Toward a Pedagogy of Conventional Expressions in Chinese Culture

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

Jia Yang, M.A.

Graduate Program in East Asian Languages and Literatures

The Ohio State University

2014

Dissertation Committee:

Professor Galal Walker, Advisor
Professor Marjorie K. M. Chan
Professor Charles Quinn
Abstract

Conventional expressions refer to any expression with a stable form that is commonly repeated in the routinized social interactions of a given culture. Expressions, such as “how are you?” “Nice to meet you,” are examples of such repetitions in the context of “greetings” in American culture. Conventional expressions are easily recognizable to members of a given culture so that no special efforts are needed to interpret desired meanings. They are culture specific and are often utilized to help newcomers (or novices) and language learners to be socialized in the interactions of a particular culture.

Considering the importance of conventional expressions in language learning, this dissertation reports on a written-discourse-completion production test and a multiple-choice recognition test that were conducted to investigate the development of American learners’ recognition and production of conventional expressions in typical social routines in Chinese culture, such as greetings, refusals, apologies and displays of gratitude. Results show that the length of exposure to the target language environment enables students to recognize more conventional expressions, but it does not ensure the students’ abilities to produce these expressions. Students’ successful production of the target forms are more likely to be related to their uses of different study strategies. In the data, high-performing students use the strategy of “making a mental picture of a situation
in which the expression is used” and the strategy of “connecting a new expression to an image or picture associated with the expression” more frequently than low performing students do. The adoption of these deep mental processing strategies enable high performing students to store and retrieve useful expressions better, and hence they are more likely to successfully produce and recognize conventional expressions. The obtained results suggest three developmental stages for students’ ability to produce conventional expressions: recognizing the expression in context, distinguishing the communicative intention conveyed by a set of related expressions, and producing the expression automatically in typical contexts that evoke the target expression.

This dissertation brings the CFL field’s attention to the fact that even in ordinary talk, contemporary Chinese will often display their personal versatility and ingenuity by using a number of expressions drawn from the cultural tradition. Consequently, a foreigner’s ability to understand and use conventional expressions is often considered by Chinese speakers to be an important indicator of acculturation and high-language proficiency. Training of students to recognize, to understand, and then to automatically use these expressions in typical social situations in Chinese culture can enable students to be effective communicators in Chinese, and thus shorten their time to achieving higher level of proficiency. Empirical studies from this dissertation also show that the training should not only provide ample opportunities of practice for students to perform the target
expressions in context, but also provide the coaching of effective strategies for students to notice, to interpret and then to remember these expressions.
Dedicated to my parents
Acknowledgments

I am most grateful to the members of my dissertation committee for their advice and support during this course of study: Dr. Galal Walker, Dr. Marjorie K. M. Chan, and Dr. Charles Quinn. As my advisor, Dr. Walker inspired my research and provided me valuable suggestions on my academic and professional career development. His superior teaching techniques allow me to grasp complex information by performing exercises that are fun and practical. His academic guidance, intellectual support and constant encouragement enable me to become a competent researcher and educator in the field of Chinese language pedagogy.

I am also grateful to Dr. Marjorie Chan for her training of my research skills in linguistics, and her guidance on how to be a good researcher in academia. Her constant encouragement and support motivate me to finish this dissertation. I also want to express my appreciation to Professor Charles Quinn. His careful reading and critical comments were invaluable to my dissertation.

My gratitude also goes to Professor Mari Noda, Dr. Eric Shepherd and Mr. Steve Knicely, who gave me much latitude in exploring multiple ways of teaching and learning, and inspired me to integrate the two. I would also like to thank Debbie Knicely for her kind assistance and tremendous support throughout my dissertation writing.

Special thanks must be given to my classmates and friends who shared with me their ideas on this topic and helped me tremendously with editing. Last, but not the least, I would like to thank my parents. Their love and encouragement granted me much strength and motivation in the past years.
Vita

May, 1980…………..Born - Kunming, P. R. of China

1998-2002…………..B.A. Department of Chinese Languages and Literatures,

        Peking University, Beijing, P. R. of China

2002-2005…………..M.A., Department of Chinese Languages and Literatures,

        Tsinghua University, Beijing, P. R. of China

2005-2007…………..M.A., Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures

        The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

Publications

1. Jia Yang, 2010. Memory and the design of Chinese class activities. Chinese Your Way-


2. Jia Yang, 2008. How to say 'No' in Chinese: a pragmatic study of refusal strategies in

        five TV series. In M. Chan & H. Kang (eds.) Proceedings of The 20th North American
        Conference of Chinese Linguistics (NACCL-20) 2008, Columbus, Ohio, 1041-1058.


        algorithms. Proceedings of International Conference on Chinese Computing 2005,
        Singapore 2005, 74-81.


        University, 12: 604-607.


        Chinese Academic Forum, 12: 12-20.
Fields of Study

Major Field: East Asian Languages and Literatures

Minor Field: Chinese Linguistics
Table of Contents

ABSTRACT ........................................................................................................................ II
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ................................................................................................ VI
VITA ................................................................................................................................ VII
TABLE OF CONTENTS .................................................................................................. IX
LIST OF TABLES ......................................................................................................... XIII
LIST OF FIGURES ....................................................................................................... XVI
CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION .................................................................................. 1
  1.1 DEFINING CONVENTIONAL EXPRESSIONS ............................................................ 1
    1. 1. 1 Conventional expression as a subset of multiword units............................. 3
    1. 1. 2 Conventional expression as a sociocultural phenomenon.......................... 4
    1. 1. 3 Conventional expression as pragmatic resources ........................................ 7
    1. 1. 4 The operational definition of conventional expression ............................... 9
  1.2 THE PURPOSE OF THE DISSERTATION ................................................................. 10
  1.3 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY .................................................................... 11
CHAPTER TWO THE ROLE OF CONVENTIONAL EXPRESSIONS IN
FOREIGN/SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING ........................................................... 14
  2.1 THE IMPORTANCE OF CONVENTIONAL EXPRESSIONS IN SECOND/FOREIGN LANGUAGE
LEARNING ....................................................................................................................... 14
    2.1.1 Facilitating language comprehension ......................................................... 14
    2.1.2 Promoting language production ................................................................. 19
5.2.2 The presentation of conventional expressions ................................................ 169
5.2.3 Instructional activities for conventional expressions................................. 179
5.3 The pedagogical treatment in advanced Chinese textbooks ....................... 181
  5.3.1 Selection of conventional expressions at advanced level......................... 181
  5.3.2 Presentation of conventional expressions at advanced level..................... 189
  5.3.3 Instructional activities for conventional expressions at advanced level..... 194
5.4 Discussions of the findings ............................................................................. 198

CHAPTER SIX TOWARD A PEDAGOGY OF CONVENTIONAL EXPRESSIONS 203
6.1 The selection of conventional expressions for instruction ......................... 203
6.2 The instruction of conventional expression: a multilayer approach.............. 209
  6.2.1 Viewing conventional expression as a routinized cultural performance ...... 209
  6.2.2 Presenting conventional expressions performances through blended media 212
  6.2.3 Developing competence through multilayer performances....................... 216
  6.2.4 Examples of pedagogical solutions to supplement current textbooks........ 222
6.3 Limitations and directions for future research ............................................. 233
6.4 Conclusion ........................................................................................................ 236

REFERENCES ........................................................................................................ 238

APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE TO IDENTIFY USEFUL EXPRESSIONS FOR STUDENTS IN THE STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM ................................................. 250
APPENDIX B: WEB-BASED SURVEY TO TEST NATIVE SPEAKERS’ AGREEMENT ON THE CREATED SCENARIOS ................................................................. 252
APPENDIX C: PRODUCTION TEST ....................................................................... 255
APPENDIX D. RECOGNITION TEST ..................................................................... 260
APPENDIX E. STUDY STRATEGY QUESTIONNAIRE ........................................... 264
List of Tables

Table 3.1 Target expressions selected from the results reported by students in the study abroad program ................................................................................................................. 61

Table 3.2 Target expressions selected from the textbooks ........................................... 62

Table 3.3 The percentage of the use of the target expressions by native speakers........ 65

Table 3.4 Summary of learners’ background information............................................. 77

Table 4.1 The percentage of successful production of the target expression in each scenario ......................................................................................................................... 82

Table 4.2 Tests of model effects from logistic regression for production test ............... 85

Table 4.3 Estimated marginal means from logistic regression for production ............. 87

Table 4.4 Tests of model effects from logistic regression for production: Non-Heritage learners.................................................................................................................. 88

Table 4.5 Estimated marginal means from logistic regression for production: Non-Heritage Students ........................................................................................................ 89

Table 4.6 Tests of model effects from logistic regression for production: Heritage Students ...................................................................................................................... 90

Table 4.7 Estimated marginal means from logistic regression for production: Heritage Students ................................................................................................................ 91

Table 4.8 Percentage of successful recognition of the target expression in each tested scenario ........................................................................................................................ 103

Table 4.9 Tests of model effects from logistic regression for recognition ................. 105

Table 4.10 Estimated marginal means for recognition from logistic regression ......... 106

Table 4.11 Tests of model effects from logistic regression for recognition: Non-Heritage Students ........................................................................................................... 107
Table 4. 12 Estimated marginal means from logistic regression for recognition: Non-Heritage Students ................................................................. 108

Table 4. 13 Tests of model effects from logistic regression for recognition: Heritage Students ................................................................................ 109

Table 4. 14 Estimated marginal means from logistic regression for recognition: Heritage Students ................................................................................ 111

Table 4. 15 The Fisher’s exact test results for production and recognition in each item 121

Table 4. 16 Descriptive statistics of strategies used by participants ....................... 130

Table 4. 17 Descriptive statistics of social strategies used by participants ............... 131

Table 4. 18 Descriptive statistics of metacognitive strategies used by participants ...... 132

Table 4. 19 Descriptive statistics of strategies for mental processing used by participants .................................................................................. 133

Table 4. 20 Descriptive statistics of Strategies for missing knowledge used by participants .................................................................................. 134

Table 4. 21 Descriptive statistics of strategies for remembering effectively used by participants ........................................................................ 135

Table 4. 22 The use of strategies for remembering effectively by low performing students and high achievers ................................................................. 139

Table 4. 23 The use of strategies for mental processing by low performing students and high achievers ........................................................................ 142

Table 4. 24 The use of strategies for missing knowledge by low performing students and high achievers ........................................................................ 144

Table 4. 25 The use of metacognitive strategies by low performing students and high achievers ........................................................................ 145

Table 4. 26 The use of social strategies by low performing students and high achievers ........................................................................ 147

Table 5. 1 Number of conventional expressions selected in beginning textbooks........ 160

Table 5. 2 Common conventional expressions selected in beginning textbooks .......... 163
Table 5. 3 The instructional activities for conventional expressions in beginning textbooks

Table 5. 4 Number of conventional expressions selected in advanced textbook

Table 5. 5 Examples of conventional expressions necessary for advanced students to learn
List of Figures

Figure 3.1 A screen capture of the survey page ............................................................... 64

Figure 4.1 Mean of production for students from different background in each item ....96

Figure 4.2 Mean of production for students from different backgrounds in home/campus setting ............................................................................................................. 99

Figure 4.3 Mean of production for students from different backgrounds in workplace setting ............................................................................................................. 100

Figure 4.4 Mean of production for students from different backgrounds in the setting of service encounters ............................................................................................................. 101

Figure 4.5 Mean of recognition by length of stay in different settings: non-heritage students .................................................................................................................... 113

Figure 4.6 Mean of recognition in home/campus setting by learners with different language backgrounds ............................................................................................................. 115

Figure 4.7 Mean of recognition in workplace setting by learners with different language backgrounds ............................................................................................................. 116

Figure 4.8 Mean of recognition in service encounters by learners with different language backgrounds ............................................................................................................. 118

Figure 4.9 Mean of production and recognition in each item ........................................ 119

Figure 5.1 The distribution of conventional expressions in different settings: Beginning Textbook .................................................................................................................... 166

Figure 5.2 A dialog extracted from NPC (Lesson Two, Dialog Three) ........................ 171

Figure 6.1 Priority zone for conventional expressions targeting in instruction ........... 207

Figure 6.2 Multilayer approach to develop competency in using conventional expressions .................................................................................................................... 219
Figure 6.3 The realization of spoken drills in VoiceThread........................................225
Chapter One Introduction

1.1 Defining conventional expressions

Recent work on second language acquisition has demonstrated a noticeable increase in the interest in a specific type of multiword units commonly referred to as formulaic language, or prefabricated units, etc. A number of researchers have agreed that this type of multiword units plays a central role in language acquisition and can be seen as fundamental to the creative use of language (Ellis 1996; Pawley & Syder 1983; Schmitt 2008; Wray 2001). According to them, a large portion of the language we use every day is composed of reoccurring word strings, including sequences that serve certain communicative functions in daily social interaction (e.g., How are you?) and sequences that are used to organize discourse (e.g., on the other hand). Such expressions sound natural to the native ear as opposed to countless (often novel) paraphrases that ring stiff.

A number of scholars working in corpus linguistics have estimated the percentage of these multi-word units in language. Their results suggest that at least one-third to one-half of language is composed of recurrent patterns (Howarth 1998a; Erman and Warren 2000; Foster 2001), although the percentage is affected by both register and communicative mode (Biber et al. 1999, 2004). Based on a representative sample, Erman and Warren (2000) report that recurrent patterns of various types constitute 58.6% of spoken English discourse and 52.3% of written discourse. Biber et al. (1999) cite that 3- and 4-word lexical bundles make up 28% of conversation and 20% of academic prose.
Howarth (1998a) states that 31-40% of the 238,000 words of academic writing that he/she examined was made up of collocations and idioms.

Although the phenomenon of recurrent patterns of language has been well recognized, researchers differ in what they consider a “recurrent pattern” and hence there is no single definition for this phenomenon. A wide range of terms are used in the existing literature to designate these recurrent multiword units:

- formulaic language,
- frozen phrases,
- ready-made expressions,
- routine formulae,
- lexical phrases,
- fixed expressions,
- formulaic speech,
- amalgams,
- recurring utterances,
- chunks,
- composites,
- conventionalized forms,
- multiword units,
- stock utterances,
- formulas,
- etc.

The term that researchers use with the most frequency, “formulaic language,” was proposed by one of the field’s authoritative figures, Alison Wray. According to her, a formulaic sequence is “a sequence, continuous or discontinuous, of words or other elements, which is, or appears to be, prefabricated: that is, stored and retrieved whole from memory at the time of use, rather than being subject to generation or analysis by the language grammar (Wray 2001: 9).” Wray’s definition covers all the word strings that will be processed as holistic units by any given language user. It also allows for the likelihood that particular word strings that are formulaic to one individual may not be for another. Moreover, this definition is as inclusive as possible, including not only lexical phrases such as idioms, proverbs, collocations, social-routine formulas (e.g., how are you?), genre-typical clichés or terminologies (e.g., economic crisis) and discourse organizers (e.g., on the other hand), but also poetry, rhythms, classicisms or any other memorized texts.
1.1.1 Conventional expression as a subset of multiword units

However, some researchers have suggested that the holistic processing of formulaic language is a hypothesis that remains to be tested (Conklin & Schmitt, 2008; Ellis et al., 2008; Underwood et al., 2004). Some empirical studies also show that even among native speakers, at least some of the meaning of the individual items/word units is retained in figurative expressions (Spöttl and McCarthy, 2004). Given this consideration, Bardovi-Harlig (2009, 2011) highlights the division between two phenomena: (1) use of formulas as an acquisition process and (2) strings that belong to a target language and are tied to certain communicative functions in that language. She defines the latter as conventional expressions, which refer to “any sequences with a stable form that are used frequently by speakers in certain prescribed social situations” (Bardovi-Harlig, 2009: 757). She clarifies that this definition makes “no presuppositions about the eventual mental representation of these sequences for either native speakers or learners (Bardovi-Harlig, 2009: 757).” According to her definition, conventional expression can be seen as a subset of multiword units. It mainly focuses on multiword units which are closely tied to certain communicative functions in the target language. These sequences are considered formulaic since they are often in a stable form. Meanwhile, those sequences are considered conventional since they are frequently used by native speakers in certain social situations to serve a particular communicative function. For example, the expression “keep in touch” is often used in leave-taking situations to express the speaker’s intention of maintaining a relationship with the listener. The expression “I am just looking” is often used while shopping in public to decline the assistance of a
salesperson. According to Bardovi-Harlig’s (2009, 2011) definition of conventional expressions, collocations, terminologies or any other lexical phrases which are not closely tied to a particular communicative function are not considered conventional expressions.

1. 1. 2 Conventional expression as a sociocultural phenomenon

Based on Bardovi-Harlig’s definition (2009, 2011), conventional expressions are used as fixed or conventional ways of realizing certain communicative activities in a given community or culture, generally without referencing to the mental processes behind the word sequence. In this sense, the stable form of these sequences represents a sort of social agreement, whereby certain communicative intentions are accomplished through certain linguistic means. Accordingly, conventional expressions are considered a sociocultural phenomenon since their interpretation and use are culture specific. Due to this cultural specificity, the translation of conventional expressions from one language to another is notoriously difficult. Cultural barriers often impede learners’ understanding and acquisition of conventional expressions in another culture, especially when the learners’ native culture is quite different from the target culture.

“Cultural barriers” in this context refer to students’ “lack of knowledge about the target culture and to the proclivity of applying the norms of the base culture as if they were valid in the target culture” (Nara, 2003: 70). For example, in a beginning Chinese language class that I taught, my students were asked to role play a situation in which a customer buys a pair of shoes from a saleswoman. The student who played the role of a saleswoman greeted the customer with the question “What’s your name?” according to
her base culture norm: showing personal attention to a customer by asking his/her name. However, such a practice is not conducted in Chinese culture. Instead, a Chinese saleswoman would use a form of address, usually a kinship term, such as “big sister/brother,” to establish a close relationship with the customer. This cultural barrier results in a student’s inappropriate use of conventional expressions.

Cultural barriers can also lead to different understandings of a conventional expression. The following example of an exchange between a barber and a customer from an example of the ESL course at City College of San Francisco demonstrates how different understandings of a conventional expression can lead to miscommunication. The barber, who is not a native English speaker, recalls that one day she asked a male customer "Do you like the hair on the side over your ears?" The customer said, "Yes," so the barber cut his hair short, having no hair covering his ear. After she finished, the customer wasn't satisfied. He said, "Over your ears means the hair covers the ear." The barber’s different interpretation of the English conventional expression “over the ear” led the barber to misunderstand her customer’s request.

In most cases, native speakers learn the meaning of a conventional expression through multiple encounters with the expression in various contexts. Using these encounters, native speakers construct a cultural story of the expression through each encounter. For example, in one of the classes I observed in a study abroad program in China, when the native speakers of Chinese were asked to explain the meaning of the

---

1 This exchange is selected from the examples of misunderstanding written by learners of English, which are posted on the website for the course of English as a second language at City College of San Francisco http://fog.ccsf.edu/~lfried/writing/misunderstandings2.html (searched by 08/2013)
Chinese conventional expression “不干不净吃了没病 búgānbújìng chīlè méibìng” (literally ‘although it is not clean, (You) will not get sick if you eat it’) to non-native speakers. The native speakers responded with stories constructed from their previous experiences. One speaker explained,

“就是说不要去在乎那个东西干不干净，嗯，它不会让你得病。这句话是从我奶奶那儿学到的，因为，比如说，我小时候嘛，比如说，馒头掉在地上了，然后我奶奶会告诉我“没事，可以吃，不干不净，吃了没病。”

“That is to say (you) don’t need to care if the thing is not clean. Eh, it won’t make you sick. I learned this saying from my grandma. Because, for example, when I was young, for example, I dropped Mantou (a kind of Chinese steamed bread bun) to the ground, then my grandma told me, “It doesn’t matter. You can eat it. Although it is not clean, (you) will not get sick if you eat it.”

Another native speaker stated,

“我觉得‘不干不净，吃了没病’是一种懒人的说法。比如说，我们买了水果，当时就非常想吃，但是，旁边又没有水。别人说你要洗了再吃，然后我很懒，我也不想

I think ‘búgānbújìng, chīlèméibìng’ is a kind of excuse for lazy people. For example, we bought fruit, and we wanted to eat it so badly, but there was no water around. Others told you to wash the fruit before eating. But I was very lazy. I didn’t want to wash, and I just

The way native speakers explained the conventional expression in this situation suggests that native speakers construct their comprehension of idiomatic expressions through multiple encounters with the same expression in different contexts. The experience of each encounter becomes a related story stored in their memory. Native speakers construct their comprehension of the expression through these stories and use these stories to establish a set of standardized ways to use the expression. These stories reflect a common understanding of the conventional expression in the speech community.

In this sense, constructing a memory of conventional expressions in a particular culture is
to construct stories of when and how to use these expressions in that culture. If adult learners of a foreign language don’t have opportunities to engage in the experience of using these expressions in situations resembling the target culture, they are not able to construct such cultural stories and such inexperience will result in the incompetency or failure to use the expressions.

Given these concerns, in the context of second/foreign language teaching and learning, the social and cultural aspects of conventional expressions must be considered, especially when the distance between the learners’ native language and the target language is great. Considering the great distance between English and Chinese culture, how cultural barriers influence American students’ acquisition of Chinese conventional expressions becomes an important question.

1. 1. 3 Conventional expression as pragmatic resources

In foreign/second language education, pragmatic competence —the ability to use language appropriately in a given context — has been identified as an important component of communicative language ability (Canale and Swain 1980; Bachman 1990). It is also a major component in building cultural competency for foreign/second language learners. In this dissertation, cultural competency refers to the ability to effectively interact with people of different cultural backgrounds. Learners must acquire not only the skills and strategies to communicate with people across cultures, but also an awareness and acceptance of different cultural practices and worldviews.

Since conventional expressions are commonly used to help learners navigate social interactions in a target culture, they are often considered important resources for
pragmatic knowledge. According to Roever (2005), pragmatic knowledge is the knowledge of linguistic forms necessary for productively conveying speech intentions. One major component of these linguistic forms is conventional expressions. Many studies on pragmatics have shown that native speakers tend to prefer using conventional expressions to convey certain communicative intentions² (Barron, 2003; Bergman & Kasper, 1993; Olshtain & Weinbach, 1993; Takahashi & Beebe, 1993). However, research in second/foreign language education reports that learners often underused such expressions (Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992; Schmitt, 2004; Edmondson & House, 1991; Kasper & Blum-Kulka, 1993; Kecskes, 2000; Roever, 2005). These studies point out that even advanced learners who have learned the language for a long time often fail to “chunk” language in the same way that native speakers do and/or use language appropriate to given contexts. Kasper and Blum-Kulka (1993: 9) observe that nonnative speakers tend to be more verbose than native speakers. Edmondson & House (1991) cite that second/foreign language learners tend to use supportive moves (e.g., giving more excuses, using more gratitude words, etc.), whereas native speakers use conventional expressions. They suggest that learners cannot handle social situations in the same way that native speakers do “because they do not have ready access to, and therefore do not make use of, standardized routines for meeting the social imposition” (p. 284).

Given these findings, conventional expressions can be viewed as important resources for foreign/second language learners’ development of pragmatic competency—the ability to use linguistic resources to convey intentions appropriately. Moreover,

² In pragmatic studies, conventional expressions are also referred as pragmatic routines.
considering that conventional expressions tend to be underused by nonnative speakers (Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992; Schmitt, 2004; Edmondson & House, 1991; Kasper & Blum-Kulka, 1993; Kecskes, 2000; Roever, 2005), it is necessary to investigate the reasons for this underuse and then explore learners’ developmental patterns of conventional expression knowledge.

