese language teachers who have worked with CHL learners at the college level. These interviews specifically focus on the instructional approaches these teachers use with such learners, and the challenges involved. Finally, the presentation concludes with insights from research on Chinese literacy instruction to CHL learners.