1.1.4 The operational definition of conventional expression

Based on the above discussion, this dissertation considers a conventional expression as a sociocultural phenomenon and defines it as any expression with a stable form that is commonly used to navigate routinized social interactions in a given culture. Conventional expressions are often tied to certain general social situations or specific physical settings. For example, an expression like “how are you?” is used in general social situations of greetings while a sequence like “for here or to go?” often occurs in the physical setting of dining out.

These expressions are conventional resources available to a speaker to express certain actions, thoughts, and opinions in particular cultural contexts. Due to their conventionality, they are easily recognizable to members of a speech community and thus do not require any special effort on the part of the listener to interpret the desired meaning. They are culture specific and are often utilized to help newcomers (or novices) and language learners to be socialized in the particular culture of a society (for details see chapter Two). A particular culture includes “the kinds of social interactions the members of society have, the kinds of behaviors they conduct, the kinds of information they value and the kinds of inferences they will draw about the world” (Tomasello, 2000:79).
According to the definition of “conventional expression” adopted here, multiple-word expressions that are not usually tied to a particular social situation, such as terminologies (e.g., economic crisis), discourse organizers (e.g., on the other hand) and collocations are not discussed in this dissertation.

1.2 The purpose of the dissertation

Conventional expressions are important for the successful navigation of social interactions in the target culture and constitute an important learning target for foreign/second language learners. Learners’ management of conventional expressions can also promote their development in pragmatic competency. As a sociocultural phenomenon, conventional expressions are often culture-specific behaviors. Because of this, it is more difficult for foreign learners to understand and use them in the same way that native speakers do. The greater the distance between a student’s native culture and target culture, the more challenging it is for the student to learn conventional expressions. American students of Chinese, whose culture drastically differs from Chinese culture and who have limited access to the target culture, will find it particularly challenging to learn these expressions. Therefore, it is necessary to explore how American learners develop knowledge of conventional expressions. Considering that much of the current research on conventional expressions focuses on learning English as a foreign/second language, this study will ask whether claims based on English acquisition are applicable to other languages, especially significantly different languages like Chinese. Specifically, the goals of the study are four-fold:
1) To determine what factors might have an effect on CFL (Chinese as a foreign language) students’ learning of conventional expressions. Students’ learning is measured by their productive knowledge of conventional expressions in a discourse completion test and by their receptive knowledge of conventional expressions in a contextualized multiple choice test.

2) To explore the reasons for learners’ underuse and unsuccessful use of conventional expressions in a given situation through an analysis of students’ performances in the productive and receptive tests.

3) To identify strategies that promote students’ learning of conventional expressions.

4) To examine how conventional expressions are selected and presented in current popular textbooks, and discover whether students’ learning needs and learning challenges identified from the above questions are reflected in the pedagogical treatment of current textbooks.

1.3 The significance of the study

Through the investigation of the development of productive and receptive knowledge of conventional expressions by American learners of Chinese, this study will contribute to knowledge about the sources of American learners’ difficulties with Chinese conventional expressions. This dissertation will explore whether a learner’s difficulty is due to insufficient exposure to certain expressions, or whether the difficulty stems from insufficient practice, i.e. learners may know an expression on some level but
have not yet developed the ability to use it in the appropriate context. A learner’s difficulty may also arise from the cultural barrier created by the great distance between Anglo-American and Chinese culture. This barrier can lead to a student not knowing when he or she should use conventional expressions, which impedes his or her development of a sense of the contexts in which conventional expressions can be used by the target-language speech community.

Furthermore, through the investigation of learners’ productive and receptive knowledge of conventional expressions, this dissertation examines how different levels of instruction, different lengths of stay in the target cultural environment, and different study strategies might influence the acquisition of conventional expressions. Considering that much of the current work on conventional expressions either focuses on productive knowledge or receptive knowledge, this study will help researchers and instructors understand how learners go from the recognition of a conventional expression to the use of an apt conventional expression in a given context. In addition, this dissertation will discuss which expressions are easily acquired through a short stay in the target language country, and which expressions require a longer stay in the target language country. It will also demonstrate which expressions are typically not acquired after a long period of residency abroad. Answers to these questions can inform our design choices in the selection and presentation of conventional expressions in teaching materials, as well as help us design study-abroad programs that provide maximum benefits for students.

Given that conventional expressions are one of the resources for learners’ development of pragmatic knowledge (linguistic forms necessary for conveying speech
intentions in contexts), the ability to use conventional expressions can be viewed as one construct to measure learners’ development in second/foreign language pragmatic competency. Therefore, results obtained from this study will inform us about the design and the development of standardized tests of American learners’ pragmatic knowledge in Chinese. Since conventional expressions are important for the realization of everyday social interactions and thus contribute to overall communicative language ability and cultural competency (the ability to effectively interact with people of different cultural backgrounds), results obtained from this study can also provide information for the design of more comprehensive assessments of communicative language ability and cultural competency in Chinese.

Last but not least, this dissertation compares students’ learning needs and difficulties to the pedagogical treatment of conventional expressions in popular textbooks in North America. I will report on which conventional expressions are presented in popular American Chinese language textbooks, in order to determine whether the textbooks’ selections satisfy the learning needs reflected in tests of learners’ productive and receptive knowledge of conventional expressions. The pedagogical presentation in these textbooks and the instructional activities designed to accompany them are examined to see if they address the learners’ difficulties with conventional expressions identified by this study. Through this analysis, a pedagogical solution for Chinese conventional expressions is designed to supplement the instruction of current textbooks.
Chapter Two The Role of Conventional Expressions in Foreign/Second Language Learning

2.1 The importance of conventional expressions in second/foreign language learning

A number of studies suggest the benefits of learning conventional expressions for foreign/second language learners. Generally speaking, previous literature has identified three beneficial roles of conventional expressions in second/foreign language learning: conventional expressions can 1) facilitate language comprehension; 2) promote language production; and 3) socialize language learners in the interactions of a particular culture.

2.1.1 Facilitating language comprehension

Hymes (1968: 126-27) observes that “a vast proportion of verbal behavior consists of recurrent patterns, … [including] the full range of utterances that acquire conventional significance for an individual group.” Therefore, many of our daily routines, such as greeting, leave-taking and expressing gratitude, make use of expressions with stable forms so that the intended message can be expressed efficiently without drawing further attention to the words. For example, when an individual wants to leave a meeting for a few minutes, he or she says “Excuse me,” which acts as an apology that is easily understood by his or her colleagues with minimal interruption of the main event in the meeting. A novel expression different from this conventional saying would require
the hearer to pay more attention to the words and engage more efforts to interpret the intention of the speaker. In addition, when imparting important information, the linguistic form is typically patterned in a conventional way so that the hearer can focus on the material of interest. For example, Crystal (1995) points out that weather forecast reporters’ fluent deliveries are largely achieved through a number of pre-patterned expressions, such as “blue skies and sunshine”, “widespread frost” or “with light winds and largely clear skies”. Consequently, individuals in audience who are familiar with the genre of weather broadcast can get needed information quickly. In presentations, people tend to use discourse markers to map out the structure of the text. These markers are used in a conventional way so that the audience can identify them easily. Under the direction of these discourse markers, an audience can remain focused and follow the content of the presentation with ease.

Recent empirical experiments also indicate that learners’ reading pace can benefit from knowledge of conventional expressions. In 2008, Conklin and Schmitt (2008) conducted a study in which both native and non-native speaking participants were asked to read silently stretches of English discourse on screens while their eye-movements were recorded by eye-trackers. Both native and non-native speakers were found to read the conventional expressions significantly faster than the non-conventional ones. The eye-tracker data suggests that the participants were able to recognize the conventional expressions almost instantly after seeing the first few words of the expression. Conklin and Schmitt explain (2008: 75),
“In effect, the mind uses an abundant resource (long-term memory) to store a number of prefabricated chunks of language that can be used ‘readymade’ in language production. This compensates for a limited resource (working memory), which can potentially be overloaded when generating language online from individual lexical items and syntactic/discourse rules.”

In the context of cross-cultural communication, conventional expressions are especially important for successful interaction. The non-identical inventories of conventional expressions possessed by interlocutors from different base cultures often result in miscommunication. This could be because they come from different speech communities; for example, one is Canadian and the other is American, or one is a native speaker of the language and the other is not. Using conventional expressions shared by the members of the target language speech community can be especially important for non-native speakers because the hearer will need to engage in extra processing for phonological decoding if the speaker has non-native like pronunciation. If the speaker’s intention was not expressed in a conventionalized way, the hearer must make extra efforts to interpret what the non-native speaker is trying to say. For example, the expression ‘Do you have the time?’ is immediately comprehensible to a native speaker of English as a request for the current time, whereas ‘tell me the hour and minute, please’ is not. On the other hand, non-native speakers may have difficulties in understanding the conventional expressions in the target language. Kecskes (2000) investigated 88 ESL (learning English as a second language) learners’ interpretation of three conventional expressions presented in the following conversations:

a) —Bill, I do not think I can agree with you
    —OK, shoot! (Go ahead)
b) —Frank, I think you really deserved that prize
—Get out of here. (Don’t fool me)
c) —Jim, do you think you can repair this coffee machine?
—Piece of cake. (Easy)

He discovers that learners relied on the literal meaning and compositional structure of the conventional expressions to interpret them, which often led to misunderstandings. Kecskes points out that the literal interpretation is even more problematic when the conventional expressions are widely used in their literal meaning as well (e.g., the expression “get out of here”), and the context determines the correct interpretation of this particular expression.

Misunderstanding may also result from the failure to identify the social values associated with conventional expressions. A phone call between my American friend and me offers a good example of this failure. My American friend has been learning Chinese for 3 years. One day, when I called her, she replied with *nǐ yǒu shénme shì* (你有什么事?) ‘What business do you have?’ This question made me feel that my call interrupted her and that she was reluctant to answer my phone call. Later on, I discussed my feelings with her. She told me that she did not realize that in Chinese culture her response implied the call was bothersome. In fact, she had meant to convey the intention of “what’s up” in English. In American culture, “what’s up?” functions as a greeting in telephone conversations that elicits more information about the person you are calling; while in Chinese culture, *nǐ yǒu shénme shì* (你有什么事?) conveys reluctance on the part of the message receiver to answer the phone call. Thus, when my friend tried to use *nǐ yǒu*
shénme shì (你有什么事?) as “what’s up?” in a Chinese telephone conversation, I felt challenged rather than greeted.

Furthermore, non-native speakers may also transfer conventional expressions in their native language to the target language, which will often lead to misunderstandings. As an English learner myself, my experience in the United States has provided some examples for this kind of misunderstanding. Upon my arrival in the United States, I spent a weekend with an American family. After I got up on Saturday morning, I found the hostess was preparing breakfast for me. In order to show my appreciation for her hospitality, I asked her if she needed my help and told her I could make the breakfast myself. She paused and then responded, “Sure, you can do it yourself if you don't want me to touch your food.” I was very embarrassed to find out that my intention of showing appreciation was interpreted as a refusal of my hostess’ hospitality. In Chinese culture, the offer to help is often used to show the appreciation of other’s hospitality, since the help will reduce the effort of the host. Sometimes, the offer of help is ritually used, i.e. the speaker does not truly intend to help and expects the offer to be declined. In accordance with Chinese culture, I tried to express my willingness to help, and expected my hostess would decline my offer of help. However, translating the Chinese conventional expression wǒ zìjǐ lái (我自己来) ‘let me do it myself’ which is commonly used in this kind of situation in Chinese culture, I ultimately told my hostess “I can make breakfast myself.” My hostess thus interpreted my offer to help as an unwillingness to accept her hospitality which made her feel uncomfortable. Although there were no
grammar errors in my utterance, the use of English corresponding to this conventional expression in my native culture did not convey my intention as I expected it to and even resulted in offending my hostess.

Therefore, the correct use and understanding of conventional expressions in the target language is very important for successful and smooth cross-cultural communication. On the one hand, the use of conventional expressions in the target language can ease the communication between cross-cultural interlocutors by reducing the time a listener spends processing information. On the other hand, the appropriate use of conventional expressions in the target language makes it easier for non-native speakers to be correctly understood by native speakers.

2.1.2 Promoting language production

As De Bot (1992: 11) explains, speech production is cognitively challenging:

“When we consider that the average rate of speech is 150 words per minute, with peak rates of about 300 words per minute, this means that we have about 200 to 400 milliseconds to choose a word when we are speaking. In other words: 2 to 5 times a second we have to make the right choice from those 30,000 words in the productive lexicon. And usually we are successful; it is estimated that the probability of making the wrong choice is one in a thousand.”

One way language users meet this demanding cognitive challenge is by using prefabricated patterns. As pointed out by many researchers (Pawley and Syder 1983; Wray 2001; Nattinger & DeCarrico 1992, Coulmas 1981), a large number of prefabricated patterns of language are stored in an individual’s memory to be used as “ready-made” language. These prefabricated patterns compensate for the limits of working memory and help speakers cope with the demands of real-time language
processing while maintaining fluency. Studies on auction and sports reporting speech provide indirect evidence for this argument. Kuiper (1996) observes that auctioneers and sports announcers make use of a great deal of prefabricated phrases to convey large amounts of information fluently under time pressure.

The importance of these prefabricated phrases in second language production is reflected in the Proficiency Guidelines (2012) for speaking proposed by the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages. The speech of novice-mid learners is described as consisting of “isolated words and memorized phrases limited by the particular context in which the language has been learned”; novice-high speech “relies heavily on learned phrases or recombination of these and what they hear from their interlocutor.” House (1996) also suggests that conventional expressions can constitute “islands of reliability,” especially to learners at lower levels of proficiency.

As a special kind of prefabricated patterns, conventional expressions can apparently contribute to smooth communication. The knowledge of contextualized conventional expressions will enable learners to know how to correctly and efficiently convey their intentions in a given situation and how other people will respond. As suggested by previous studies, instruction that targets conventional expressions will improve learners’ ability to conduct certain speech acts, such as requesting something or offering an apology. House (1996) found that German EFL learners improved their

---


4 In her study, conventional expressions are referred as pragmatic routines.
initiation of requests through explicit instruction on a list of conventional expressions. In 2001, Tateyama (2001) investigated the effects of explicit instructions on three functions of sumimasen (attention-getting, expressing gratitude, and as an apology indicator) and discovered that students’ performance was improved in both a multiple-choice test and role-plays even after a single instruction of only 25 minutes.

The evidence provided by House’s and Tateyama’s studies suggest the importance of conventional expressions in second/foreign language production. Therefore, as Nattinger & DeCarrico (1992: 159) point out, learners who do not have a stock of conventional expressions to draw on are more likely to have difficulty in achieving fluent language use in either production or comprehension.

2.1.3 Socializing language learners in the daily routines of a particular culture

Conventional expressions are often required for repeated daily routines, such as greetings, leave-takings or apologies, and social events like a wedding, funeral or awards ceremonies. In order to engage in these group rituals and events, one needs to understand and adopt language forms conventionally used in these situations. These conventional forms are shared by all the members in the language community and hence offer speakers a powerful way to signal to other individuals that they belong to the same community. Burdelski and Cook (2012) point out that through repeated routine interactions with adults or experts, children and adult novices are socialized to use conventional expressions, understand the sociocultural meanings indexed by these expressions, and analyze the contexts in which these expressions are used. In their study of Japanese L1 and L2 children’s socialization in households, playgrounds and a preschool, Burdelski
(2010) found that caregivers, teachers, and siblings socialize children to use conventional expressions such as *arigatoo* (“thank you”) for expressing appreciation for food and gifts, while using *doozo* (“Here you are/Please have it”) for offers of toys and food (or for compliances with requests for such objects). Similarly, adult novices are socialized to use conventional expressions when they enter new communities of practice, such as new workplaces, university clubs, or online forums. In another study, Dunn (2011) examines the training of Japanese L1 adults in courses on “business manners” to use polite, honorific language in speaking to customers. He found that the adult trainees were instructed to use a series of conventional expressions, such as *Osoreirimasu ga* (“I am fearful but . . .”), *Shirtsurei desu ga* (“It is rude but . . .”), and *Moshiwake gozaimasen ga* (“There is no excuse but . . .”), to convey politeness when turning down the listener’s request or inquiry. His findings suggest that as adult Japanese L1 trainees are socialized to use these expressions, they become competent members of the business communities.

Conventional expressions can also be used to indicate and negotiate a speaker’s place in a group hierarchy. In Chinese, “*gui* 贵” (“honorable”) is often used in an expression to elevate the listener’s position. While the plain form of asking for someone’s last name is “*nǐ xìng shénme* 你姓什么？”, the polite form is “*nín guìxìng* 您贵姓？”. The use of this conventional expression conveys respect on the part of the speaker. In the same vein, Howard’s study (2012) finds that in many East Asian cultures, such as Japan, Vietnam and Korea, children are socialized to use honorific conventional expressions, such as kinship and other address/reference terms, greetings, and farewell expressions to
display respect toward others. In another study of Korean heritage children in the United States, Song (2009) finds that Korean mothers socialized children to use honorific kinship terms through prompting, modeling, and recasting. All these studies show that in many Eastern Asian cultures, such as Japan, China and Korea, address/reference terms, greetings and farewell expressions do more than just refer, greet or farewell. Children of these societies are socialized to view these expressions as a means of indexing social hierarchy.

The socialization that comes through learning to use these conventional expressions is especially important for adult L2/foreign language learners, since these conventional expressions are deemed appropriate by members of the target language speech community and hence are much easier for those members to understand. Consequently, native-like use of conventional expressions makes it easier for learners to “fit into” the target culture. However, many studies demonstrate that the acquisition of conventional expressions for adult L2 language learners is particularly challenging (De Cock, 2004; Bardovi-Harlig 2009; Howarth 1998b). The following section of this chapter will address the challenges faced by L2 learners when learning to use conventional expressions.

2.2 The challenges of conventional expressions faced by second/foreign adult language learners

For many foreign/second language learners, their mastery of conventional expressions lags behind their grammar and vocabulary knowledge. Even advanced
learners who have studied the language for a long time may frequently fail to use native-like conventional expressions. House (1996) suggests that learners may be uncomfortable with the use of some common expressions. Kesckes (2000) reports that advanced students of English, especially advanced Asian students whose native culture is different from western culture, often produce grammatically correct but non-native-like expressions. Researchers also observe that learners may not link expressions to their communicative function or context in the target language (Bardovi-Harlig, 2009; Kesckes, 2000) or still have not mastered the linguistic form of the expression (Bardovi-Harlig 2009; Eisenstein and Bodman, 1986; Yorio, 1989). Three hypotheses have been proposed for the difficulties of learning conventional expressions: L1 interference, insufficient exposure in input and the cultural barriers encountered by learners. The following sections will discuss the three hypotheses in details.

2.2.1 L1 interference

Unlike a child learning a first language, adult learners have already acquired a mature language system when they begin to learn a second language. Their knowledge of the second language is built on prior language knowledge of how to conduct communication. As a result, learners tend to transfer structures and/or lexical items from their native language, thereby inhibiting the correct production of conventional expressions in the second language. Sharifian (2008) demonstrates that intermediate-level Persian learners of English in Tehran often use translations of a Persian formula for responding to compliments in English. Similarly, Yu (2011) compares the ways in which Chinese learners of American English and native English speakers offer “compliments.”
Her results demonstrate that although there were some similarities between the learners and the target language speakers, the performance of the Chinese speakers learning English could often be seen to reflect native language communicative styles in terms of the use of strategies, syntactic formulaic patterns, supportive moves and/or small talk.

As Wray (2008: 223) points out, children learn what to say in their social interactions with others so that learning about the specific scripts of that social interaction is a part of learning. In contrast, as mature users of their native language, adults usually start from an awareness of what they might need to say in L1 and try to translate it into L2. As a result, they tend to generate word strings that reflect their own according to their L1 experiences. Their linguistic production may differ greatly from word strings conventionally used in the L2 community and thus may result in language use marked as inappropriate or wrong.

2.2.2 Insufficient exposure

The second explanation for learners’ difficulties in the learning of conventional expressions is insufficient exposure to input. Kanagy (1999) claims that the more learners are exposed to the specific usage contexts in the target language, the more likely they are to learn conventional expressions, which is also a process of being socialized into the target language social interaction. In some cases, learners may not actually know the meaning of the individual words of a conventional expression but learn their structure and function in the specific context. Since exposure plays an important role in learning conventional expressions, some researchers have found that learners who have spent time abroad are more likely to use native-like conventional expressions, as compared either to
their performance before they went abroad or with other foreign language learners who have not had the experience. House (1996) reports that German EFL learners who spent time in an English-speaking country outperformed their peers in the use of conventional expressions. Roever (2005, 2011) finds that even short-term exposure of 2 to 3 months led English learners in the target language environment to score significantly higher in a multiple-choice test of conventional expressions than learners without such exposure.

The insufficient exposure explanation suggests the necessity of repeated encounters for the acquisition of conventional expression and emphasizes the importance of exposure to contexts in which the conventional expressions are used.

### 2.2.3 The cultural barrier

However, the insufficient-exposure hypothesis alone cannot explain the fact that L2 learners have difficulties with conventional expressions even when they are exposed to them for a long time. In her 2009 study, Bardovi-Harlig (2009) tested ESL learners’ recognition and production of conventional expressions frequently used in social-interaction routines (such as “thanks for having me,” “Sorry, I am late”). She found that high recognition is not always coupled with high production. For example, the expression “I gotta go” is easily recognized by students yet is rarely produced. Instead, students tend to use deviants from the conventional expression, such as “I have to go” or “I need to go.” This suggests that extended exposure alone may not ensure production. Kecskes (2000) found out that when EFL learners were asked to recall the phrase used on TV to tell the audience to continue watching the program after the commercial break, learners who have spent less than two years in the U.S. could rarely recall anything that vaguely
resembles the most frequently used expressions. Although these students watch TV often
and knew they were expected to remember clichés they heard on TV, these expressions
still sounded unfamiliar to them. This fact suggests that factors other than insufficient
exposure must be involved in the failure to learn these items.

As mentioned before, given that a great number of conventional expressions in a
particular language are culture specific, the cultural barrier encountered by students when
understanding and using these expressions should be taken into consideration. Compared
to L1 interference, which happens unconsciously, the influence of the cultural barriers
can be either conscious or unconscious. Specifically, the cultural barrier could result
from many perspectives, for example: 1) unawareness of the cultural connotation
associated with a conventional expression; 2) lack of the knowledge of the non-verbal
behavior associated with a conventional expression; 3) lack of the knowledge of the
routine of a given social interaction; and 4) attitudes toward the target culture norm. In
the end, when there is a lack of knowledge of the target culture or an unwillingness to
conform to the target cultural norm, students tend to apply the norms of their base culture
as if they were valid in the target culture.

Cultural barriers are often reflected in the experience of students who study
abroad. One example is a senior project created by an American student (D’Amico, 2007)
in which she describes her experience at Zhejiang University, a University located on the
eastern coast of China. In this project, she recalls her difficulty with the use of certain
conventional expressions in Chinese, such as “对不起 duìbúqǐ” “劳驾 láojià” and “请问
qǐngwèn,” all of which can be translated “excuse me” in certain contexts. She complains
that she often received a roundabout, convoluted explanation in class when it came to the subtle differences between these conventional expressions. Clearly, her class experience failed to prepare her to understand the cultural connotations embedded in these routine phrases. Due to a lack of experience of encountering the usage of these expressions in situations resembling the target culture, it was extremely difficult for her to figure out the real intentions conveyed by these phrases. After multiple encounters of these expressions in China, she gradually figured out that “请问 qǐngwèn” is used only when you are going to be asking a question. “劳驾 láojià” is used when you are trying to get someone’s attention, while “对不起 duìbùqǐ” is used when you have done something wrong like being late.

In addition, D’Amico’s experience indicated that a cultural barrier can also result from a lack of knowledge of the non-verbal behaviors associated with a particular social interaction. She reports that her awareness of the non-verbal behavior associated with greetings changed after she engaged in social interactions in China. Before living in China, she knew some basic conventional greetings in Chinese, such as “你好 nǐhǎo” or “您贵姓 nín guìxìng,” and assumed that these phrases may be accompanied by a full bow. After she stayed in China for a period of time, she realized that hand-shaking and a slight bow are appropriate for greetings in Chinese culture. A full bow isn’t necessary unless one is visiting a temple or shrine.

In her experience, another cultural barrier formed due to her unfamiliarity with the procedure of a particular social routine in the target culture. She recalled that ordering
food for the first time in the university cafeteria was extremely daunting even though she was equipped with expressions for ordering food. Since she was unsure of the flow of the patrons of the customs of a cafeteria, she was even unable to have breakfast there at that time. After gradually familiarizing herself with cafeteria procedures, she realized that she had to go to a small desk to the right of the serving line to get tickets first and then aggressively grab the attention of the servers to order food.

Nonnative speakers may experience social situations in their native culture that are similar to those in their target language; however, they are not aware that the expected verbal and non-verbal behaviors are different in each situation. Bardovi-Harlig, Rose and Nickels (2008) report that influenced by their native culture, L1 Arabic speakers profusely apologized when they wanted to express gratitude in the thanking contexts. Kecskes (2000) explains that the expression “how are you doing?” in American English generally functions like a greeting. No answer other than ‘Fine, thank you’ or its equivalents is expected. However, in many other cultures, the equivalent expression means “Tell me how you are doing.” Thus learners from different cultures tend to say too much when responding to “How are you doing?” Wong (2010) investigates expressions of gratitude and responses by Hong Kong speakers of English in the International Corpus of English in Hong Kong (ICE-HK). She found that compared to uses in standard British English, Hong Kong speakers of English did not use expressions of gratitude in many occasions of thanking.

In some cases, nonnative speakers are aware, at least to some degree, that certain types of social interaction in the target culture are conducted differently from their base
culture. Nonetheless, they tend to make false generalizations and fail to figure out what style or tone is appropriate to use in each situation. Kecskes (2000) observes that when some advanced learners of English were trying to use the relaxed, informal American-style of speech, they sometimes made false generalizations. These generalizations led to them sounding too relaxed and disturbingly intimate. In his example, students were asked what they would say when they knocked at a professor’s office door and wanted to speak with him. Trying to employ relaxed style of speech, some of the advanced students responded with phrases such as “—Hi, Randy” or “—Hi, how are you, George?” which are not appropriate ways to address a professor.

Cultural barriers are also reflected in some learners’ unwillingness to adopt the target cultural norm, especially when the two cultures differ greatly from each other. Some learners decide not to conform to the target cultural norms in order to maintain their self-identity, despite having a clear understanding of the target cultural norm. Ishihara and Tarone (2009) found in their 2009 study that certain learners of Japanese tend to resist using honorifics or gendered language in Japanese because of their beliefs in egalitarian social relationships from their native culture norms. In Barron’s (2003) investigation on the development of pragmatic competency in the production of Irish learners of German during a year abroad, participants’ retrospective interviews show that learners often weigh the value of competing approaches by adopting the target culture norm or maintaining native cultural norms. They often explain their rejection of the target culture norms as “But I want to be myself!” As discussed in section 2.1.3, the apt use of conventional expressions is an indicator of social membership. Learners’ reluctance to
adopt a target culture’s conventions may impede their integration into the target culture and may even result in misunderstandings. Therefore, although learners have the right to decide in accordance with their learning goals whether they will accept or resist the conventions of a target culture, it is important for teachers to make their students aware of the potential consequences of selecting or not selecting conventional forms in the target culture.

Most foreign language speakers receive formal language training in the classroom, where conventional expressions are taught through mechanical drills. In some cases, in order to make it easier for students to familiarize themselves with a form, a conventional expression is presented in the context of the students’ base culture rather than the context of the target culture. Consequently, students are not prepared for the aforementioned cultural barriers and usually get lost when they finally engage in real social activities in the target culture despite being equipped with the linguistic forms of the conventional expression.

2.3 The instruction of conventional expression

Although the importance of conventional expressions to foreign/second language learners has been recognized in previous research, very few studies focus on the instruction of conventional expressions. In terms of teaching theory, Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992) call for the need to teach lexical phrases that fulfill communicative functions in conversation and bring conventional expressions to the attention of teachers and pragmatic researchers by presenting an inventory of expressions.
However, research on classroom instruction of conventional expressions is scarce. The majority of the research on the effect of instruction of conventional expressions is obtained from studies focusing on the improvement of a learner’s pragmatic competency (House, 1996; Tateyama 2001). The only exception is the study conducted by Bardovi-Harlig & Vellenga (2011). In that study, students received three 50-minute periods of instruction delivered once a week for three weeks. Examples of the target conventional expressions were extracted from the television transcripts of *Friends* and were used as the input during instruction. The instructional sessions were composed of two segments: 1) a warm-up segment in which students were asked to remember, state or predict the conventional expressions that might be used in a given context; 2) a segment in which students were given the written excerpts from a *Friends* episode and then directed to observe the grammatical and social features of the target expression. Results showed that instruction only promoted the use of some conventional expressions, especially those relatively transparent and consistent with the learner’s current grammatical development level.

The study by Bardovi-Harlig & Vellenga (2011) suggests some gains from instruction, but future studies on the teaching of conventional expressions remain to be done, since Bardovi-Harlig & Vellenga’s (2011) study was only concerned with a special unit within a course directed at students at one instructional level. The question of how to integrate the instruction of conventional expressions into a regular curriculum and how to introduce conventional expressions to students at different instructional levels remains unanswered. Second, this study employed written excerpts of television transcripts as the
The question of whether or not the use of video clips will improve the effectiveness of instruction needs to be further explored. Video input may give students opportunities to learn the rhythm, intonation, tone of voice and non-verbal behavior accompanied by a conventional expression. Third, this study only adopted a noticing activity in instruction and left the learning process of practice and application to students. However, based on the evidence of incidental vocabulary acquisition, incidental learning of vocabulary in input requires multiple encounters with the word in various contexts and/or a good deal of mental processing. Only exposing students to the authentic input containing the target expression may not lead to learning. Although training students to notice the expression may raise their awareness of the target expression, it does not mean that students are thereby enabled to store the expression in long term memory and retrieve it when needed. Further research can be conducted to explore what instructional activities can be designed to help learners go from noticing to remembering conventional expressions.

Very few empirical studies in the literature address this question by examining the effects of different training techniques on the learning of lexical phrases. Most of these studies focus on the learning of collocations in laboratory settings. Durrant and Schmitt (2010) investigate, for example, the effects of different forms of repetition on collocation acquisition in a laboratory setting where L2 learners of English were exposed to collocations in a sentence under three different conditions. In the first condition, participants were exposed once to collocations in a sentence context. In the second condition, participants were exposed once to collocations in a sentence. After that, the same sentences were represented in the same way but in a new random order and
participants were instructed to read the sentences aloud. In the third condition, participants were exposed once to the collocations in the same way as in the other two conditions; however, in the repetition phase, participants were presented with a different set of sentences containing the same target collocation. In other words, in the third condition, participants were exposed to the same collocation in various sentences. In the second condition, participants experienced verbal repetition while participants in condition one received no repetition. Durrant and Schmitt report that the two groups under the repetition condition outperformed the non-repetition group, and the verbatim repetition group recalled target collocations better than the varied sentences repetition group. Therefore, they conclude that at least in the early stages of collocation learning, verbatim repetition has an advantage over varied sentences repetition. They also point out, however, that participants in all the groups were only able to recall a small number of target collocations in the post-test. These results suggest that learners will need substantial exposure to the target language in order to gradually build up a large repertoire of collocation. The study indicates the potential benefits of learning activities involving verbal repetition for the learning of multi-words units. However, the experiment was conducted in laboratory conditions. Studies conducted in the real classroom are needed to confirm the laboratory studies.

In addition to Durrant and Schmitt’s study, Yu (2009) conducted an experiment on how well college Chinese learners of English learned the phrase “Despite + Nominal.” Participants in her study were randomly divided into two groups. One group was taught the structure “despite + Noninal” through explicit instruction on the grammatical rule that
“despite” can only be followed by noun phrases. The other group received no instruction on this rule and were required to memorize paragraphs containing the target structure. Yu found out that the memorization group significantly outperformed the grammar instruction group in terms of procedural knowledge examined by a translation test whereas the grammar instruction group outperformed the memorization group on declarative knowledge examined by a multiple choice test. According to the data from the translation test, Yu claims that the memorization group treated the phrase “despite the fact (that)” as a chunk and therefore enhanced their procedural knowledge of producing the correct sentences in the translation task. Yu (2009)’s study supports the facilitating role of recitation on the learning of multi-words units and suggests the benefit of verbal recitation for building up procedural knowledge.

However, the above studies all focus on the learning of collocations or discourse organizers. Considering that the use of conventional expressions may require not only the control of linguistic form but also the ability to identify and analyze the sociocultural context, instructional activities other than recitation and verbal repetition should be involved in the instruction of conventional expressions. Further research on the development pattern of conventional expression learning and on factors that might influence their learning (exposure/input, types of instruction, level of proficiency, learning strategies, etc.) is indicated.
2.4 Conventional expression and learning Chinese as a foreign/second language

Conventional expressions are important for learners of Chinese as a foreign/second language, especially when we consider the fact that a great deal of formulaic polite speech “客套话 kètào huà” is employed in daily communication in Chinese. Specifically, the learning of conventional expressions in Chinese will benefit learners of Chinese in six aspects, which I will explain in the following.

2.4.1 The benefits of learning conventional expression in Chinese

The first benefit of learning conventional expressions is to equip learners with the tools to express their desired meaning accurately and concisely. This is evident in the study conducted by McAloon (2008). In this study, McAloon analyzed how five advanced native English speakers’ Chinese language usages at their workplaces, through interviews with the subjects and two of the colleagues of each subject. He also obtained quantitative evaluations of learners’ language usage from the subjects, their colleagues and Chinese language instructors. His findings reveal that both the nonnative speakers and the native evaluators feel that non-native speakers would benefit substantially from the ability to use conventional expressions. Three out of the five advanced learners in MacAloon’s study reported that they need to improve their ability to use idioms (成语 chéng yǔ) and classicisms (典故 diǎngù) and needed to master the use of ‘formulaic polite speech’(客套话 kètào huà) in social situations like banquets, small talk, accepting gifts, and making apologies. The subjects all agreed that using conventional expressions make
it possible for Chinese people to interpret their intentions more concisely and accurately.

McAloon quotes one subject,

“There’s a lot of words or phrases or idioms that express the idea that you’re trying to express and I use the 11th grade way of saying it, whereas [a Chinese] adult might say it a much different way. You can understand someone who’s in the 11th grade when they say, ‘that’s a big bummer,’ ‘that’s not cool,’” but somebody will say, ‘but what are you trying to say?’” (McAloon 2008: 342)

Moreover, McAloon reports that both the Chinese audience and the subjects recall a number of cases of miscommunication due to the incorrect use of conventional expressions. One subject recalled calling a Chinese publishing house to confirm their business hours. On the call, the listener did not understand when the subject asked, 请问，您的营业时间是什么? Qǐngwèn, nín de yíngyè shíjiān shì shénme? (“Excuse me, what are your business hours?”), so the subject rephrased the question, asking 请问，你们几点开门，几点关门? Qǐngwèn , nǐmen jǐdiǎn kāimén, jǐdiǎn guānmén? (Literally, “when does your store open and when does your store close?”), which was readily understood. In this situation, although “营业时间 yíngyè shíjiān” is grammatically correct and conveys the same literal meaning as “几点开门，几点关门 jǐdiǎn kāimén, jǐdiǎn guānmén”, the latter is the more conventionalized way to ask for business hours in Chinese and thus easier for a Chinese interlocutor to understand.

Secondly, native speakers may have different interpretations of learners’ unconventional language use. This often happens when a learner translates an English conventional expression into Chinese and assumes it conveys the same meaning as it does in English. McAloon (2008) reports one of his subjects as using the English phrase
“Do you know what I mean” and “Do you understand what I mean” in Chinese when he was unsure if his Chinese audience understood him. The subject, McAloon explains, believed that these phrases were effective in communicating his meaning. On the contrary, the native speaker evaluators felt the phrases demeaned the listener, essentially stating that the listeners were not smart enough to understand what the speaker was saying. The other two subjects used “OK?” in this situation, which also made the evaluators feel uncomfortable for the same reason. These examples clearly demonstrate how deviations from conventional forms affect learners’ attempts at communication.

Thirdly, learners of Chinese may have difficulty understanding a number of conventional expressions in Chinese. Ding (2006) demonstrates that learners of Chinese may encounter difficulties in correctly interpreting the meaning of conventional expressions during their interactions with native speakers in China. The following is an example from her study:

留学生：有今天的中国日报吗？
老板：在这里， 有是！你自己拿！
留学生：对不起，我不知道这里面那一份是今天的？请你给我今天的报纸。

Lái xué shēng：yǒu jīntiān de zhōngguó rìbào ma?
Lǎobān：zài zhè lǐ， yǒu de！ nǐ zìjǐ ná!
Lái xué shēng：duì bù qǐ， wǒ bù zhǐdào zhè lǐ miàn nà yī fēn shì jīntiān de？ Qǐng nǐ gěi wǒ jīntiān de bàozhǐ.
Learner of Chinese: Do you have today’s China Daily (The name of a Chinese News Paper)?
The owner of the stand: Here, plenty of them! Take it yourself!
Learner of Chinese: Sorry, I don’t know which of them is today’s newspaper. Please give me today’s newspaper.
Apparently, the learner interprets the meaning of the conventional expression “有的是 有 youdeshì (there are plenty of them)” based on its literal meaning “some of them are” and thinks the owner is telling him “some of the newspaper are today’s and some of them are not.” In fact, the owner is trying to say “There are plenty of today’s newspaper” through the use of the conventional expression “有的是 yǒudeshì.” Due to the different interpretations of the phrase, communication between the owner and the learner breaks down.

Fourthly, contemporary TV series, films, novels and news reports contain a large number of conventional expressions (Feng et al., 2007). Ding (2006) investigated the use of conventional expressions in a Chinese contemporary novel Wanzhu (The Troubleshooters, 332 pages) and found 365 instances of conventional expression use in the novel. In certain genres with pre-patterned formats to convey important information, such as news reports, formal speech, and weather forecasts, the use of conventional expressions is particularly evident. One reporter of China Daily—the most widely known newspaper in China—claims (Mao, 2007) that most Chinese news reports of government officials are related to two types of social events: “会议 huìyì (formal meetings)” and “视察 shíchá (inspections).” When reporting on formal meetings, what the government officials do is often reported using the following expressions: “出席会议 chūxī huìyì, (attend a meeting)” “到会讲话 dàohuì jiǎnghuà (give a speech at the meeting)” and “发表重要讲话 fābiǎo zhòngyào jiǎnghuà (give an important speech).” “参加会议 cānjíà huìyì (participate in a meeting)” is never used since it describes what less-important
workers do. When reporting the contents of the meeting, a number of conventional expressions emphasizing leadership and accomplishments are used, such as “在...的正确领导下 zài ...de zhèngquè lǐngdào xià (under the leadership of ...),” “开创...的新局面 kāichuàng ...de xīn jùmiàn (to create a new...situation),” “统一思想 tònɡyǐ sīxiǎnɡ (to unify ideology)” “提高认识 tígāo rènshì, (to enhance understanding)” and “加强领导 jiǎqiǎnɡ lǐnɡdào, (to strengthen leadership).” In reporting inspections, what the government officials do is often reported as “深入基层 shěnrù jīcénɡ, (go all the way down to the realities of life)” “亲切交谈 qīnqiē jiāotán (have a cordial conversation)” and “详细询问 xiánɡxì xúnwèn (make detailed inquiries)” in order to indicate an official’s intimate interaction with the local people. The use of conventional expressions in news reports of routine social events is also evident in previous studies. Shi (2005) examines the language used in Chinese newspaper reports on fire incidents and reports that these incidents are often described by the following expressions: “发生火警 fāshēnɡ huǒjǐnɡ, (caught fire),” “迅速蔓延 xùnsù mànyán, (quickly spread),” “...全都起火燃烧 quánɡè fú huǒ yánshāo, (all caught fire and burning).” “...火势一发不可收拾 huǒshì yīfā bùkě shōushí, (fire’s momentum became impossible to contain once ignited).” “...火势很快被控制 huǒshì hěnkuài bèi kònɡzhì.” “Fire’s momentum was quickly under control.” When reporting the results of a fire, expressions like “总计有 zònɡjìyǒu, (in total),” “...全都烧毁 quán bèi shāohuǐ, (all were destroyed by the fire),” “...损失难以
估算 sǔnshī nányí gāsuàn (the loss of … is hard to estimate)” and “所幸并没有 suǒxìng bīng méiyou (fortunately there is not…)” are used.

Given these facts, in order to equip students with the ability to handle authentic artifacts selected from contemporary TV series, films and novels, the purposeful teaching of conventional expressions is necessary.

The fifth benefit of learning conventional expressions derives from the fact that the ability to use conventional expressions is often perceived as one indicator of high language proficiency by native speakers of Chinese. In order to find out if learners’ use of conventional expressions can influence native speakers’ evaluation of their performance, I conducted an examination of native speakers’ comments on advanced learners’ performances through the Advanced Language Performance Portfolio System (ALPPS) developed by Ohio State University. This system allows learners to submit five categories of language use samples for evaluation: presentations, conversations, compositions, reading, and occasional or spontaneous events. Each sample is evaluated on a scale of 0 to 5 followed by an open-ended comment box. The evaluators’ comments show that native speakers’ positive comments are often associated with learners’ appropriate use of conventional expressions while negative comments are related to deviations from the conventional way of expressing the intention. For example, when evaluating a student’s performance of introducing his tutor at a formal banquet, four out of five evaluators commented that the student’s performance is culturally appropriate and authentic since he was able to use the expression “燃烧了自己照亮了别人 ránshāo le zījī zhàoliàng le biérén (literally, “the teacher is like a candle which burns itself to
illuminate others),” which is commonly used to express gratitude to teachers in Chinese culture.

On the other hand, when evaluating learners’ performances of giving a formal presentation, many evaluators pointed out that the utterances used by learners to end the presentation or to elicit comment sounded foreign to them since the expressions used by the learners were different from the conventional expressions in Chinese. This indicates that native speakers are sensitive to deviations from conventional expressions. As a result, the use of non-conventional forms might influence Chinese native speakers’ perception of learners’ ability to do things in the Chinese language.

The last but not the least benefit of learning conventional expressions is to help learners find “common ground” and deepen the bond with a Chinese audience. As discussed earlier, conventional expressions are commonly used to conduct certain social interactions in a given culture. Due to their conventionality, these expressions can effectively cue the “common ground” shared by members of a community. According to Clark (1996), the “common ground” between participants of a social interaction includes all the knowledge, beliefs, assumptions and experiences that they believe they share at that time. An indication of shared common ground facilitates the identification of members from the same social group and the establishment of bonds or relationships between the interlocutors.

Chinese people are often proud of their five-thousand-year history and often consider idioms, proverbs, classicisms, and conventional expressions as one important component of “common ground” shared by members of Chinese culture. Thus the ability
to use these components of “common ground” in speech or writing is often considered an indicator of wisdom. Young’s (1994: 128) depiction of contemporary Chinese people’s use of references drawn from cultural tradition reflects this belief:

“Even in ordinary talk, contemporary Chinese will often display their personal versatility and ingenuity within the tradition, for instance, by wittily evoking an analogy from the past that hits and mark in the present. Their conversation might be laced with symbolic references-----maxims, images, and examples drawn from the cultural tradition-----and delightedly capped with a well-aimed *chengyu* (a four-to-seven character adage” that hits a conversational bull’s-eye.”

Similarly, Chang (2010) points out that Chinese speakers have a strong interest in artistic language use through different forms of expression, such as matched couplets, Chinese idioms (*chengyu*), common sayings, proverbs, doggerels, and so on. She suggests that this kind of artistic language use is viewed as a sign- of wisdom in Chinese culture since the Chinese aesthetic often involves creative composing and employing of artful expressions. On the other hand, she claims that the unique linguistic constructions of the Chinese language make the extensive use of artistic language possible. According to her, it is the phrase and not the sentence that is the fundamental element of Chinese composition. Consequently, Chinese grammar, as conceived in ancient China, was of an essentially lexicographical order, and Chinese words or phrases are chemical elements which form new compounds with few constraints on ‘parts of speech’, number, gender, cases, and so on. Chang’s analysis of Chinese grammar indicates the linguistic foundation for the central place of lexical phrases in knowledge of the Chinese language.

Given these considerations, a learners’ use of conventional expressions is much appreciated by their Chinese audience since they usually assume that foreigners won’t share such common ground with them. Once native-speakers found that a learner is able
to communicate with them through these conventional forms, the learner is considered someone who shares a valuable component of the common ground with them, and hence the bond/relationship between the Chinese audience and the learner is strengthened.

2.4.2 The instruction of Conventional expression in Chinese

However, despite that the importance of teaching conventional expressions in Chinese language is recognized in the literature, there are very few studies focusing on the instruction of conventional expressions in a foreign or second language. Only one study, conducted by Ding (2006), investigates the production of conventional expressions in a retelling task by 15 advanced learners of Chinese in China. In this study, learners watched a video clip from a television episode, and then were asked to act out the video clip. Ding found that learners only used 1/6 of the 42 conventional expressions that occurred in the video clip. Expressions that were mostly used by learners were those students have learned at beginning levels, such as “不好意思 búhǎoyìsī (an apology when you have done something slightly embarrassing or impolite or an attempt to get someone’s attention),” or those with transparent meanings, such as “不会吧 búhuì ba (really?)” “告诉你 gàosù nǐ (let me tell you).” She also observed that although learners were able to interpret some conventional expressions correctly, they were still not able to use these expressions in their own production. Ding’s study reveals that even advanced learners of Chinese continue to have difficulty using conventional expressions. However, Ding’s study does not explore the sources of this difficulty. Investigating the sources of this difficulty will be important in designing lesson plans for efficiently teaching conventional Chinese expressions. Furthermore, Ding’s study examined learners
immersed in the target language environment, where they may have more opportunities of exposure to authentic uses of conventional expressions in Chinese. Studies of learners in the foreign language environment where learning is predominantly conducted through classroom instruction outside of China should be done to see if the conclusions drawn from the target language environment can be generalized.

2.5 Needs for new research

The review of previous literature suggests that research on how learners gain competence in using and understanding conventional expressions is scarce, especially in the area of learning Chinese as a foreign language. The following issues need to be investigated further: 1) factors that influence the learning of conventional expressions; 2) a comparison between learning conventional expressions as heritage and non-heritage learners; 3) learners’ receptive knowledge as compared to their productive knowledge; 4) strategies adopted by students to learn conventional expressions; 5) a comparison between students’ learning outcomes and the pedagogical treatment of conventional expressions in textbooks; and 6) the methods for teaching conventional expressions in the classrooms. Let us consider each of these in turn.

1) Factors that influence the learning of conventional expressions

As mentioned in Section 2.2, three hypotheses have been proposed to explain the difficulties of learning conventional expressions: L1 interference, insufficient exposure through input and the cultural barrier encountered by learners. The insufficient exposure in input can be related to the length of exposure in the target language environment.
However, research results were very mixed regarding the effects of these factors on the learning of conventional expressions in a second/foreign language. Barron (2003) reported that learners of German exhibited increased native-like use of conventional expressions and decreased nonnative-like use of L1-driven expressions within a single academic year. Roever (2012) examined ESL and EFL learners’ receptive knowledge of conventional expressions through an online, multiple-choice test. His results showed that EFL learners with even a brief residence of two months in the target environment had increased knowledge of conventional expressions. Longer periods of residence led to further improvement in the knowledge in this area. However, Rodriguez (2001) found that study-abroad and domestic students showed similar development in recognition of expressions of request in L2 Spanish over a semester abroad. Bardovi-Harlig and Bastos (2011) reported that length of residence in the target environment did not have a significant effect on either recognition or production. Given these inconsistent research results, it is important to investigate whether the length of stay in the Chinese-speaking environment might affect native English students’ learning of conventional expressions, since these students might have different patterns of interaction in a study abroad environment as compared to EFL learners. If students can easily acquire a conventional expression “for free” in the target environment, as stated by Roever (2012), we don’t need to spend a large amount of precious class time on conventional expressions. However, if the stay in the target environment does not ensure production and recognition, as shown in Bardovi-Harlig and Bastos’s study (2011), the instruction of
conventional expressions should be included in the curriculum of Chinese teaching in the United States.

In addition, in a foreign language environment, most learners are exposed to the target language in the classroom. Therefore, it is important to see if the length of classroom instruction might influence their use of conventional expressions. This will tell us if the acquisition of certain conventional expressions might be coupled with a student’s level of language development and hence help us as educators determine an effective order for introducing different types of conventional expressions in teaching.

As discussed before, the challenges faced by learners when learning conventional expressions can be the result of L1 interference and a cultural barrier, both of which are closely related to the students’ language backgrounds. Learners of Chinese in the United States may vary greatly in terms of their language backgrounds. Most of them may begin as monolingual and mono-cultural English speakers while some of the students might have East Asian cultural backgrounds, such as international students from Japan and Korea. This difference in language backgrounds might result in different learning needs and different degree of difficulties in learning conventional expressions. However, research looking into the effect of language backgrounds is scarce. Further studies are needed in this area, especially a comparative study between English-speaking learners and learners with East Asian cultural backgrounds.

2) Comparison between heritage and non-heritage learners
With the trends of globalization and immigration, heritage learners of Chinese have become a sizable and growing constituent in many Chinese language programs in the United States. Researchers agree that heritage learners often have impressive oral vernacular proficiency but typically lack capabilities in formal and sophisticated registers. Therefore, heritage learners might show varying development patterns of conventional expressions in different registers. Moreover, heritage learners of Chinese are often exposed to dialects of Chinese other than Mandarin, such as Cantonese, Hokkien or Shanghainese. These dialects have their own conventional expressions which might be different from Mandarin Chinese and hence increase the complexity for heritage students to acquire conventional Mandarin expressions. However, none of the available studies touches upon this question, which calls for further investigation. Research on this question will provide us with a better understanding of Chinese heritage learners’ language abilities. That, in turn, will inform the design of a more comprehensive pedagogical solution in the form of lesson plans for the instruction of conventional expressions in the United States.

3) Learners’ receptive knowledge as compared to their productive knowledge

Previous research on conventional expressions focuses either on learners’ productive knowledge (Yorio, 1989, House 1996, Kesckes 2000) or on learners’ receptive knowledge (Roever 2005, 2011). What is needed is a comparative study between the two. Such a study will tell us whether learners’ difficulty in production of conventional expressions is the result of insufficient exposure or of other factors, such as the transfer of the first language practices, a cultural barrier or a lack of practice that
inhibits the development of procedural knowledge. Bardovi-Harlig (2009) compared learners’ production and recognition of conventional expressions; but the measure of recognition in her study was based on reports given by the students on how often they hear a given expression on a rating scale of three (I often/sometimes/never hear this). As analyzed by Bardovi-Harlig (2009), sometimes learners may be too generous in reporting their recognition. Moreover, this recognition test did not control the specific context in which the conventional expressions were used. Considering that the use of conventional expressions often relies on context, a contextualized recognition test of learners’ receptive knowledge of conventional expression is needed. A comparison between receptive and productive knowledge will reveal if learners’ difficulties in producing the target expressions is due to insufficient exposure or to other factors such as insufficient practice or a cultural barrier.

4) Strategies adopted by students to study conventional expressions

Although previous studies have found individual differences in the use of conventional expression (Ding 2006, Kecskes 2000), none of these studies addresses the effect of study strategies on the acquisition of conventional expressions. Strategies like associating an expression with its context, memorizing set phrases without analysis, or paying attention to and imitating a native speaker’s speech may, to some degree, improve students’ learning of conventional expressions. Moreover, learners who have a good command of conventional expressions might show different patterns of strategies use when being compared to low performing learners. Research from this perspective will provide information on how students can be trained to use which strategies to learn
conventional expressions outside of the classroom. Considering that the number of conventional expressions in any given language is enormous, it is impossible to teach all these conventional expressions in class. How to train students to use effective learning strategies to interpret and learn unknown conventional expressions outside the classroom is an important component for the instruction of conventional expressions, especially for students at the upper-intermediate level.

5) Comparison of students’ learning outcomes against the pedagogical treatment of conventional expressions in textbooks

Another inadequacy of previous studies on the acquisition of conventional expressions is that they look only at the product of learning, focusing entirely on what learners know, without any consideration of input. The comparison between input and output will tell us how students process input and how the method of providing input might influence what students end up knowing. Therefore, it is important to compare the pedagogical treatment of conventional expressions in current textbooks to students’ learning outcomes. More specifically, further study should be conducted to investigate whether the learning needs and learning difficulties reflected by students’ learning outcomes are dealt with in current popular textbooks.

6) Methods of teaching conventional expressions in the classroom

Many of the previous studies fail to address the question of how conventional expressions can be taught to students. With the focus only on the product of learning, many studies demonstrate the inadequacy of students’ knowledge of conventional expressions or the benefits of conventional expressions for the improvement of pragmatic
competency. They fail to address how students can be trained to use these expressions automatically and appropriately in real life situations.

As mentioned in section 2.4, only one study, by Ding (2006), investigated the instruction of conventional expressions in Chinese. However, her study adopted only a noticing activity in instruction. We need to discover how we can design systematical learning activities to help learners go from noticing, to remembering to using conventional expressions in real-life situations.
Chapter Three Methodology

3.1 Research questions and the design of the study

Based on the literature review, this dissertation investigates the following research questions:

1) To what extent do learners of Chinese as a foreign language produce and recognize conventional expressions collocated with situations that they might encounter in China? Are there differences between learners’ productive knowledge and receptive knowledge? How is each related to the other, in actual learning?

2) What factors might affect students’ production/recognition of these conventional expressions? Specifically, do the length of instruction, the length of stay in the target language environment, and the learner’s language background influence on students’ production and recognition? Do English speaking learners, learners with East Asian cultural backgrounds and heritage learners show different patterns of development in the production and identification of Chinese conventional expressions?

3) What are the reasons for the underuse or unsuccessful use of conventional expressions? Do the underuse or unsuccessful uses are mainly caused by
insufficient exposure, or are more likely to be the result of other factors, such as cultural barriers, overuse of familiar forms, or a student’s level of language development?

4) What strategies are used by a student to learn a useful expression? Are there any differences in preferred strategies between high achievers and low performing students?

5) What is the pedagogical treatment of conventional expressions in current popular textbooks? Are the learning needs and difficulties identified from the above research questions reflected in such pedagogical treatment?

In order to answer the first research question, a written discourse completion test was designed to examine students’ productive knowledge while a contextualized multiple choice test was adopted to assess students’ receptive knowledge. A statistical analysis of the obtained data is conducted to determine whether the length of instruction, the length of stay in the target environment, and the learner’s language background have an effect on his/her learning of conventional expressions. Following this statistical analysis, a qualitative analysis on the data will further explore the sources of the underuse or unsuccessful use of conventional expressions. In order to answer the student strategies question, a questionnaire is designed to collect information about learners’ strategies of use. Statistical analysis will be carried out to investigate whether learners who performed well in the production/recognition tests adopt different patterns of strategies as compared to students who didn’t do well.
Since textbooks are still widely used by teachers as the main source of target language input in the classroom, the last part of this dissertation will compare the pedagogical treatment of conventional expressions in current popular textbooks with the findings obtained in the recognition and perception tests. The selection criteria for the conventional expressions, the presentation of these expressions and the instructional activities focusing on these expressions in the textbooks will be suggested based on the learning needs, the learning difficulties and the study strategies identified from this study.

3.2 Instruments Design

Based on the study design, three instruments were used in this study: a production test, a recognition test and a questionnaire of learning strategies. The following section will discuss the design of these instruments respectively.

3.2.1 The production test

This section discusses the design of the test that is meant to elicit students’ production of conventional expressions. The design process entails four steps: 1) the method for selection of data collection; 2) the initial selection of the target expressions; 3) testing native speakers’ agreement on the created scenarios; and 4) writing the test items.

3.2.1.1 Selecting the data collection method

Previous studies on social interactions adopt the following methods to collect participants’ production: observation of interactions in real life, role-play, and discourse completion tasks.
Observation of interactions in real life allows the researchers to observe how participants interpret the context and how to make verbal and non-verbal moves based on this interpretation. However, in such a method, the researchers have little control over the contextual factors of the interaction or over the appearance of the interaction being investigation. In some cases, the social characteristics of the participants, such as age, ethnic group, and socioeconomic status, which might influence their behavior in conversation, are unknown. In addition, Kasper and Dahl (1991) point out that there may be unintentional observer effects on the informants resulting in unnatural language production during the observation process.

Given these considerations, researchers adopt role-play to obtain the data of interaction under controlled conditions. In such a method, researchers can determine the context of the interaction and control the variables within it because participants are required to perform what they would say and do in a specific situation. The two types of role-plays that are used in previous studies are determined by the length of interaction. Closed role-play records a single turn of response to the described situation while open role-play records as many turns and discourse phases as the participants need to maintain their interaction in the given situation. Although role-play can elicit oral production under controlled contexts and record the turn-taking and negotiation mechanism in the interaction, it also entails certain limitations. Golato (2003) points out that participants know that their performance in the role-play situations is not going to impact their real life, in contrast to what really happen in authentic conversations. For this reason, not only what linguistic forms are used but how well communicative strategies are used in the
role-play situations may not reflect real speech. Moreover, the number of participants in the role-play situation should also be taken into account since it may not be possible to arrange for a large number of pairs to participate in the role-play situations.

A Discourse completion test has been widely used by researchers to study social interaction. This test is a questionnaire which includes descriptions of many different situations followed by a short dialog. The dialog contains a conversational gap which participants are expected to fill-in with their own responses. The descriptions in each test item allow the researcher to control the contextual variables that might affect participants’ choice of particular forms when giving their responses. Another advantage of a discourse completion test is that it allows large amounts of data to be collected in a relatively short period of time. Despite these advantages, this data collection method has been criticized for being unnatural. Participants were asked to give written responses of what they would say orally. These written responses may not accurately reflect what the participants would actually say in the same situation under real circumstances. However, Beebe and Cummings (1996) report that the data collected by a discourse completion test and authentic discourse did not significantly differ. In their study, they compare data gathered from a discourse completion test to a natural speech data collection, focusing on the amount of speech and linguistic forms used by participants in situations of refusal. Results show that data collected through a discourse completion test in many aspects accurately reflects the content expressed in natural data. The only significant difference is found in speech length and the use of certain refusal strategies. In addition, some researchers (Kwon 2004) argue that a discourse completion test will provide the
prototype response occurring in one’s actual speech. Therefore, a discourse completion test is more likely to trigger participants to respond to the described situations using mental prototypes whereas collected natural data is more likely to reflect unpredictable and uncommon items in speech such as repetition of certain words and back-channel.

A discourse completion test may be the appropriate testing model for the current study since its goal is to investigate students’ production of conventional expressions in a given situation. Compared to the observation of natural data, a discourse completion test allows for control over contextual variables in a given situation and participant-related variables such as social status and cultural backgrounds. This control allows for the examination of the influence of these variables on learners’ production. Another possible advantage of a discourse completion test is that it may elicit participants’ prototype responses to given situations. Since conventional expressions are usually used in a given situation by the members of a speech community, they can be considered to be typical responses to certain situations. This feature of conventional expressions makes a discourse completion test the appropriate method to elicit students’ production of typical responses to a given situation. Compared to role-play, a discourse completion test allows for the collection of a large amount of data in a short period of time, which enables quantitative analysis of the collected data. Moreover, the major advantages of role-play are to record the turn-taking mechanism, the negotiation of meaning in the interaction and the sequence of speech—none of which is the focus of the current study. As mentioned by Kasper (2000: 329), a discourse completion test is an effective data collection instrument when the objective of the investigation is to record speakers’ knowledge of
the strategic and linguistic forms by which communicative acts can be implemented and the contextual factors under which particular strategies and linguistic choices are appropriate. Considering that the purpose of the current study is to examine what linguistic forms are used by students in a situation where a conventional expression is typically called for in the target culture, rather than to examine the sequence of communication, a discourse completion test may be a more suitable data collection method than role-play.

However, Kasper and Roever (2005) also indicate that the fact that a discourse completion test can be administered faster than other data collection instruments does not mean that it is the easiest instrument to use. They claim that the design of the test items and the evaluation process are important for the successful implementation of the discourse completion test in accordance with the goals of the study. Accordingly, the following sections will discuss the design and evaluation process of the test items in this dissertation.

3.2.1.2 Selecting the target expressions

In order to ensure that the selected items are conventional expressions that students might encounter in real life, the initial selection of expressions was informed by conventional expressions found in popular Chinese textbooks in the United States and by the results of a questionnaire conducted on 32 students who participated in a 10-week study abroad program in China. Students who participated in the questionnaire were from five American universities: two universities in the Midwest, one university on the east coast and two universities on the west coast. The students who participated in the
questionnaire were classified by three ACTFL proficiency levels according to their placement test scores for the study abroad program: Novice high-Intermediate low (7 students); Intermediate mid-Intermediate high (16 students); and Advanced Low-Advanced High (9 students). The placement test for the study abroad program included standardized test scores on listening and reading, such as test scores from CCALT, Webcape, or CCART, and an evaluation of students’ speaking and writing samples by a committee of three Chinese language teachers.

The questionnaire (see appendix A) asked students to list the expressions they found useful during their stay in China according to provided interactional types. The questionnaire included 13 types of interactions that students might encounter in a short term study abroad program in China. These interactional types include six service-related interactions, e.g., dining out, shopping, taking public transportation, entertainment service (i.e., places like KTV, bars and hotels) and banking; five interpersonal interactions, e.g., greetings, small talks, leave-taking, requests and compliments; and two formal interactions, e.g., attending a formal banquet and interviewing a native speaker of Chinese on a given topics.5

Students reported a total of 126 expressions they found useful during their stay in China. (Expressions reported multiple times by different students was only counted as one appearance). Among these 126 expressions, 57% were related to service interactions,

---

5In the study abroad program, all participants were required to attend two formal banquets held by the host university in China. All the intermediate and advanced participants had a weekly assignment to interview a professional on a topic students are interested in. Therefore, most participants have engaged in listed formal social interactions.
28% were related to personal interactions while only 5% was related to formal interactions. Among the expressions used in service encounters, 27% were related to dining out, 29% to shopping, and 22% to expressions used at a bank.

These results suggest that students were more frequently engaged in interactions in the settings of “dining out” “shopping” and “banking” during their stay in China since they learned a number of useful expressions in these settings after a short period of time in the target environment. In contrast, students had limited access to formal settings in the study abroad environment since the range and amount of useful expressions in these settings that they reported was very low.

Considering that expressions reported by multiple students are expressions that students are most likely to encounter in the target environment, 20 expressions that were reported by at least five students in the questionnaire were selected for the design of the discourse completion test. These expressions are shown below in Table 3. 1.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Target Expression</strong></th>
<th><strong>Communicative Function</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Greeting</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>好久不见</td>
<td>A greeting to a familiar after a long separation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>大家好</td>
<td>A greeting to a group of people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>First meeting</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>认识你很高兴</td>
<td>A greeting to someone you met for the first time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leave-taking</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>我先走了</td>
<td>An expression of departing a group of people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>不用送了</td>
<td>An expression for a guest to decline the host’s attempt to escort the guest out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>保持联系</td>
<td>An expression to ask someone to keep contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Making/responding to a request</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>打搅一下</td>
<td>An expression to get someone’s attention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>不用了</td>
<td>An expression to decline someone’s offer of help / food / drink</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>您太客气了</td>
<td>An expression to respond to gifts / help / gratitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Banquet</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>我(想)敬你(您)一杯</td>
<td>An expression to propose a toast.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>我自己来</td>
<td>An expression to decline someone’s offer of food / drink / help and to indicate your willingness to do it on your own</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dining out</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>买单</td>
<td>An expression to ask for a check at a restaurant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>打包</td>
<td>An expression to ask for a to-go container</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>带走</td>
<td>An expression to order a takeout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>我们AA吧</td>
<td>An expression to indicate that each person pays his/her own expenses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shopping</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>随便看看</td>
<td>An expression to decline a salesperson’s offer of help</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>试(一)试这件衣服</td>
<td>An expression to indicate your willingness to try on the clothes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Taking public transportation</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(请)让一下</td>
<td>Asking someone to make a way so one may pass by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(请)打表</td>
<td>An expression to ask the Taxi driver to run the meter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Check out at a hotel</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>退房</td>
<td>An expression to check out a hotel room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Asking for directions</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>......怎么走？</td>
<td>An expression to ask for directions to a certain place</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1 Target expressions selected from the results reported by students in the study abroad program
Considering that the major input students are exposed to is textbook, eight conventional expressions appearing in popular American textbooks——*Integrated Chinese, New practical Chinese, China Link* and *Chinese: Communicating in the Culture*——were selected as the target expressions as well (see table 3.2). These expressions appear in at least two of these popular textbooks. Ultimately, a total of 28 expressions were selected for the design of the production test. These Chinese expressions are used in common interactions, such as greeting, leave-taking, shopping, dining out, apologizing, making/responding to requests, using transportation, asking for directions, and so on.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target Expression</th>
<th>Communicative Function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>请问，您贵姓？</td>
<td>Asking someone’s surname politely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>……在吗？</td>
<td>Asking if someone is in office or at home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>我就是</td>
<td>Confirming that the speaker is whom the listener is looking for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>对不起</td>
<td>An expression of apology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>不好意思</td>
<td>An apology when you have done something slightly embarrassing or impolite or an attempt to get attention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>祝你生日快乐</td>
<td>Conveying the good wishes to a person who is celebrating his/her Birthday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>恭喜，恭喜</td>
<td>Congratulating someone on something nice that has happened to them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>你打错了</td>
<td>An expression to indicate to the listener that s/he has dialed the wrong number.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 3.2 Target expressions selected from the textbooks*
Considering that the major input students are exposed to is textbook, eight conventional expressions appearing in popular American textbooks——*Integrated Chinese*, *New practical Chinese*, *China Link* and *Chinese: Communicating in the Culture*——were selected as the target expressions as well (see Table 3.2). These expressions appear in at least two of these popular textbooks. Ultimately, a total of 28 expressions were selected for the design of the production test. These Chinese expressions are used in common interactions, such as greeting, leave-taking, shopping, dining out, apologizing, making/responding to requests, using transportation, asking for directions, and so on.

### 3.2.1.3 Testing native speakers’ agreement on the created scenarios

Based on these selected expressions, 28 scenarios in which each expression might be used were created. Following that, a web-based survey (see Appendix B) was conducted to test if these scenarios could elicit in native speakers the production of the target expressions. The web-based method was adopted for its accessibility and ease of administration. A commercial online survey creation site, Checkbox, was selected for its user-friendly interface design, low maintenance cost, and rich data tracking reporting and exporting capabilities.

In the Checkbox survey, participants were asked to write down what they would say in a given scenario described in Chinese. They were allowed as much time as they needed to complete the survey. In fact, the website offered participants the opportunity to save the text in progress by bookmarking the website and returning later to complete the survey. As discussed earlier, even in written form, the discourse completion task may elicit participants’ prototype response to a given situation. Thus, it was assumed that if
the majority of the survey participants used the target expression to respond to the given scenario that the target expression is a conventional expression used by native speakers in the scenario. Figure 3.1 shows a screen capture of the survey page.

The participants in the survey were 36 native speakers of Chinese, ages ranging from 18 to 60. All of them spoke Mandarin Chinese and had completed advanced degrees in China. 14 of them were from the northern part of China and 12 of them were from the south. 10 of them were Chinese language teachers and the other were from a variety of different professions. The participants completed all the test items, yielding a total of 1008 responses. It was assumed that if two thirds of the participants produced the target expression in the given scenario, that the scenario was appropriate for the students’
production test. Two thirds was selected as the threshold since it is typically used to define a majority consensus. Therefore, the 21 scenarios that elicited the target expressions in 66.7% or more of the responses were selected for the production test.

Table 3.3 shows the percentage of the use of the target expressions by native speakers in each scenario.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>Target expression</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1    | Greeting a friend | 好久不见  
A greeting to a familiar after a long separation | 91.7% |
| 2    | Self-introduction to new colleagues | 大家好  
A greeting to a group of people | 72.2% |
| 3    | Looking for a teacher | ……老师在吗？  
Asking if a teacher is in office | 94.4% |
| 4    | Meeting a new friend | 认识你我很高兴  
Greeting someone whom you met for the first time | 53.2% |
| 5    | Politely asking a customer’s name | 请问，您贵姓？  
Asking someone’s surname politely | 69.4% |
| 6    | Answering the phone at work | 我就是  
Confirming that the speaker is the person whom the listener is looking for | 88.9% |
| 7    | Leaving a friend’s home | 不用送了  
Declining the host’s attempt to escort the guest out | 69.4% |
| 8    | Declining a colleague’s offer of coffee | 不用了。  
Declining someone’s offer of help / food / drink | 83.3% |
| 9    | Leaving the office | 我先走了  
An expression of departing a group of people | 83.3% |
| 10   | Declining the offer of more food from a host | 我自己来  
Declining someone’s offer of food / drink / help and indicating your willingness to do it on your own | 66.7% |

Continued

Table 3.3 The percentage of the use of the target expressions by native speakers
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>Target expression</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Apologizing to a boss</td>
<td>对不起 An expression of apology</td>
<td>72.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Birthday wishes to a classmate</td>
<td>祝你生日快乐! Conveying the good wishes to a person who is celebrating his/her Birthday</td>
<td>97.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Congratulating a coworker on a promotion</td>
<td>恭喜，恭喜 Congratulating someone on something nice that has happened to them</td>
<td>94.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Wrong number</td>
<td>你打错了! An expression to indicate to the listener that s/he has dialed the wrong number!</td>
<td>91.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Proposing a toast</td>
<td>我(想)敬您一杯酒! An expression to propose a toast</td>
<td>41.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Declining a gift from a coworker</td>
<td>您(你)太客气了! An expression to respond to gifts / help / gratitude</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Asking for help</td>
<td>打搅一下。 An expression to get someone’s attention</td>
<td>61.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Leaving a friend</td>
<td>保持联系 Asking someone to keep contact</td>
<td>36.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Ordering takeout</td>
<td>带走 An expression to order a takeout</td>
<td>38.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Answering a phone in the middle of a conversation with a friend</td>
<td>不好意思 An apology when you have done something slightly embarrassing or impolite</td>
<td>77.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Packing up leftovers</td>
<td>打包 Asking for a to-go container</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Requesting the check at a restaurant</td>
<td>买单/结账 Asking for the check at a restaurant.</td>
<td>94.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Splitting the bill with friends</td>
<td>我们AA吧! Indicating that each person pays his/her own expenses</td>
<td>72.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Shopping at a restaurant</td>
<td>随便看看 Declining a salesperson’s offer of help</td>
<td>55.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Getting off a crowded bus</td>
<td>(请你/您)让一下 Asking someone to make a way so one may pass by</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Taking a cab</td>
<td>打表 Asking the Taxi driver to run the meter</td>
<td>69.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Checking out at a hotel</td>
<td>退房 Checking out a hotel room</td>
<td>88.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Asking for directions</td>
<td>(Place name) 怎么走? Asking for directions to a place</td>
<td>77.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.2.1.4 Writing the test items

Based on the 21 scenarios selected from step three, test items were written for the discourse completion test to elicit students’ production of conventional expressions. The following is an example of a test item:

**Example 1: Production Test Item**
When you are walking to/on campus, you run into one of your friends who you have not seen for a long time. You say to him:

In the test, English was used for the directions and description of the context to ensure that the test takers understand critical contextual information since the production of the typical conventional expressions in a given scenario is the purpose of this test. Every attempt was made to make the directions and the descriptions concise and straightforward. Students were asked to write down their answers either in Chinese characters or in Pinyin (the phonetic system for transcribing the sound of Chinese characters in Romanized script) to decrease the influence of students’ writing proficiency on their production. This is particularly important for Chinese, considering the complexity of the Chinese writing system.

In the end, a total of 21 test items were designed for the production test (see Appendix C). A background questionnaire was also designed as the first part of the production test to gather information about the length of classroom instruction students received, the length of their stay in China, the language(s) students were exposed at home and the students’ motivations for learning Chinese.
3.2.2 The recognition test

Previous research has adopted different rating tasks (paired comparison, card sorting, and rating scales), multiple choice questionnaires and self-report data (i.e., interviews, diaries or think-aloud protocols) to collect information about participants’ perception of a particular social interaction. Rating tasks are often used to evaluate learners’ perceptions of errors or the appropriateness of a social interaction. Self-report data such as interviews, diaries and think-aloud protocols are used to obtain information on learners’ cognitive processes in regards to their performance in the interaction. As the purpose of the recognition test in this study is to examine if students can recognize the appropriate conventional expression when giving a particular context, a contextualized multiple choice questionnaire was employed for the recognition test. Each item of the recognition test (see Appendix D) is composed of a description of the context in English and three response options. The 21 scenarios designed for the production test were used as the contexts of the multiple-choice questionnaire. Options were created to test if students can distinguish the target conventional expression and expressions that are grammatically correct but are inappropriately or unnaturally used in the given context.

The following is an example of a test item:

**Example 2: Test item example for the recognition test**

21. You are staying at a Hotel in Beijing. You want to go to Beijing University, but you don’t know how to get there. You ask the front desk:
   A. 请问，北京大学在哪儿? Qǐngwèn, Běijīng dàxué zài nǎ’èr?
   B. 请问，北京大学怎么走? Qǐngwèn, Běijīng dàxué zěnme zǒu?
   C. 请问，北京大学怎么到? Qǐngwèn, Běi jīng dàxué zěnme dào?
As shown in the example, both options A and C are grammatically correct but are not appropriate responses to the given situation. Option A is a general question to ask for a place’s location. Option C is a word-for-word translation of the English question “How do I get to Peking University?”—which sounds unnatural in Chinese. Only option B, “How do I go to Peking University?” is the target expression conventionally used in this situation.

All the options are provided in Chinese characters and in pinyin in order to minimize the effect of reading proficiency on students’ understanding of the options. Röver (2005) noted that a test that requires minimal or no literacy skills would greatly broaden the possible test taker population and improve the precision of measurement at lower levels of second language proficiency where reading capabilities interferes most with measurement of the construct. Considering the complexity of the Chinese writing system, the use of Pinyin is necessary to ensure the accurate measurement of students’ perceptive knowledge of conventional expressions.

3.2.3 Pilot testing

The designed production and recognition tests were piloted with four students of Chinese to gather information about each test item and to revise items for the operationalized test. The students who participated in the pilot test were from two universities in the United States’ Midwest. Two of the students had studied Chinese for one year, one for two years, and one four years. All of them were native English speakers. The production and recognition test were emailed to the participants so that they could complete the test at home. Participants were permitted to take as long as they
needed to finish the tests; however, they were instructed to complete the test without consulting any textbooks or dictionaries. After finishing the test, the participants were interviewed by the researcher to see if there were any descriptions of the scenarios that caused confusion. Based on their comments, the wording of three items were revised to ensure correct understanding of the described context. The following is an example of these revisions:

**Example 3. The revision of the test item**
You are having dinner with your Chinese friend. Your friend keeps *refilling your bowl* (**serving more food to you**) with her chopsticks and asks you to eat more. You don't want her to do so, you say:

3.2.4 The study strategy questionnaire

A study strategy questionnaire was designed as well to investigate what strategies students use to study conventional expressions. In previous literature, the Strategies Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) developed by Oxford (Oxford, 1990, 1992, 1996) is a widely and cross-culturally used survey instrument that measures the frequency at which language learners use various different learning strategies. SILL has an internal consistency reliability in the 90th percentile range and a strong predictive validity in relation to language performance, learning style and setting characteristics (Oxford, 1986, 1990, 1992; Oxford & Burry-Sock, 1995). In addition, this inventory has been applied to many languages. Therefore, the SILL is tailored to investigate students’ strategies of studying useful Chinese expressions in this study. The SILL is composed of six categories in which students rate their use of strategies. Students are asked to read
each statement of the questionnaire and rate the statement’s relevance to them on a scale of one to five:

1. Never or almost never true of me
2. Usually not true of me
3. Somewhat true of me
4. Usually true of me
5. Always or almost always true of me

The first SILL category contains nine questions that investigate strategies for effective vocabulary memorization. These nine questions were tailored for the current study as follows (the words in bold represent the revised portion):

1. I think of relationships between what I already know and new things I learn in Chinese.
2. I use new second-language words Chinese expressions in a sentence conversation so I can remember them.
3. I connect a new second-language word Chinese expression and an image or picture of the word expression to help me remember.
4. I remember a new Second Language word Chinese expression by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word the expression might be used.
5. I use rhymes to remember new Second Language words. I remember a useful expression as a whole.
6. I use flashcards to remember new Second Language words Chinese expressions.
7. I physically act out new Second Language words Chinese expressions.
8. I review Second Language lessons often review the expressions I find useful.

9. I remember new Second Language words or phrases Chinese expressions by remembering their location on the page, on the board, or on a street sign. In this category, item 5 was deleted since rhymes are not usually used to remember a Chinese expression. In order to examine if students store useful expression as a whole item, item 5 was revised as “I remember a useful expression as a whole.”

The second category of the SILL contains 14 questions that focus on different kinds of mental processes. They were revised to investigate how students with different study styles attempted to remember useful expressions:

10. I say or write new Second Language words Chinese expressions several times.

11. I try to talk like native Second Language Chinese speakers.

12. I practice the sounds of Second Language.

13. I use the Second Language words I know in different ways the Chinese expressions I have newly learned as much as I can.


15. I watch TV shows spoken in Second Language Chinese or go to movies spoken in Second Language Chinese.


17. I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in the Second Language.
18. I first skim a Second Language passage (read over the passage quickly) then go back and read carefully.

19. I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words in the Second Language make a note when I hear or read a useful expression in Chinese.

20. I try to find patterns in the Second Language Chinese.

21. I find the meaning of a Second Language word Chinese expression by dividing it into parts that I understand.

22. I try not to translate word for word.

23. I make summaries of information that I hear or read in the Second Language Chinese.

In this category, items 12, 16, 17, 18 were deleted because they are strategies related to reading, writing and phonetic systems, which is not the focus of the current study. Items 13 and 19 were revised to examine whether or not students notice useful expressions in input and then try to use them in later production.

The third category of the SILL contains six strategies used to compensate for missing knowledge. Items 25 and 29 were deleted for the current study since they were related to strategies to compensate for unknown words. Item 27 was deleted as well since it focused on a strategy used to deal with reading unknown information.

24. To understand unfamiliar Second Language words Chinese expressions, I make guesses.

25. When I can't think of a word during a conversation in the Second Language, I use gestures.
26. I make up new **words expressions** if I do not know the right ones in the **Second-Language Chinese**.

27. I read Second-Language without looking up every new word.

28. I try to guess what the other person will say next in the **Second-Language Chinese**.

29. If I can't think of a Second-Language word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing.

The metacognitive component is the fourth category of the SILL. It contains 9 strategies used for planning, organizing and evaluating self-learning. They were revised for the current study as follows:

30. I try to find as many ways as I can to use **my Second-Language Chinese**.

31. I notice my **Second-Language Chinese** mistakes and use that information to help me do better.

32. I pay attention when someone is speaking **Second-Language Chinese** and try to remember the useful expressions used by him/her.

33. I try to find out how to **be a better learner of Second-Language** and learn more useful expressions in Chinese.

34. I plan my schedule so I will have enough time to study **Second-Language Chinese**.

35. I look for people I can talk to in **Second-Language Chinese**.

36. I look for opportunities to read as much as possible in **Second-Language**.

37. I have clear goals for improving my **Chinese Second Language** skills.
38. I think about my progress in learning **Chinese Second Language**.

In this category, item 36 was deleted since it is a strategy related to reading.

The fifth category of the SILL contains 6 questions that reveal affective strategies for managing emotions, motivations, and attitudes. This category was deleted since it is not closely related to the learning of colloquial expressions.

The sixth category of the SILL contains six questions that reveal social strategies related to interacting with native speakers and other peer students. They were revised as the following:

45. If I do not understand something in **Second Language Chinese**, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again.

46. I ask **Second Language Chinese** speakers to correct me when I talk.

47. I practice **Second Language Chinese** with other students.

48. I ask for help from **Second Language Chinese** speakers.

49. I ask questions in **Second Language-Chinese**.

50. I try to learn about the culture of **Second Language Chinese** speakers.

After the revision, the final operational questionnaire for learning strategies contained five categories: strategies for remembering more effectively, strategies for using different kinds of mental processes, strategies for compensating for missing knowledge, strategies for planning, organizing and evaluating self-learning, and strategies for learning with other individuals. A total of 31 items were included in the questionnaire (see Appendix E).
3.3 Participants

85 students in either their second year of Chinese or beyond at a Midwestern university participated in this study. The background information part of the questionnaire reveals that the participants’ ages ranged from 17 to 23 years old. 46 of them were native English speakers, 26 were heritage learners who had been exposed to Mandarin Chinese, Cantonese or Min Dialect, and 13 were native Korean speakers. 70.6% of the participants identified “getting a job related to China” as one of their motivations for learning Chinese. 41.2% of the participants identified “communicating with my relatives/friends who speak Chinese” as one of their motivations while 29.4% of them chose “fulfilling the foreign language requirement for my college study” as one of their motivations.

At the time of this study, the average length of Chinese classroom instruction the students had received was 2.3 years (minimum 1 year, and maximum 6 years). In the data analysis for this study, the length of classroom instruction was grouped into three bands: one to two years (41 students: 15 native English speakers, 15 Heritage students, and 10 Korean students), two to four years (29 students: 24 native English speakers, 3 Heritage students, and 2 Korean students) and over four years (15 students: 6 native English speakers, 8 Heritage students, and 1 Korean students). 46 of the participants had visited Mainland China/ Taiwan at least once. Their average stay was about five months. In the data analysis, participants’ length of stay in Mainland China / Taiwan was grouped into five bands: 0 months (39 students: 25 native English speakers, 5 Heritage students, and 9 Korean students), up to one month (11 students: 6 native English speakers, 5 Heritage
students, and 1 Korean students), one to three months (20 students: 8 native English
speakers, 9 Heritage students, and 3 Korean students), three to twelve months (8 students:
6 native English speakers and 2 Heritage students), and more than twelve months (7
students: 2 native English speakers and 5 Heritage students).

Some of the important background information is summarized in the following
table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Subcategories</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>49.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>50.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language background</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>54.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Heritage</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>30.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of classroom instruction</td>
<td>1-2 years</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>48.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2-4 years</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>34.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Over 4 years</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of stay in the target environment</td>
<td>No residence</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>45.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Up to 1 month</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1-3 months</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3-12 months</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Over 12 months</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.4 Summary of learners’ background information
3.4 Procedures to collect data

Data collection was conducted in three phases. In the first phase, the background questionnaire and the production test were given to four instructors of the participants to have students finish them in class. The instructors were asked to tell students to answer all the questions even when the students were not sure of the answer and to think of the conversations in the test items as normal, everyday conversation between Chinese speaking individuals (i.e. not between people being extremely rude, sarcastic, funny, etc.). Students were permitted to take as long as they needed to finish the test, but were not allowed to consult textbooks, dictionaries, their instructor or other students. After the participants finished the test, the instructors collected the questionnaires and gave them to the researcher. The instructors reported that all the participants finished the tests within a 50-minutes class period, and most of them finished the tests in half an hour.

The second phase of data collection occurred two weeks after the production test. In this phase, the contextualized multiple-choice recognition test was given to the instructors of the participants, and instructors were asked to have students complete the test in class. The lag between production and recognition test was to reduce the effect of the production test on students’ choices in the recognition test. Similar to the procedure of the production test, students were instructed to take all the time they needed to finish the questions, but were once again prohibited from consulting textbooks, dictionaries, etc. The instructors reported that all the participants finished the test within a 50 minutes class period, and most of them finished it in 20 minutes.
The third phase of data collection occurred after one week of the recognition test. In this phase, the study strategy questionnaire was given to the instructors of the participants to have students complete it in class. The instructors were asked to explain that the strategy questionnaire was designed to help instructors understand how students study conventional Chinese expressions, which, in turn, would tell instructors how to help their students become more effective learners. In addition, the instructors were asked to tell students that there were no right or wrong answers and that students should respond to each statement in terms of how well the statement described their learning habits not how they thought they should be learning or how they thought other people learned. According to the reports from the instructors, students took about 20-25 minutes to finish the questionnaire.
Chapter Four Data Analysis

4. 1 Production test

4.1.1 Overall description of the data

The production test yielded a total of 1785 responses (85 participants responding to 21 scenarios). Table 4.1 shows the percentage of successful productions of the target expression in each tested scenario. The percentage was calculated as ([number of productions of the target expression by all the participants/number of the participants] x 100). The results show that the percentage of successful production ranges widely, from 83.5% to 1.2%. A high percentage of participants successfully produced three expressions: 对不起 duìbùqǐ (an expression of apology), 祝你生日快乐zhù nǐ shēngrì kuàilè! (Happy Birthday to you) and 好久不见 hǎojiǔ bùjiàn (long time no see). The English counterparts of these expressions would be used similarly in the tested scenarios. Therefore, students had no difficulties in producing these expressions in the task. Except for these three expressions, the percentages of successful production were lower than 30% in all the other scenarios, suggesting that the students’ capability to produce native-like conventional expressions in the situations that they might encounter in China is not promising. This is consistent with the findings for adult learners of English in previous studies (see De Cock, 2004, 2009; Howarth 1998a, 1998b) which show that the
acquisition of conventional expressions is particularly challenging. De Cock (2004, 2009) conducted a large-scale corpus driven analysis of the recurrent sequences of more than two single words that native speakers of English and advanced French speaking EFL learners tend to use as preferred ways of sayings in spoken and written discourse. The analysis shows that advanced learners still lack in routinized ways of interacting and building rapport with their interlocutors as well as of toning down and expressing the right amount of imprecision and vagueness. For example, De Cock finds out that native speakers use more “sort of” and “kind of” in speech to signal common ground and social closeness while these sequences are significantly underused overall in the learners’ spoken data. Similarly, Howarth (1998a, 1998b) examined the use of multi words units in 10 essays written by 10 non-native English graduate students, and compared to native use in the 1 million-word corpus of written British English. The results show that non-native writers produce a much lower density of conventional combinations (25%) than native writers do. These studies suggest that even advanced learners who have learned the language for a long time fail to use native-like conventional expressions.

Among the test items, less than 5% of the students were able to produce the target expressions in the scenarios of “self-introduction”, “leaving a friend’s home”, “Declining a colleague’s offer of coffee”, “taking a cab”, “Declining the offer of more food from a friend”, “checking out at a hotel”, and “splitting the bill with friends.” Notably, students’ management of conventional expressions in such social encounters as “self-introduction,” “leave-taking,” “refusal” and certain service encounters is very low. Even most heritage learners or advanced learners who have been exposed to Chinese for a long time were not able to produce the target expressions in these scenarios.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>Target expression</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Frequency&lt;sup&gt;6&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Apology to a boss</td>
<td>对不起！ An expression of apology for something you have done wrong</td>
<td>83.5</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Birthday wishes to a classmate</td>
<td>祝你生日快乐！ Conveying the good wishes to a person who is celebrating his/her Birthday</td>
<td>81.2</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Greeting a friend</td>
<td>好久不见 A greeting to a familiar after a long separation</td>
<td>71.8</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Looking for a teacher</td>
<td>X老师在吗？ Asking if a teacher is in office</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Asking directions</td>
<td>(Place name) 怎么走？ Asking for directions to a place</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Packing up leftovers</td>
<td>打包 Asking for a to-go container</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Congratulations on promotions to a coworker</td>
<td>恭喜，恭喜 Congratulating someone on something nice that has happened to him/her</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Wrong number</td>
<td>你打错了。 An expression to indicate to the listener that s/he has dialed the wrong number.</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Requesting the check at a restaurant</td>
<td>买单/结账 Asking for the check at a restaurant.</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Asking a customer’s name politely</td>
<td>请问您贵姓？ Asking someone’s surname politely</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Getting off a crowded bus</td>
<td>(请你/您)让一下 Asking someone to make a way so one may pass by</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Answering the phone at workplace</td>
<td>我就是 Confirming that the speaker is the person whom the listener is looking for</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Continued

Table 4.1 The percentage of successful production of the target expression in each scenario

<sup>6</sup> The frequency here indicates the number of students who successfully produced the target expression in this scenario.
Table 4.1 continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>Target expression</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Answering a phone in the middle of a conversation with a friend</td>
<td>不好意思 An apology when you have done something slightly embarrassing or impolite</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Leaving the office</td>
<td>我先走了。 An expression of departing a group of people</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Self-introduction to new colleagues</td>
<td>大家好 A greeting to a group of people</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Leaving a friend’s home</td>
<td>不用送了 Declining the host’s attempt to escort the guest out</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Decline a colleague’s offer of coffee</td>
<td>不用了。 Declining someone’s offer of help / food / drink</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Taking a cab</td>
<td>(请您)打表 Asking the Taxi driver to run the meter</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Decline the offer of food from the host</td>
<td>我自己来 Declining someone’s offer of food / drink / help and indicating your willingness to do it on your own</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Checking out at a hotel</td>
<td>退房 Checking out a hotel room</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Splitting the bill with friends</td>
<td>我们AA吧！ Indicating that each person pays his/her own expenses</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.1.2 Factors influencing the learning of conventional expressions

4.1.2.1 Identifying the significant factors

As discussed in chapter two, the previous literature identifies four factors that might influence the learning of conventional expressions: proficiency, length of stay in the target environment, and the learner’s native language. However, research results about the effects of these factors are not consistent. It is still unclear which of these four
factors, has or have, an effect on the learning of conventional expressions. Influenced by Bardovi-Harlig (2011)’s study, a repeated measure logistic regression is conducted in this study to see which of the aforementioned factors have a significant effect on learners’ production. Considering that conventional expressions are often associated with a context, students’ learning of conventional expressions in different types of contexts might follow different patterns. The type of the scenarios of the test item is considered as one variable in the regression analysis as well. Therefore, the dependent variable of the regression analysis is the production of a conventional expression. A student’s response received a score of “1” if it exhibited the target conventional expression and “0” if it did not. The independent variables are length of classroom instruction, length of stay in the target environment, students’ language background and the types of the scenarios of the test items. As discussed in the chapter on methodology, the length of students’ classroom instruction is grouped into three levels: 1 year, 2-4 years and more than 4 years. The length of stay in the target environment is converted into five bands: 0 (no study abroad experience), up to 1 month, 1-3 months, 3-12 months, over 12 months. The bands end with over 12 months since most study abroad programs are no longer than one year. The learners’ backgrounds in this study include English-speaking learners, Korean-speaking learners and heritage learners of Chinese. The scenarios of the test items are grouped into three settings: home/campus interactions, workplace interactions and service encounters. The repeated measures of regression were conducted using Generalized Estimating Equations with a binomial probability distribution and logit link (Hardin and Hilbe 2003; Liang and Zeger 1986) using SPSS 18.
Table 4. 2 Tests of model effects from logistic regression for production test

The obtained results (see Table 4.2) show that the length of classroom instruction (P=0.000<0.05), learners’ language backgrounds (P=.009<0.05) and settings of the test items (P=.000<0.05) have a significant effect on a learner’s production of a conventional expression while the length of stay (P=.135>0.05) in the target environment does not. This suggests that if the usages of conventional expressions are not pointed out to the students by the instructors or people whom the students are interacting with, exposure to the target language alone cannot ensure students to acquire the target expression. This is also consistent with Bardovi-Harlig (2011)’s finding in English that the level of proficiency has a significant effect on the production of conventional expressions by L2 learners of English while length of residence in an English environment does not.

Departing from Bardovi-Harlig (2011)’s study, the present study further indicates that language background and the setting of the test item has a significant effect on production.

As shown in Table 4.3, as the level of instruction length rises, the estimated mean for production increases from 0.15 at Level 1 to 0.19 at Level 2, and achieves 0.26 at
Level 3. In terms of the effect of language background, heritage learners’ estimated mean for production (0.25) is higher than that of Korean-speaking students (0.19). However, the mean of Korean-speaking students is higher than that of English-speaking students (0.15). This suggests that heritage students and students who have cultural backgrounds similar to the target language have some advantages when learning conventional expressions. The estimated mean of production for items in the home/campus settings is higher than the mean for items in the workplace. Service encounter settings have the lowest estimated mean. This suggests that students manage conventional expressions used in campus/home settings better than the expressions in workplace settings while many of them lack the knowledge of conventional expressions used in service encounters. The following sections will analyze in detail the effect of these factors on production.
1. Estimated Marginal Means: Length of Instruction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instruction Length</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>95% Wald Confidence Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (1 year)</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.020</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (2-4 years)</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.026</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (over 4 years)</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>.020</td>
<td>.22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Estimated Marginal Means: Length of Time Abroad

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abroad Length</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>95% Wald Confidence Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 (0 month)</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.014</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 (1 month)</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.020</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (1-3 months)</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.044</td>
<td>.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (3-12 months)</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.029</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 (over 12 months)</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>.044</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Estimated Marginal Means: Language Backgrounds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Backgrounds</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>95% Wald Confidence Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.015</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.029</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.033</td>
<td>.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Estimated Marginal Means: Settings of the Test Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settings</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>95% Wald Confidence Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home/Campus</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.023</td>
<td>.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workplace</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.014</td>
<td>.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.017</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Estimated marginal means from logistic regression for production
4.1.2.2 Differences between heritage and non-heritage students

Considering that length of instruction and length of stay in the target environment may have different effects on heritage learners and non-heritage learners, a similar statistical analysis process is conducted individually for the data from both heritage and non-heritage learners.

The data of non-heritage learners is composed of 1239 responses in the production test (59 non-heritage learners tested with 21 scenarios). The results of non-heritage learners’ data (see Table 4.4) are consistent with the results obtained from all the students, showing that the length of classroom instruction (P=0.000<0.05), learners’ language backgrounds (P=.000<0.05) and settings of the test items (P=.000<0.05) have a significant effect on learner’s production of a conventional expression while the length of stay (P=.125>0.05) in the target environment does not.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type III</th>
<th>Wald Chi-Square</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instruction Length</td>
<td></td>
<td>16.321</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Backgrounds</td>
<td></td>
<td>27.171</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abroad Length</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.348</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settings</td>
<td></td>
<td>77.535</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dependent Variable: Production
Model: Instruction Length, Language Backgrounds, Abroad Length, Settings

Table 4.4 Tests of model effects from logistic regression for production: Non-Heritage learners
1. Estimated Marginal Means: Length of Instruction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instruction Length</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>95% Wald Confidence Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (1 year)</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.020</td>
<td>.09 - .17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (2-4 years)</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.027</td>
<td>.10 - .20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (over 4 years)</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>.025</td>
<td>.17 - .27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Marginal Means: Length of Time Abroad

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abroad Length</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>95% Wald Confidence Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 (0 month)</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.013</td>
<td>.10 - .16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 (1 month)</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.024</td>
<td>.06 - .16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (1-3 months)</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.046</td>
<td>.12 - .30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (3-12 months)</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.038</td>
<td>.08 - .23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 (over 12 months)</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>.025</td>
<td>.17 - .27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Estimated Marginal Means: Language Backgrounds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Backgrounds</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>95% Wald Confidence Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.014</td>
<td>.11 - .17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.033</td>
<td>.12 - .25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Estimated Marginal Means: Settings of the Test Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settings</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>95% Wald Confidence Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home/campus</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.029</td>
<td>.27 - .38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workplace</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.017</td>
<td>.16 - .23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.016</td>
<td>.02 - .09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.5 Estimated marginal means from logistic regression for production:
Non-Heritage Students
The estimated marginal means (see Table 4.5 above) show that as instruction length increases, the mean of production increases. Also similar to the overall results, non-heritage students performed best in campus/home settings (mean=0.33), followed by workplace settings (mean=0.20), and performed the worst in service encounters (mean=0.06). Among non-heritage students, Korean speaking students (mean=0.14) outperformed English speaking students (mean=0.18) in terms of the estimated marginal mean of production.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Wald Chi-Square</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instruction Length</td>
<td>10.513</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abroad Length</td>
<td>3.915</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.418</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settings</td>
<td>32.612</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dependent Variable: Production
Model: Instruction Length, Abroad Length, Settings

Table 4.6 Tests of model effects from logistic regression for production: Heritage Students

The data of heritage learners is composed of 546 responses in the production test (26 heritage learners tested in 21 scenarios). The regression analysis results obtained from the data of heritage learners (Table 4.6) show that length of instruction (p=0.005<0.05) and the settings of the test items (p=0.000<0.05) have a significant effect on production. However, length of stay in the target environment (p=0.418>0.05) does not. Since heritage learners are considered as one language group in this study, language
background is not considered as one variable in the regression model for heritage learners.

1. Estimated Marginal Means: Length of Instruction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instruction Length</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>95% Wald Confidence Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (1 year)</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.028</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (2-4 years)</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>.076</td>
<td>.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (over 4 years)</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>.036</td>
<td>.23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Estimated Marginal Means: Length of Time Abroad

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abroad Length</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>95% Wald Confidence Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 (0 month)</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.040</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 (1 month)</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (1-3 months)</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.083</td>
<td>.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (3-12 months)</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.061</td>
<td>.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 (over 12 months)</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>.065</td>
<td>.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Estimated Marginal Means: Settings of the Test Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settings</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>95% Wald Confidence Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home/campus</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>.032</td>
<td>.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workplace</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.027</td>
<td>.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.036</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.7 Estimated marginal means from logistic regression for production: Heritage Students
Estimated marginal means (Table 4.7) also indicate that heritage learners’ ability to produce conventional expressions improves as their length of classroom instruction increases. Similar to non-heritage learners, heritage learners also perform worst in service encounter settings (estimated marginal mean=0.20), followed by workplace settings (estimated marginal mean mean=0.25), and perform the best in campus/home settings (estimated marginal mean=0.37).

4.1.3 Length of classroom instruction and production

The current study shows that the length of classroom instruction has a significant effect on learners’ production of conventional expressions. Since length of instruction may to some degree determine the level of a learner’s language development, the obtained results can be viewed as indirect evidence that a student’s ability to produce a conventional expression is coupled with his or her level of language development. Sometimes, the inability to produce certain conventional expressions is due to inadequate grammatical or vocabulary knowledge. This is consistent with Wong (2012)’s findings that more advanced learners of Chinese as a second language produce more multiword expressions than less advanced learners in a computerized oral proficiency assessment operated by the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK). In the data of my study, students with longer instructional time greatly outperformed students with short instructional time in two scenarios: “calling the wrong number” and “asking for directions.” In the scenario of “calling the wrong number,” 27.8% of the students who have received classroom instruction for more than 4 years were able to produce the target expression “(你)打错了(nǐ)dàcuò le. You dialed the wrong number.” Only 2.6% of the students who have received classroom instruction for 2-4 years were able to produce the
target expression, and none of the students who have received classroom instruction for 1 year were able to produce the target expression. Most of the students used the word-for-word translation in English “你打错的电话号码. nǐ dà cuò de diànhuà hàomà. You dialed the wrong number” to respond to this scenario. This suggests that students’ production of the target form “你打错了. Nǐ dăcuò le” is influenced by the development of their grammatical knowledge of “resultative complements.” Although participants who had received at least one year of instruction had already studied the “resultative complements” and had been exposed to “打错 dăcuò” as an example, they have not internalized this structure. The unfamiliarity with the “resultative complements” led to the inability to produce the target form. As their instruction length increases, students are exposed to more examples of “resultative complements” and gradually internalize this structure. Therefore, students who had received longer instructional time outperformed the other two groups. However, lower-level students’ inability to produce this expression could also be influenced by the presentation of this expression in textbooks. In the most popular textbook, “打错了” is treated as a “resultative complement structure” rather than a set phrase. If the target form “打错了” is introduced as a set phrase in the vocabulary list of teaching materials related to telephone conversation, lower-level students might be able to master this form better.

In the scenario of “asking for directions,” 44.3% of the students who had received classroom instruction for more than 4 years were able to produce the target expression.

7In Chinese, a “resultative complement” is usually an adj or a verb, following the main verb to denote the result of the action. In the example of “打错 dial the wrong number,” the verb is “打 to dial” and “错 wrong; mistakenly” is the resultative complement denoting the result of the verb “打.”
“...怎么走? zěnme zǒu? how do I get to …?” while only 14.3% of the students who had received classroom instruction for 2-4 years were able to produce the target expression and 10% of students who had received classroom instruction for 1 year were able to produce the target expression. Most students who had received instruction for one year used the general question form “...在哪 zàinǎ? (Where is …?)” in this scenario rather than the more native-like form “...怎么走 zěnme zǒu,” despite having studied this expression in the first semester of their Chinese study. This suggests that as the length of instruction increases, students are able to associate different questions forms with their desired communicative intentions and use different forms to appropriately express their desired meaning. Given this consideration, our teaching of conventional expressions should help students associate these expressions with their communicative intentions, thus permitting students to distinguish the subtle differences among similar expressions.

4.1.4 Students’ language background, settings of the expression, and production

In the current study, both the students’ language background and settings of the expressions had a significant effect on production. Therefore, it is important to further analyze if the effect of language background can be influenced by the settings of the expressions. To do this, this dissertation analyzes the production of students from different backgrounds for each item and then for each setting.

4.1.4.1 The production of students from different backgrounds for each item

Figure 4.1 below shows the mean of production for students from different language backgrounds in each test item. The mean of production is calculated as number of correct productions of the target expression in each test item generated by students of each background / number of students with that language background. As shown in the
figure, in three test items (“leaving the office”, “checking out at a hotel” and “decline the offer of food from the host”), only heritage learners were able to produce the target expression. The first two scenarios also exist in American culture, so non-heritage students have no problem interpreting these scenarios as “leave-taking” and “checking out,” but they failed to produce the more native-like forms either due to the lack of knowledge about different “leave-taking” forms or due to the lack of experience in the given scenario. In the scenario of “leaving the office”, most of the non-heritage students use the general leave-taking form “再见 zàijiàn bye.” Some of them used an alternative form “明天见! Míngtiān jiàn! See you tomorrow!” which is similar to the English leave-taking expression. Even non-heritage learners who have stayed in China for 2-3 years were unaware that the expression “我先走了! Wǒ xiān zǒu le! An expression of departing a group of people.” is conventionally used to indicate the intention to leave a group. Students’ familiarity with the general form “再见 zàijiàn bye” impedes the possibilities for them to use the native-like expression.
In the scenario of “checking-out at a hotel,” due to the lack of experience in this situation, only two heritage students were able to produce the target expression “退房 tuìfáng, checking out a hotel room.” Some students used an expression similar to its English counterpart to compensate for the missing knowledge, for example, “我现在就 wǒ xiànzài jiù zǒu. I am leaving now” “我现在出去。wǒ xiànzài chūqù. I am going out” or “我现在去。Wǒ xiànzài qù. I am leaving.” Some students adopted the expression in shopping or dining out settings to compensate for the missing knowledge, such as, “请你给我买单 Qǐng nǐ gěi wǒ mǎidān, please let me buy the bill” which is used in the setting

Figure 4. 1 Mean of production for students from different background in each item
of dining out and “我付钱 Wǒ fùqián, I will pay” which is a general expression for paying money.

The scenario of “decline the offer of more food from the host” usually would not occur in American culture, so some of the non-heritage learners have different interpretations for this scenario. In Chinese culture, the host of the dinner may keep serving more food to the guest throughout the whole process of dinner to show hospitality, even when the guest’s plate or bowl is full. Accordingly, the guest will use the expression “我自己来 wǒ zìjǐ lái, I will help myself” to show the acceptance of the host’s hospitality. If the host insists on giving the guest more food, the guest will take his/her bowl off the table or cover the bowl with hands to show that they really don’t want any more food. However, some non-heritage learners thought this scenario only happens when the guest’s bowl is empty and the host tries to serve more food to the guest. Consequently, they used excuses, such as “我吃饱了 wǒ chībǎo le, I am full,” “*我很满 wǒ hěnmǎn” (a word-for-word English translation of “I am full”) or “对不起，我吃完了 duìbúqǐ, wǒ chīwán le. I am done with the meal” to decline the host’s offer of more food. Some students thought the scenario only happens at the beginning of the dinner and used excuses like “我吃过了 wǒ chīguò le, I have eaten” or “我不饿 wǒ bù’è, I am not hungry” to decline the offer of more food. Some students correctly interpreted the scenario, but were only able to recall part of the target expression, for instance, they used expressions like “我自己吃饭 wǒ zìjǐ chīfàn” literally “I will eat on my own,” or “我可以自己做了, wǒ kěyǐ zìjǐ zuò le,” literally “I can do it on my own.”
Students’ difficulties with conventional expressions in these scenarios echo Barron’s (2003: 186) statement that students’ difficulties in doing things appropriately using language may arise in “situations requiring a pragmatic routine in one language but an ad hoc formulation in the other; [and] situations requiring a pragmatic routine in one language but no remark in the other.” In the scenario of “leaving the office,” Chinese culture and American culture require different conventional expressions for the same leaving-taking situation. The scenario of “declining more food offered by the host” is uniquely called for in Chinese culture while this scenario is not marked in American culture. Due to their exposure to the Chinese way of social interactions at home, heritage learners did slightly better in these situations.

However, most heritage learners were still unable to produce the target conventional expression “我自己来 wǒ zìjǐ lái, let me help myself” in the scenario of “declining more food offered by the host” although they interpreted the situation correctly. Some of them could only recall parts of the target expression. Only the two heritage learners who have stayed in China for more than 6 years correctly produced the expression. This suggests that heritage learners may have certain advantages in reading culture specific scenarios and recognizing conventional expressions, but these advantages may not lead to the production of conventional expressions. Deviations from the conventional expression often result.

4.1.4.2 The production of students from different backgrounds in each setting

This section explores whether learners with different backgrounds will have certain advantages in producing conventional expressions in different settings. As shown in Figure 4.2, the production by students with three language backgrounds (English,
Korean and Heritage) show similar patterns in the home/campus setting. Heritage learners didn’t show any obvious advantages in producing conventional expressions in this setting. In some scenarios, Korean students even did a little better than heritage students. This suggests that the setting of campus/home is the most familiar setting to all the learners, most likely because most of dialogs they studied in their textbooks occur in this setting. After classroom instruction, learners with different language backgrounds can perform equally well in this setting.

Figure 4.2 Mean of production for students from different backgrounds in home/campus setting
In the setting of workplace (see Figure 4.3), heritage learners only did slightly better than the other two groups in Item 7—-the scenario of “leaving the office,” which has already been analyzed in section 1.4.1.1.

Only in the setting of service encounters (see Figure 4.4) did heritage learners outperform the other two language groups in 6 out of 7 items in this setting. Heritage learners’ better performance in this setting can be explained by their increased opportunities to engage in service encounters in Chinese restaurants, Chinese grocery stores or public transportation systems in China.
Findings from the comparison between heritage and non-heritage learners echo previous studies showing that heritage learners may have impressive receptive skills but a limited range of sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence, that is, the ability to speak to or write to people with appropriate levels of formality and politeness, across a range of genres and for different audiences and for a wide range of purposes (Sohn, 2004)
4.2 Recognition test

4.2.1 Overall description of the data

The recognition test yielded a total of 1785 responses (85 participants responding to 21 scenarios). Each response received a point value. If the participant chose the correct expression in each contextualized multiple choice item, 1 point was received for this response, otherwise, 0 points were received. Table 4.8 showed the percentage of successful recognition of the target expression in each tested scenario by all the students. The percentage was calculated as [number of the recognition scores received by all the participants/number of the participants] x 100. The results show that the percentage of successful recognition ranges from 95.3% to 16.5%. More than half of the students recognized the target expressions occurring in 14 out of 21 items. Similar to the production test, a high percentage of participants successfully recognized two expressions: “祝你生日快乐! Zhù nǐ shēngrì kuàilè! Happy Birthday to you!” and “好久不见! Hǎojiǔ bújiàn! Long time no see.” Less than 25% of the participants recognized the following expressions: “我自己来 wǒ zìjǐ lái I’ll help myself” “我们 AA ba, indicating that each person pays his/her own expenses,” and “(请你/您)让一下 Qǐng nǐ/nín ràng yǐxià, asking someone to make a way so one may pass by”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>Target expression</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Frequency³</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1    | Greeting a friend                | 好久不见  
A greeting to a familiar after a long separation                              | 95.3       | 81         |
| 11   | Birthday wishes to a classmate  | 祝你生日快乐！  
Conveying the good wishes to a person who is celebrating his/her Birthday       | 95.3       | 81         |
| 21   | Asking directions                | (Place name) 怎么走？  
Asking for directions to a place                                                  | 77.6       | 66         |
| 6    | Leaving a friend’s home          | 不用送了  
Declining the host’s attempt to escort the guest out                             | 74.1       | 63         |
| 13   | Congratulating a coworker on a promotion | 恭喜，恭喜  
Congratulating someone on something nice that has happened to him/her          | 71.8       | 61         |
| 3    | Looking for a teacher            | X老师在吗？  
Asking if a teacher is in office                                                 | 61.2       | 52         |
| 2    | Self-introduction to new colleagues | 大家好  
A greeting to a group of people                                                  | 60.0       | 51         |
| 20   | Checking out at a hotel          | 退房  
Checking out a hotel room                                                        | 57.6       | 49         |
| 4    | Asking a customer’s name politely | 请问您贵姓  
Asking someone’s surname politely                                                | 55.3       | 47         |
| 14   | Wrong number                     | 你打错了。  
An expression to indicate to the listener that s/he has dialed the wrong number! | 55.3       | 47         |
| 17   | Requesting the check at a restaurant | 买单/结账  
Asking for the check at a restaurant                                              | 54.1       | 46         |
| 5    | Answering the phone at workplace | 我就是  
Confirming that the speaker is the person whom the listener is looking for      | 52.9       | 45         |

Continued

Table 4. 8 Percentage of successful recognition of the target expression in each tested scenario

³ The frequency here indicates the number of students who successfully recognized the target expression in this scenario.
Table 4.8 continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>Target expression</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Leaving the office</td>
<td>我先走了。 An expression of departing a group of people</td>
<td>50.6</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Packing up leftovers</td>
<td>打包 Asking for a to-go container</td>
<td>50.6</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Taking a cab</td>
<td>(请您)打表 Asking the Taxi driver to run the meter</td>
<td>47.1</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Apology to a boss</td>
<td>对不起！ An expression of apology</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Decline a colleague’s offer of coffee</td>
<td>不用了。 Declining someone’s offer of help / food / drink</td>
<td>44.7</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Answering a phone in the middle of a conversation with a friend</td>
<td>不好意思 An apology when you have done something slightly embarrassing or impolite</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Decline the offer of more food from the host</td>
<td>我自己来 Declining someone’s offer of food / drink / help and indicating your willingness to do it on your own</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Splitting the bill with friends</td>
<td>我们AA吧！ Indicating that each person pays his/her own expenses</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Getting off a crowded bus</td>
<td>(请你/您)让一下 Asking someone to make a way so one may pass by</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.2 Factors influencing the recognition of conventional expressions

4.2.2.1 Identifying the significant factors

Similar to the analysis of the data from the production task, a repeated measure logistic regression was conducted to determine which of the variables investigated in the study (length of formal instruction, length of stay in the target environment, learners’ language background and the settings of the test items) have an effect on students’
recognition of conventional expressions. The dependent variable of the regression analysis is the recognition of a conventional expression in each test item. The independent variables are length of classroom instruction, length of stay in the target environment, students’ language background and the settings of the test items. Results (see Table 4.9) show that students’ language backgrounds (P=.000<0.05) and the settings of the expressions (P=.000<0.05) have a significant effect on students’ recognition but length of instruction (P=.055<0.05) and length of stay in the target environment (P=.072<0.05) do not.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type III</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wald Chi-Square</td>
<td>df</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruction Length</td>
<td>5.817</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abroad Length</td>
<td>8.597</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.072</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Backgrounds</td>
<td>20.476</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settings</td>
<td>53.436</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dependent Variable: Recognition
Model: Instruction Length, Abroad Length, Language Backgrounds, Settings

Table 4. 9 Tests of model effects from logistic regression for recognition
## 1. Estimated Marginal Means: Length of Instruction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instruction Length</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>95% Wald Confidence Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (1 year)</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>.030</td>
<td>.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (2-4 years)</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>.037</td>
<td>.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (over 4 years)</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>.035</td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## 2. Estimated Marginal Means: Length of Time Abroad

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abroad Length</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>95% Wald Confidence Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 (0 month)</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>.033</td>
<td>.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 (1 month)</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>.028</td>
<td>.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (1-3 months)</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>.037</td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (3-12 months)</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>.059</td>
<td>.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 (over 12 months)</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.067</td>
<td>.45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## 3. Estimated Marginal Means: Language Backgrounds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Backgrounds</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>95% Wald Confidence Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>.031</td>
<td>.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.041</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>.030</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## 4. Estimated Marginal Means: Settings of the Test Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settings</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>95% Wald Confidence Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home/Campus</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>.023</td>
<td>.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workplace</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>.026</td>
<td>.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>.029</td>
<td>.45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. 10 Estimated marginal means for recognition from logistic regression
Similar to the results from the production test (see Table 4.10 above), heritage learners’ estimated mean for recognition (0.69) is higher than that of Korean speaking students (0.58), and the mean of Korean speaking students is higher than that of English speaking students (0.49). The estimated mean of recognition for items in the home/campus settings (0.69) is higher than the mean for items in the workplace (0.56). Service encounter settings received the lowest estimated mean (0.51). This suggests that students are more frequently exposed to conventional expressions in campus/home settings than the expressions in workplace settings, and they received the least frequent exposure to conventional expressions in service encounters. The following sections will analyze in detail the effect of language background and setting on recognition.

### 4.2.2.2 The differences between heritage and non-heritage students

In order to find out if factors of length of stay in the target environment and settings of test items have different effects on heritage and non-heritage students, the same statistical analysis was conducted on the data of heritage and non-heritage students respectively.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type III</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Triangle</td>
<td>Type III</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wald Chi-Square</td>
<td>df</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruction Length</td>
<td>5.822</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.054</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abroad Length</td>
<td>11.023</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.026</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Backgrounds</td>
<td>5.482</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.019</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settings</td>
<td>28.722</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dependent Variable: Recognition
Model: Instruction Length, Abroad Length, Language Backgrounds, Setting

Table 4.11 Tests of model effects from logistic regression for recognition: Non-Heritage Students

107
1. Estimated Marginal Means: Length of Instruction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instruction Length</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Lower</th>
<th>Upper</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (1 year)</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>.042</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (2-4 years)</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.041</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (over 4 years)</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>.046</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Estimated Marginal Means: Length of Time Abroad

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abroad Length</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Lower</th>
<th>Upper</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 (0 month)</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>.036</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 (1 month)</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>.028</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (1-3 months)</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>.046</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (3-12 months)</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>.086</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 (over 12 months)</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>.083</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>.86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Estimated Marginal Means: Language Backgrounds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Backgrounds</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Lower</th>
<th>Upper</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>.029</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>.043</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Estimated Marginal Means: Settings of the test items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settings</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Lower</th>
<th>Upper</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home/Campus</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>.031</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workplace</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>.038</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>.040</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. 12 Estimated marginal means from logistic regression for recognition: Non-Heritage Students
Results obtained from the data of non-heritage students show that length of stay in the target environment (P=0.026 < 0.05), students’ language backgrounds (P=0.019 < 0.05) and settings of the test items (p=0.000<0.05) have a significant effect on non-heritage learner’s recognition while length of instruction does not (see Table 4.11 above). As shown in Table 4.12, the estimated mean for recognition increases steadily as the length of time abroad rises, from 0.45 for students who have no experience in China to 0.70 for students who have stayed in China for more than one year. In terms of the effect of language backgrounds, Korean-speaking students’ estimated mean for recognition (0.61) is still higher than that of English-speaking students (0.52). Similar to the results from production tests, non-heritage learners also performed their best in the setting of home/campus (estimated mean=0.64), followed by the setting of workplace (estimated mean=0.56) and did worst in the setting of service encounters (estimated mean=0.49) in the recognition test.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type III</th>
<th>Wald Chi-Square</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instruction Length</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.618</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abroad Length</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.848</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settings</td>
<td></td>
<td>32.224</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dependent Variable: Recognition
Model: Instruction Length, Abroad Length, Settings

Table 4. 13 Tests of model effects from logistic regression for recognition: Heritage Students
Results obtained from the data of heritage students (see Table 4.13) show some similarities with the results from non-heritage learners: settings of the test items ($p=0.000<0.05$) have a significant effect on a heritage learner’s recognition while length of instruction does not. However, different from the results of non-heritage students, length of stay in the target environment does not have a significant effect on heritage learners’ recognition. Similar to the results from the production tests, heritage learners also performed their best in the setting of home/campus (estimated mean=0.64), followed by the setting of workplace (estimated mean=0.56) and did the worst in the setting of service encounters (estimated mean=0.49) in the recognition test (see Table 4.14 below).
1. Estimated Marginal Means: Length of Instructional Estimates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instruction Length</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>95% Wald Confidence Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (1 year)</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>.038</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (2-4 years)</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>.082</td>
<td>.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (over 4 years)</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>.062</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Estimated Marginal Means 2: Length of Time Abroad Estimates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abroad Length</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>95% Wald Confidence Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 (0 month)</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>.105</td>
<td>.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 (1 month)</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>.038</td>
<td>.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (1-3 months)</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td>.051</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (3-12 months)</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>.078</td>
<td>.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 (over 12 months)</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>.069</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Estimated Marginal Means 3: Settings of the test items Estimates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settings</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>95% Wald Confidence Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home/Campus</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>.040</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workplace</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>.040</td>
<td>.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>.031</td>
<td>.53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. 14 Estimated marginal means from logistic regression for recognition: Heritage Students

4.2.3 Length of stay in the target environment and recognition

Learners in the study abroad environment are assumed to have more contact with target language culture and exposure to a rich target language input, and thus should benefit from such an environment for linguistic gains. However, as discussed earlier, that
is only the “ideal” situation. Inconsistent results can be found in previous studies regarding whether students’ knowledge of conventional expressions can benefit from the target environment (see details in chapter two). As pointed out by Spenader (2008), whether the target language environment can make a difference has to do with an infinite number of variables, including the type and quality of interactions the learners have with others and with the target language environment. The degree of exposure to and immersion in the target language and culture may be determined by factors such as the kinds of relationships students have with host nationals and learner-specific personality traits. The present study is consistent with these points, for the length of stay in the target environment was found to have no significant effect on learners’ production of conventional expressions. The type and the quality of interactions the learners have could be a more important factor in determining their ability to produce conventional expressions. However, in the present study, length of stay in the target environment was found to have a significant effect on non-heritage learners’ recognition of conventional expressions. This suggests that learners are exposed to more conventional expressions in the target environment; but this exposure does not ensure improvement in production. Only the receptive knowledge of conventional expressions is improved. This finding is consistent with Roever (2012)’s discovery that learners with even short-term residence (two months) in the target culture increased their receptive knowledge of conventional expressions and longer residence led to further improvement. However, Roever also points out that the specific expressions acquired depend on the interactional settings in which learners communicate. In the present study, the effect of length of stay in the target environment on recognition differs in different settings. Figure 4.5 shows the mean of
recognition scores obtained by students with different lengths of residence in the target environment in different settings.

![Graph showing mean of recognition by length of stay in different settings: Non-heritage students](image)

**Figure 4.5 Mean of recognition by length of stay in different settings: Non-heritage students**

As shown in Figure 4.5, students’ recognition of conventional expressions increases rapidly for expressions used in service encounters. In the setting of home/campus, students’ recognition increases as the length of stay extends to 3 months. However, after 3 months, no obvious improvement is observed. In regards to the workplace setting, students’ recognition does not show much improvement as the length of stay increases. The results suggest that participants often engage in home/campus
interactions or service encounters but have minimal access to workplace interactions in the study abroad environment. As a result, their ability to either recognize or produce the common workplace expressions does not improve much even after more than 12 months in China.

4.2.4 Language background, settings of the expressions and recognition

The present study found that language background has a significant effect on recognition, but this effect may work differently in different settings since a scenario effect has been identified for language background (see Section 4.1.4). It is important to further explore if expression recognition by students’ with different backgrounds varies in each of the test settings.

In the home/campus setting (see Figure 4.6), native English speakers’ and native Korean speakers’ means of recognition show similar patterns. However, heritage learners generally outperformed non-heritage learners in all of the test scenarios except for the “Birthday Wish” scenario, where all the students performed well. In particular, salient differences are observed between the performances of heritage and non-heritage learners in four scenarios: “looking for a teacher (test item 3),” “Declining the offer of more food from a host (test item 8),” “answering a phone during a conversation with friends (test item 10)” and “calling the wrong number (test item 14).” Each of the four scenarios calls for a conventional expression different from its equivalent in English, which makes it challenging for non-heritage learners to recognize.
In the workplace setting (see Figure 4.7), heritage learners did not do much better than non-heritage learners. Heritage learners only outperformed non-heritage learners in two out of the seven scenarios in this setting: “declining colleague’s offer of coffee (test item 9)” and “Congratulating a coworker on a promotion (test item 13).” This suggests that heritage learners’ familiarity with expressions of refusal and congratulations are better than non-heritage learners; however, as discussed in section 4.1.4, heritage learners did not show any overall notable advantages in producing conventional expressions in workplace settings.

Figure 4.6 Mean of recognition in home/campus setting by learners with different language backgrounds
Figure 4. 7 Mean of recognition in workplace setting by learners with different language backgrounds

Korean speaking students outperformed both heritage and English-speaking students in two scenarios: “asking a customer’s name politely (test item 4)” and “apologizing to a boss (test item 12).” In the first scenario, a polite form of asking someone’s last name “请问您贵姓 Qīngwèn nín guìxìng, May I ask your honorable last name?” is required to show respect to the customer. In the second scenario, the apology expression “对不起 duìbùqǐ” should be used to show the seriousness and sincerity of one’s apology. However, in this situation, many English-speaking and heritage learners selected the casual form “不好意思 bùhǎoyísǐ, an apology when you have done
something slightly embarrassing or impolite” or “我错了 Wǒ cuò le. My bad.” The former is often used in situations where a minor mistake or a small indiscretion is made while the latter is often used by children to apologize to adults for doing something wrong. Apparently, many participants could not distinguish among usages of the three apology expressions. Both the scenarios of “asking a customer’s name politely” and “apologizing to a boss” require speakers to identify the social hierarchy involved in the scenario before choosing the correct response. Since social hierarchy is often marked in Korean language, Korean students are likely to be more sensitive to the social hierarchy involved in contexts and hence outperformed other students in the recognition test in regard to these two scenarios. However, in the production test, Korean students did not outperform other students in the two scenarios. Many Korean students still used the general expression for asking names “你叫什么名字? Nǐ jiào shénme míng zì? What’s your name?” in the scenario of “asking a customer’s name politely.” The familiarity with the general form outweighed the possibility of producing the polite form. In the scenario of “leaving the office,” Korean speaking students showed a much higher mean of recognition than that of English-speaking students. As discussed earlier, this scenario calls for an expression “我先走了. Wǒ xiān zǒu le. An expression of departing a group of people.” rather than the general form “再见 zàijiàn. See you again” to indicate the speaker’s intention to leave the group of his/her co-workers. In Korean, this scenario calls for a conventional expression similar to the one used in Chinese. Influenced by their first language, Korean students are more likely to recognize this expression than English-speaking learners. However, this
advantage still did not show up in the production test: the use of the more familiar form in text books “再见 Zàijiàn! See you again!” prevented them from using the target form.

![The Setting of Service Encounters](image)

**Figure 4.8 Mean of recognition in service encounters by learners with different language backgrounds**

In service encounters (see Figure 4.8), heritage learners did better than non-heritage learners in three out of the seven scenarios: “packing up the leftover at a restaurant (test item 15)” “requesting the check at a restaurant (test item 17)” and “checking out at a hotel (test item 20).” This suggests that heritage learners’ increased ability to recognize conventional expressions is also determined by the quality and type of interactions in which they engage in the target language. Since heritage learners’
interactions with the Chinese language are mainly limited to home, campus and/or service encounters, they exhibit certain advantages in recognizing conventional expressions used in the home/campus setting and the setting of service encounters. But due to their limited access to workplace interactions, they did not show any advantages in either recognizing or producing conventional expressions in this setting. Similar to native English speakers, they were unable, for the most part, to use the formal and polite form of the language in the workplace.

4.3 The comparison between production and recognition

![Figure 4.9 Mean of production and recognition in each item](image)

Figure 4.9 compares the mean of production and recognition in each test item by all the participants. The mean of production/recognition was calculated as [sum of each
production or recognition of the target expression in each test item / the number of all the participants].

As shown in Figure 4.9, except for item 12, “apologizing to the boss,” participants’ recognition outperformed production in all the items. This suggests that students’ receptive knowledge of conventional expressions is generally better than productive knowledge. A Fisher’s exact test⁹ was conducted to see if there is any correlation between the participants’ recognition and production of each item. The results (see Table 4.15) show a significant correlation (p < 0.05) in only 4 items: “calling the wrong number (test item 14)”; “packing up leftover at a restaurant (test item 15)”; “requesting a check at a restaurant (test item 17)”; and “getting off a crowded bus (test item 18).” Students’ inability to recognize these expressions indicates that students’ failure to successfully produce the target expressions in these scenarios can be attributed to insufficient exposure to these expressions. However, in the other scenarios, recognition is not significantly correlated with production, suggesting that learners’ recognition of a given expression does not necessarily guarantee production.

---

⁹ The chi-square test was not used here because some of the cells have counts less than 5.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Fisher's Exact Test</th>
<th>Exact Sig. (2-sided)</th>
<th>Exact Sig. (1-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Fisher's Exact Test</td>
<td>.066</td>
<td>.066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Fisher's Exact Test</td>
<td>.297</td>
<td>.174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Fisher's Exact Test</td>
<td>.139</td>
<td>.080</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Fisher's Exact Test</td>
<td>.179</td>
<td>.140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Fisher's Exact Test</td>
<td>.717</td>
<td>.425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Fisher's Exact Test</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.726</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Fisher's Exact Test</td>
<td>.055</td>
<td>.029</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Fisher's Exact Test</td>
<td>.059</td>
<td>.059</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Fisher's Exact Test</td>
<td>.577</td>
<td>.337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Fisher's Exact Test</td>
<td>.132</td>
<td>.075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Fisher's Exact Test</td>
<td>.573</td>
<td>.573</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Fisher's Exact Test</td>
<td>.559</td>
<td>.296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Fisher's Exact Test</td>
<td>.168</td>
<td>.121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Fisher's Exact Test</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Fisher's Exact Test</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Fisher's Exact Test</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.753</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Fisher's Exact Test</td>
<td>.018</td>
<td>.015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Fisher's Exact Test</td>
<td>.037</td>
<td>.037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Fisher's Exact Test</td>
<td>.100</td>
<td>.100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Fisher's Exact Test</td>
<td>.506</td>
<td>.329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Fisher's Exact Test</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.496</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. 15 The Fisher’s exact test results for production and recognition in each item
Comparing recognition and production scores reveals that the learners’ responses to the recognition and production tests can be classified under four categories: high recognition with high production, leading to native-like use; low recognition with low production, suggesting insufficient exposure; high recognition with low production, indicating the overgeneralization of the familiar expression; and low recognition with high production, suggesting students’ difficulty in distinguishing similar expressions.

As discussed in the methodology chapter, expressions which were used by more than 66.7% of the native speakers (i.e., two thirds of the participants) were included in the test. Using this as a reference, the recognition or production of a target expression is considered high if it was recognized or produced by more than 70% of the students. If a target expression was recognized or produced by less than 30% of the students, the recognition of production of this expression is considered low.

### 4.3.1 High recognition with high production

“好久不见 Hǎojiǔ bùjiàn! Long time no see!” and “祝你生日快乐 Zhù nǐ shēngrì kuāilè! Hope you have a happy Birthday!” are the two most frequently recognized expressions as well as the two most produced expressions. These two expressions received 71.8% and 81.2% production rate (=percentage of participants who successfully recognize this expression) respectively, and both of them obtained more than 95% of recognition rate (=percentage of participants who successfully produce this expression), suggesting that learners’ control of these two expressions is close to native use.
4.3.2 High recognition with low production

Three expressions received more than 70% recognition rate but got less than 20% production rate: “不用送了! Búyòng sòng le! It’s not necessary to see me out!” “恭喜, 恭喜! Gōngxi, gōngxi! Congratulations!” and “…怎么走? …zěnme zǒu? How do I get to …?” Examination of the production data in this context reveals that the overuse of familiar forms may contribute to the low production of the target expressions in scenarios where they are appropriate. The first expression “不用送了búyòng sòng le. It’s not necessary to see me out” is used by guests to politely refuse their host’s offer to see them out. In the recognition test, many participants understood the expression as a way for guests in Chinese culture to respond to their hosts’ attempts to see them out. In the production test, many participants successfully interpreted the scenario when it was presented to them, but they used general expressions of responding to someone’s politeness in their response, such as “你太客气了! Nǐ tài kèqì le! You are too polite!” or “别客气. Bié kèqì. Don’t be polite.” In the native speakers’ data, nine out of the 36 participants used one of these two expressions to show the acceptance of the host’s polite action of “seeing the guest out” and then used the target expression “不用了! Búyòng sòng le! It’s not necessary to see me out” to prevent the host from actually seeing the guest out. However, this ultimate refusal of the host’s offer to see the guest out was not observed in the students’ data. Compared to the target expression “不用送了! Búyòng sòng le! It’s not necessary to see me out,” expressions like “你太客气了! Nǐ tài kèqì le! You are too polite” or “别客气! Bié kèqì! Don’t be polite!” are more familiar to students since the two expressions are also used to respond to expressions of gratitude. The
overuse of these two familiar forms prevented students from producing the target expression. Some students produced the grammatically incorrect form of the target expression (“* 你不得跟我走 Nǐ bùdéi gēn wǒ zǒu!”) as a result of not knowing the corresponding negative of “得 děi, have to.” In Chinese, the negative of “得 děi, have to” is “不用 búyòng or 不必 búbì. Don’t need to.” rather than “* 不得 bùdèi.” Due to this unfamiliarity with the negative of “得 děi, have to”, many learners are able to recognize the target expression “不用送了! Búyòng sòng le! It’s not necessary to see me out!” but fail to correctly reproduce it.

In Chinese, “恭喜 Gōngxǐ, congratulate; congratulations” informs another person that the speaker is pleased about the other’s good fortune or achievements. It can also be used in the conventional Chinese New Year expression “恭喜发财! Gōngxǐ fācái!” to wish someone a prosperous New Year. Due to students’ familiarity with this expression, some students, especially heritage students, used “恭喜发财! Gōngxǐ fācái!” as a general form of congratulations, relying on it to respond to an imagined co-worker’s promotion. Many participants produced “很好! Hěnhào! Very Good!” or “太好了! Tài hào le! Great!” in this scenario to show their positive evaluation on the coworkers’ achievement. Since these two expressions are often used by instructors to respond positively to students’ performance, students easily pick up and reproduce them even though the students were able to recognize the target expression “恭喜，恭喜 Gōngxǐ, gōngxǐ, congratulations” easily in the recognition test.

The expression “…怎么走 …zěnme zǒu? How do I get to …?” is used in Chinese culture to ask for directions. In the recognition test, 77.6% of the participants were able to
recognize this expression; however, only 18.8% of the participants were able to produce it. Most of the participants used the general form of asking locations “…在哪儿? …zài nǎr?” due to their familiarity with this form, while none of the native speakers used this form to ask for directions to a place. Some participants used the variation “…怎么到? …zěnme dào?” confusing “到 dào, to arrive” with “走 zǒu, to walk.” This suggests that “…在哪儿? …zài nǎr?” is internalized as one chunk by most participants and thus can be easily recalled in situations involving places; however, many participants have not internalized “…怎么走 …zěnme zǒu? How do I get to …?” as a chunk and thereby either used the general question for location instead, or produced deviations from the target expression.

4.3.3 Low recognition with low production

The expressions “我自己来. Wǒ zìjǐ lái. Let me help myself,” “不用了! Búyòng le! It’s not necessary!” and “我们AA吧! Wǒmen AA ba, indicating that each person pays his/her own expenses” were the expressions recognized and produced the least in the tests, which suggests an insufficient exposure to these three expressions. As discussed earlier (see Section 4.1.4), “我自己来. Wǒ zìjǐ lái. Let me help myself” is a situation-specific phrase in Chinese culture. Proving that students had insufficient exposure to this scenario (i.e. declining the host’s offer of more food), they even presented different interpretations of the situation. Only heritage learners had been exposed to this typical cultural interaction in China and thus were able to successfully produce this expression.

In Chinese, “不用了! Búyòng le! It’s not necessary” is typically used to decline help or suggestions. In the test, this expression is meant to be used to refuse a coworker’s
attempt to buy the speaker coffee. Instead of using the conventional expression for
refusal, most students first expressed their appreciation of the help using “谢谢! Xièxiè,
Thanks!” and then adopted an excuse to refuse the help, for example, “谢谢，可是我现在
不想喝咖啡。Xièxiè, kěshì wǒ xiànzài bù xiǎng hē kāfēi. Thanks, but I don’t want to
drink coffee now.” “谢谢，我不喜欢咖啡。Xièxiè, wǒ bù xǐhuān kāfēi. Thanks, but I
don’t like coffee.” Or “谢谢，我不渴。Xièxiè, wǒ bù kě. Thanks, I am not thirsty.”

Some of the students adopted a very direct and blunt refusal, such as “我不要。Wǒ
bùyào. I don’t want any.” “我不需要。Wǒ bù xūyào. I don’t need any.” or “我现在不
要。wǒ xiànzài bùyào. I don’t want now.” In the native data, all the speakers expressed
their appreciation of the help offered by using “谢谢! Xièxiè! Thanks!” or “非常感谢
Fēicháng gǎnxiè! Thanks a lot!” and 83% of them used the conventional expression “不
用了! Búyòng le! It’s not necessary!” to refuse the offer. Only two of them provided an
excuse after using the conventional expression. This is consistent with previous studies’
findings that nonnative speakers tend to be wordier when conducting certain speech acts
than native speakers. Students’ low use of the conventional expression “不用了! Búyòng
le!” for refusal can also be attributed to insufficient exposure to refusal scenarios in their
input. Very few refusal scenarios are found in current popular Chinese teaching materials.
Accordingly, the practice of the refusal form “不用了! Búyòng le!” is not emphasized.

Only 24.7% of the students were able to recognize the target expression “我们AA
吧, Wǒmen AA ba, indicating that each person pays his/her own expenses” in the
receptive test and only 1.2% of the students were able to produce it. Although students
who studied abroad in China identified it as a useful expression (see section 3.2.1.2), insufficient exposure to this expression in the instruction environment resulted in the participants’ low production and recognition of this expression. This suggests that the selection of conventional expressions in current textbooks may not reflect what students need to know. Expressions that are identified as useful by students with study abroad experience should be considered when designing textbooks and classroom materials.

4.3.4 Low recognition with high production

Only one expression, “对不起 duìbùqǐ, sorry,” received a high production rate (83.5%) and relatively low recognition rate (43.5%). In the test, this expression is called for in the scenario of the speaker being 30 minutes late to a meeting and thus in need of apologizing to the boss. Since “对不起 duìbùqǐ, sorry” is the general term for apology, students were able to use it with ease in the production test. In the recognition test, students had to distinguish the correct intentions conveyed by three apology forms: “对不起 duìbùqǐ, sorry” “不好意思 bùhǎoyīsī, an apology when you have done something slightly embarrassing or impolite” and “我错了。Wǒcuò le. It’s my mistake.” In the Chinese language, “对不起 duìbùqǐ, sorry” is often used in situations where serious mistakes are made or in formal settings. “不好意思 bùhǎoyīsī, an apology when you have done something slightly embarrassing or impolite” is usually used for a less serious mistake, when the speaker’s action has annoyed others, or when someone has gone out of their way to help the speaker. For example,

1) When you are leaving a dinner party, you could say:
   不好意思, 我得走了。
   Bùhǎoyīsī, wǒdeī zǒule
   Excuse me, I have to go
2) When you telephone someone late at night, you could say:

不好意思，打扰了。……
Bùhǎoyìsi，dáráole……
Sorry for interrupting...

3) When your friend agrees to proofread your article, you could say:

不好意思，麻烦你了。……
Bùhǎoyīsī，máfnán nǐ le.
Sorry that I troubled you…..

“我错了! Wòcuò le! My bad!” is often used by a child to apologize to adults for something he/she has done. For example,

When a boy breaks a glass again, his mom would say?
妈妈：你为什么又把杯子弄坏了?
Māma：Nǐ wèishénme yòu bā bēizī nònghuài le?
Mum：Why did you break a glass again?
孩子：妈妈，我错了，以后不会这样了。
Háizǐ：Māmā，wǒ cuò le，yǐhòu bùhuì zhèyàng le.
Child: Mum, my bad. I won’t do it again.

Therefore, when native participants needed to apologize to a boss for being egregiously late in the production test, 72% of them chose “对不起 duìbùqǐ” or “非常/真 的对不起 fēicháng / zhēnde duìbùqǐ, extremely / truly sorry” to make the apology stronger. The rest of the native speakers used a more formal form of apology “抱歉 bàoqiàn I apologize” or “非常/真抱歉 fēicháng / zhēn bàoqiàn. I sincerely apologize.” to mark the formality of the situation. In the recognition test, however, less than half of the participants were able to choose the appropriate form “对不起 duìbùqǐ sorry” to respond to the need for a serious and formal apology; the majority confused the different intentions conveyed by the three apology forms. This suggests that the differentiation of the communicative intentions conveyed by related conventional expressions should be
also emphasized in the teaching; otherwise, unsuccessful use of native-like forms or even misunderstandings will result.

4.4 Strategies used by students to study useful expressions

4.4.1 Strategies used by all participants

As discussed earlier, a questionnaire was designed to investigate what strategies are used by students to study expressions they find useful. The questionnaire (Oxford, 1990, 1992, 1996) investigated three types of strategies: memory strategies, which are related to the storage and retrieval of new information; metacognitive strategies, which are used to plan, organize and evaluate self-learning; and social strategies, which are related to learning with others. Memory strategies are sub-categorized into three groups: strategies for remembering more effectively; strategies for using different mental processes; and strategies for compensating for missing knowledge. As discussed in the methodology chapter, students were asked to designate how frequently they used each strategy on a scale of one to five:

1. Never or almost never true of me
2. Usually not true of me
3. Somewhat true of me
4. Usually true of me
5. Always or almost always true of me
### Overall Descriptive Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N&lt;sup&gt;10&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Strategies</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>3.8745</td>
<td>.63408</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metacognitive Strategies</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>3.7162</td>
<td>.50274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies for Mental Processing</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>3.4693</td>
<td>.53104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies for Missing knowledge</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>3.2627</td>
<td>.75083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies for remembering</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>4.89</td>
<td>3.1765</td>
<td>.45338</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.16 Descriptive statistics of strategies used by participants

As shown in Table 4.16, students used social strategies most frequently, followed by metacognitive strategies, strategies for mental processing, and strategies for missing knowledge. Strategies related to effective memorization are the least frequently used. The obtained data suggests that students are trying to learn about the target culture, are trying to get feedback from native speakers, and are aware of the importance of planning, monitoring and evaluating self-learning. Nonetheless, their strategies to store and retrieve new information are generally not adequate. This may partially explain why students’ productive knowledge of conventional expressions is not satisfying.

---

<sup>10</sup> N denotes the number of participants.
Descriptive statistics of social strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ask others to slow down or say it</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.24</td>
<td>.781</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>again</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn about the culture of Chinese</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>.936</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>speakers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask Chinese speakers to correct me</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>.944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask questions in Chinese</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>.843</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask for help from Chinese speakers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>.991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice Chinese with other students</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>1.107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid N (listwise)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.17 Descriptive statistics of social strategies used by participants

Among social strategies (see Table 4.17), “Ask others to slow down when one doesn’t understand something” and “Try to learn about the culture of Chinese speakers” are the most frequently used strategies. “Ask for help from Chinese speakers” and “Practice Chinese with other students” are the least frequently used strategies. These results suggest that students are trying to learn more about the target culture and rely on the strategy of “Ask others to slow down” to deal with communication breakdowns. However, their opportunities to practice with other students and learn from native speakers are limited.

Among metacognitive strategies (see Table 4.18), the two most frequently used strategies are “Notice mistakes and use that information to do better” and “Think about progress in learning.” The two least frequently used strategies are “plan schedule so having more time to study” and “Look for people I can talk to in Chinese.” Strategies of “Pay attention when someone is speaking and try to remember the useful expression used by him/her”; “Find as many ways as I can to use my Chinese”; and “Find out how to learn more useful expressions” ranked in the middle. This suggests that students are
aware of the importance of monitoring mistakes and progress in learning, but they do not have a productive strategy to find out ways to learn more about and use the language. This may result in inadequate practice outside of class.

Descriptive statistics of metacognitive strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Notice mistakes and use that information to do better</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>.718</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think about progress in learning</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>.796</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have clear goals for improving skills</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>.876</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay attention when someone is speaking and try to remember the useful expression used by him/her</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>.937</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find as many ways as I can to use my Chinese</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>.852</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find out how learn more useful expressions</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>.734</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan schedule so having more time to study</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>.983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Look for people I can talk to in Chinese</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>.998</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.18 Descriptive statistics of metacognitive strategies used by participants

Among the nine strategies for mental processing (see Table 4.19 below), “Say or write new expressions several times”; “Try to talk like native Chinese speakers”; and “Find the meaning of an expression by dividing it into parts that I understand” are the top three most frequently used strategies. The use of these strategies suggests that students tend to use repetition to store new information and they prefer to use native-like expressions. When encountering a new expression, they try to understand it by dividing it into parts that they can comprehend. This suggests that adult learners rely on an analytical analysis of the language and this analysis helps them understand new expressions.
Descriptive statistics of strategies for mental processing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Say or write new expressions several times</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>.964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Try to talk like native speakers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>1.096</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding the meaning of an expression by dividing it into parts that I understand</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>.936</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Try to find patterns in Chinese</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>.862</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take a note when I hear or read useful expressions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>1.201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Try not to translate word-for-word</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>1.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Try to use the expression I newly learned as much as I can</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>.819</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make summaries of information that I hear or read</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>1.086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take a note When I hear or read a useful expression</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>1.139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid N (listwise)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.19 Descriptive statistics of strategies for mental processing used by participants

However, as pointed out by Wary (2001), this analytical process may also increase the difficulties of processing conventional expressions as one memory chunk. As a result, in the production data, some students were only able to produce part of a conventional expression. The three least frequently used strategies were “Watch TV show spoken in Chinese or movies spoken in Chinese”; “Make summaries of information that I hear or read in Chinese”; and “Try to use the newly learned expression as much as I can.” The minimal use of “Watch Chinese TV show or movies” may be attributed to the limited opportunities students have to access Chinese media or to their insufficient proficiency levels. In not making summaries of the information they receive, students limit their opportunities to synthesize information that they have gathered from reading and listening, thereby decreasing their opportunities to notice conventional expressions in
reading and listening materials. Students’ reticence to use newly learned expressions as much they can suggests that they usually depend on the practice opportunities provided in class to remember a new expression. Students are not motivated to practice and review newly learned expressions on their own. Therefore, interval review and synthesis of the newly expressions should be provided often in instruction, to enforce memory.

### Descriptive statistics of Strategies for missing knowledge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Make guesses</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>.977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make up new expressions according to my native language</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>1.060</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guess what the other person will say next</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>1.052</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 4.20 Descriptive statistics of Strategies for missing knowledge used by participants**

To compensate for missing knowledge, students reported that they guess the meaning of unfamiliar expressions (see Table 4.20). On average, they sometimes make up new expressions according to their native language if they do not know the right ones in Chinese and sometimes they guess what the others will say next. The use of these strategies suggest that students usually use analogy or mapping from English to Chinese to compensate for missing knowledge. As discussed earlier, conventional expressions are often culturally specific. When students encounter an unknown conventional expression, they tend to use the norms in their native culture to infer the meaning of the unknown conventional expression, which can lead to either misunderstanding or misusing of the
conventional expression in the target culture. Therefore, in terms of teaching conventional expressions, caution should be taken when introducing a new expression to avoid students’ understanding the expression through their base culture.

**Descriptive statistics of strategies for remembering effectively**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Think of relationships between I already know and the new expression I learn</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>.730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remember a useful expression as a whole</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>.809</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review the expressions I find useful</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>.872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use new expression in a conversation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>.733</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make a mental picture of a situation in which the expression might be used</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>1.145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connect a new expression and an image or picture of the expression to help me remember</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>1.113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remember new expressions by remembering their locations on the page</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>1.249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use flashcards to remember useful expressions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>1.442</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physically act out new expressions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.87</td>
<td>.870</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid N (listwise)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 4.21 Descriptive statistics of strategies for remembering effectively used by participants**

Among the nine strategies for remembering a new expression (see Table 4.21), students used the strategy of “Think of relationships between what I already know and the new expressions I learn” most frequently, followed by the strategy of “I remember a useful expression a whole”, and then by the strategy of “I often review the expressions I find useful.” These results reflect that students often adopt the strategy of comparing old and new information and the strategy of review to help them remember an expression.
more effectively. They also tend to remember the expression as a whole once they find out that the expression is usually used to express certain communicative intention. Among the nine strategies of this group, the strategy of “I remember a new expression by making a mental picture of a situation in which the expression might be used” and “I connect a new Chinese expression and an image or picture of the expression to help me remember” ranked respectively as the 6th and 5th on the scale of frequently used remembering strategies. The strategy of “I physically act out new expressions” and the strategy of “using flashcards to remember useful expressions” are ranked as least frequently used strategies for remembering. This suggests that students seldom associate useful expressions with the situations in which they are used. Considering that conventional expressions are often bound by context, associating the expressions with their contexts will facilitate not only the understanding of the expressions, but also the memorization of and ability to recall the expressions. Learners’ low use of strategies of contextual association demands attention be paid to these contexts in the development of teaching materials and classroom instruction.

To sum up, students reported using social strategies most frequently, followed by metacognitive strategies, strategies for mental processing, and then strategies for missing knowledge. Strategies related to remembering effectively were least frequently used. These results suggest that although students are trying to learn about the target culture, their access to the target culture and native speakers is limited. Therefore, the strategy of “Ask for help from Chinese speakers”, the strategy of “Practice Chinese with others”, and the strategy of “Watch Chinese TV shows or movies” are scarcely used. In addition, students are aware of the importance of planning, monitoring and evaluating self-
learning, but their use of strategies to store and retrieve new information is not adequate. Generally speaking, students tend to use repetition, association of old and new knowledge, and review to remember a useful expression. But strategies involving deeper processing, such as summarizing what they have read or heard, trying to find patterns or using a new expression in a conversation are less frequently used. Moreover, students seldom associate useful expressions with the contexts in which the expressions are used, which may impede the understanding and efficient recall of these expressions. The infrequent use of these memory strategies may partially explain students’ low scores in the production test and relatively high scores in the receptive test. In addition, when compensating for missing knowledge, students tend to infer the meaning of an unfamiliar expression based on their native language. This explains the cultural barrier encountered by students when learning new conventional expressions and alerts us to a type of L1 transfer.

4.4.2 Differences between low performing students and high achievers

In order to find out if the use of different strategies might influence students’ learning of conventional expressions, this section compares strategies used by students who performed well in the production and receptive tests and those who did not perform well.

Students whose average production/recognition score (the average score is calculated as the sum of the production/recognition scores received by each student in all the test items / the number of test items) was within the top 25%, i.e., students whose average production score \( \geq 0.23 \) and average recognition score \( \geq 0.66 \), were considered high-achieving students in the learning of conventional expressions. Students whose
average production/recognition score was below 75%, i.e., students whose average production score $\leq 0.15$ and average recognition score $\leq 0.39$, were considered low performing students. Only native English speaking learners are selected for the analysis to eliminate the effect of language backgrounds on the results.

Based on these criteria, 16 students were identified as high achievers while 16 students were identified as low performing students. The background information of the selected high achievers is summarized as the following: Length of instruction (1-2 years: 6 students; 2-4 years: 5 students; over 4 years: 5 students), Length of stay in the target environment (no residence: 2 students; up to 1 month: 3 students; 1-3 months: 8 students; 3-12 months: 1 student; over 12 months: 2 students). The background information of the selected low-performing students is summarized as: Length of instruction (1-2 years: 8 students; 2-4 years: 6 students; over 4 years: 2 students), Length of stay in the target environment (no residence: 11 students; up to 1 month: 1 student; 1-3 months: 3 students; 3-12 months: 1 student; over 12 months: 0 student).
### Descriptive Statistics for Low Performing Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Think of relationships between what I already know and new expressions I learn</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>.719</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review the expression I find useful</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>.806</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remember a useful expression as whole</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>.727</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use new expression in a conversation</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>.512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use flashcards to remember useful expressions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remember new expressions by remembering their location on the page</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>1.063</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connect a new expression and an image or picture of the expression</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>.854</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make a mental picture of a situation in which the expression might be used</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>1.025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physically act out new expressions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.87</td>
<td>.619</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Descriptive Statistics for High Achievers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Think of relationships between what I already know and new expressions I learn</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>.929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connect a new expression and an image or picture of the expression</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>.957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make a mental picture of a situation in which the expression might be used</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>1.195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review the expression I find useful</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>1.025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remember a useful expression as whole</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>.806</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use new expression in a conversation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>.730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remember a useful expression as a whole</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>1.328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use flashcards to remember useful expressions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physically act out new expressions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>.856</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.22 The use of strategies for remembering effectively by low performing students and high achievers
A t-test was conducted to determine if low performing students and high achievers differ in their use of different groups of learning strategies (strategies for remembering more effectively; strategies for using different mental processes, strategies for compensating for missing knowledge, metacognitive strategies and social strategies). The t-test results demonstrate that only the use of strategies for missing knowledge differed significantly between the two groups of students (p=0.009<0.05, df=30). The comparison of the mean of strategies for missing knowledge shows that high performing students (mean=3.48) use this strategy more frequently than low performing students (mean=2.94) do. This indicates that high performing students are able to utilize strategies more often to help them deal with missing knowledge.

In order to investigate if different strategies within each group are favored by either low performing students or high achievers, the use of each strategy within the strategy groups was measured for the two sets of students. In the category of strategies for remembering more effectively (see Table 4.22), although both groups used the strategy of “Think of relationships between old and new knowledge” most frequently, their use of the strategy “Connect a new Chinese expression and an image or picture of the expression to help remember” and “Remember a new expression by making a mental picture of a situation in which the expression might be used” differed greatly. The two strategies ranked as the second and third most frequently used remembering strategies by high performing students while they ranked eighth and ninth for low performers.

This suggests that in addition to “thinking of relationships between old and new knowledge,” deeper processes like connecting the expression to a picture or mental image of the situation where it is used can help students remember more effectively. On the
other hand, low performing students use the strategy of “Use flashcards to remember useful expressions” more frequently than high achievers do. This indicates that the use of flashcards may not greatly influence students’ learning of useful expressions.

Among the strategies for mental processing (see Table 4.23 below), the most frequently used strategy by high achievers is “Try to talk like native Chinese speakers” (mean=4.5)—this strategy ranked third among low-performing students (mean=3.69). This suggests that high performing students are more willing to shift to the norms of target language use and, therefore, are more attentive to native-like language choices.
### Descriptive Statistics for Low Performing Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Say or write new expressions several times</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>.894</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find the meaning of an expression by dividing into the parts I understand</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>.619</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Try to talk like native Chinese speakers</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>.873</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Try to find patterns in Chinese</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>.957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Try to use the expressions I newly learned as much as I can</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>.629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take a note when I hear or read a useful expression</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>.957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make summaries of information that I hear or read</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>.856</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Try not to translate word-for-word</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>.834</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch TV shows or go to movies in Chinese</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td>.998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid N (listwise)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Descriptive Statistics for High Achievers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Try to talk like native Chinese speakers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>.632</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Say or write new expressions several times</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>.854</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Try to find patterns in Chinese</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>.931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find the meaning of an expression by dividing into the parts I understand</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>1.014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Try to use the expressions I newly learned as much as I can</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>.814</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Try not to translate word-for-word</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>1.031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take a note when I hear or read a useful expression</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>1.328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch TV shows or go to movies in Chinese</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>1.436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make summaries of information that I hear or read</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>1.078</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid N (listwise)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 4.23 The use of strategies for mental processing by low performing students and high achievers*
Similarly, previous studies have found that the shift of self-identity plays an important role in the course of language socialization (Wang & Mallinckrodt, 2006). In a study of American high school sojourners in Sweden, Spenader (2005, 2008) found that the best language learners were the ones with the highest level of identity shift toward the target culture. Siegal (1995) investigated two American female learners living and studying in Japan. As the two subjects both struggled to reposition themselves in the highly sophisticated Japanese sociolinguistic context, the individual differences between the two in acculturation to the target culture resulted in the selection of different socially appropriate terms. Similarly, in the current study, learners who were willing to conform to the norms of target language use performed better in the recognition and production of conventional expressions.

Higher achievers and low performing students also show differences in how they process information (see Table 4.23). The strategy of “Find the meaning of a Chinese expression by dividing it into parts that I understand” ranked as the second most frequently used strategy by low performing students while this strategy only ranked fourth among high performing students. Instead, high performing students used the strategy of “Find patterns in language” more often. This suggests that low performing students depend more on analytical analysis to process new information while high performing students tend to find out the patterns of the new information.
### Descriptive Statistics for Low Performing Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Make guesses to understand unfamiliar expressions</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>.680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make up new expressions according to my native language</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>.885</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guess what the other person will say next</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>1.088</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid N (listwise)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Descriptive Statistics for high achievers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Make guesses to understand unfamiliar expressions</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>.680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guess what the other person will say next</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>1.031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make up new expressions according to my native language</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>.854</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid N (listwise)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.24 The use of strategies for missing knowledge by low performing students and high achievers

Among the strategies for missing knowledge (see Table 4.24), high achievers used the strategy of “Guess what other person will say next” more frequently than low performing students did. This suggests that high performing students are able to anticipate what conversation partners will say next to help them better understand what is being said. Equipped with the knowledge of conventional expressions, high performing students are more likely to be able to anticipate what their conversation partners will say next.
### Descriptive Statistics for Low Performing Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Think about my progress in learning Chinese</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>.602</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have clear goals for improving my Chinese skills</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>.680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan my schedule so I will have enough time to study</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>.544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Notice my mistakes and use that information to help me</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>.775</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay attention when someone is speaking Chinese and try to remember the useful expressions used by him/her</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>.957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Try to find as many ways as I can to use my Chinese</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>.704</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Try to find out how to learn more useful expressions</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>.577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take for people I can talk to in Chinese</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>1.047</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Valid N (listwise)

### Descriptive Statistics for high achievers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Notice my mistakes and use that information to help me</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>.574</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have clear goals for improving my Chinese skills</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>.730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think about my progress in learning Chinese</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>.806</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Try to find as many ways as I can to use my Chinese</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>.834</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay attention when someone is speaking Chinese and try to remember the useful expressions used by him/her</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>.931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Try to find out how to learn more useful expressions</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>.619</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take for people I can talk to in Chinese</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>.946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan my schedule so I will have enough time to study</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>.894</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Valid N (listwise)

Table 4.25 The use of metacognitive strategies by low performing students and high achievers

Among metacognitive strategies (see Table 4.25), the most frequently used strategy by high achievers is “Notice my mistakes and use that information to help me do better”; however, this strategy only ranked fourth among low performing students. In
addition, high achieving students ranked the strategy of “Find as many ways as I can to use Chinese” as the fourth most frequently used strategy while this strategy ranked as the seventh most frequently used strategy by low performing students. Low performing students ranked the strategy of “Plan my schedule so I will have enough time to study Chinese” as the third most frequently used strategy while high achievers ranked this strategy as the least-frequently used metacognitive strategy. The different use patterns of metacognitive strategies suggest that high achieving students are better at monitoring and learning from their mistakes. In addition, they try to make use of as many opportunities as they can to practice the language. Although low performing students are aware of the importance of spending more time on Chinese study, they perceive their language practice as a rigid plan relegated to assigned periods of time and may not take every possible opportunity to use the target language.

In terms of the six social strategies examined in this study (see table 4.26), the major difference between low performing students and high achievers is the use of the strategy of “asking Chinese speakers to correct me when I talk.” This strategy is the most frequently used social strategy by high performing students while it is the fourth most frequently used one by low performing students. This is consistent with the findings that high performing students are more attentive to their mistakes and are more willing to get feedback on their mistakes so that they can learn from these mistakes.
### Descriptive Statistics for Low Performing Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Try to learn about the culture of Chinese speakers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.19</td>
<td>.750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask the other person to slow down or say it again</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>.680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask questions in Chinese</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>.856</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ask Chinese speakers to correct me when I talk</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>.793</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask for help from Chinese speakers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>.719</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice Chinese with other students</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>1.033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Valid N (listwise)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Descriptive Statistics for high achievers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ask Chinese speakers to correct me when I talk</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>.816</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask the other person to slow down or say it again</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>1.033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Try to learn about the culture of Chinese speakers</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>.998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask questions in Chinese</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>.957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask for help from Chinese speakers</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice Chinese with other students</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Valid N (listwise)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 4.26 The use of social strategies by low performing students and high achievers**

To sum up, high performing students use strategies of compensating for missing knowledge more frequently than low achieving students to deal with unknown expressions. They often anticipate what speakers will say next to help them better understand an ongoing conversation while low performing students usually do not adopt this strategy. Moreover, high performing students are more engaged in deep mental processing when storing information. In addition to the strategy of repetition and
association of old and new information, they use the strategy of “connecting new expression to a mental image or picture” and the strategy of “remembering a new expression by making a mental picture of a situation in which the expression might be used” more frequently than low performing students do. Connecting a new expression with a mental image or picture of the situation where the expression is used helps high performing students store and retrieve information better. In addition, high performing students use the strategy of “Try to talk like native Chinese speakers” more frequently than low performing students do. This indicates that high performing student are more willing to conform to the norms of the target language and hence are more likely to be socialized in the use of conventional expressions in the target culture. Finally, the use of metacognitive and social strategies by the two groups of students show that high performing students are more attentive to their mistakes and often ask feedback from native speakers to help them do better while low performing students tend to refrain from doing so.

4.5 Summary of the Findings

This section summarizes the findings from the current study. As mentioned earlier, this study investigates American learners’ productive and receptive knowledge of Chinese conventional expressions through a discourse completion production test and a contextualized multiple choice recognition test. Quantitative and qualitative analysis of the tests results was conducted to find out what factors have an effect on students’ learning of conventional expressions. A questionnaire was also adopted to explore what strategies are used by students to study useful expressions.
4.5.1 Overall results from the production and recognition tests

Results from the production test suggest that students’ successful production of target expressions ranges widely from 83.5% to 1.2%. Except for three expressions (对不起 Duìbùqǐ! “Sorry,” 祝你生日快乐! Zhù nǐ shēngrì kuàilè! “Happy Birthday to you!” and 好久不见! hǎojiǔ bùjiàn! “Long time no see,”) the percentages of successful production were lower than 30% in all the other scenarios, revealing that conventional expressions used in situations that students might encounter in Chinese culture are challenging for American students to produce. Less than 5% of the students were able to produce the target expressions in the scenarios of “self-introduction”, “leaving a friend’s home”, “declining a colleague’s offer of coffee”, “Declining the offer of more food from the host”, “splitting the bill with friends,” and “checking out at a hotel.” This suggests that conventional expressions used in the situations of “self-introduction”, “leave-taking”, “refusal“ and certain service encounter should have special attention paid to them in the future classroom instruction and teaching materials compilation.

Results from the recognition test shows that the percentage of successful recognition ranges from 95.3% to 16.5%. More than half of the students recognized the target expressions appearing in 14 out of 21 items. Except for one scenario, students’ average scores in all the test scenarios in the recognition test were much better than in the production test, revealing that the production of conventional expression is more challenging than the recognition of them for students. Similar to the findings from the production test, students in the recognition test found it difficult to recognize
conventional expressions for refusal and some service encounters, such as “checking out of a hotel” or “splitting a bill at a restaurant.”

4.5.2 Factors affecting the learning of conventional expressions

The repeated measure logistic regression model on the production test results shows that for both heritage and non-heritage learners, length of classroom instruction, learners’ language backgrounds and settings of the test items have a significant effect on a learner’s production of a conventional expression while the length of stay in the target culture does not. On the other hand, the repeated measure logistic regression model on the recognition test results demonstrates different factorial effects for heritage and non-heritage learners. For non-heritage learners, length of stay in the target environment, students’ language background and settings of the test items have a significant effect on their recognition of conventional expressions while length of instruction does not. For heritage learners, settings of the test items has a significant effect on their recognition while length of instruction and length of stay in the target environment do not.

Based on the results from the repeated measure logistic regression models, as the length of classroom instruction increases, students are more likely to produce conventional expressions correctly. However, their ability to recognize conventional expressions may not be influenced by the length of their classroom instruction. This reveals that students’ ability to produce a conventional expression is correlated with their “expertise” in foreign language learning. The effect of language development level on the production of conventional expressions is also consistent with previous studies on both English and Chinese language learners. Yorio (1989: 68) found that the successful use of conventionalized language by adult learners of English is correlated with their
grammatical proficiency in English. Wong (2012) also found that more advanced learners of Chinese used more formulaic language than less advanced learners. As pointed out by Bardovi-Harlig (2011: 374), learners’ language development level contributes both to the well-formedness of the conventional expressions and the appropriate use of these conventional expressions in contexts.

The distance between learners’ cultural background and the target culture has a significant effect on their production and recognition of conventional expressions; however, a scenario effect is also observed. Generally speaking, heritage leaners outperformed Korean speaking learners and Korean speaking learners outperformed English speaking learners in both production and recognition tests. Likewise, heritage learners demonstrated having some advantages in producing conventional expressions unique to Chinese culture and in producing and recognizing conventional expressions in service settings. However, heritage learners did not show much advantage in both the production and recognition of conventional expressions in workplace settings. Since social hierarchy is often marked in Korean language, Korean-speaking students outperformed both heritage learners and English speaking learners in social hierarchy scenarios that call for a polite form of the expression. Findings about the effect of language background suggest that learning challenges may arise in situations requiring a conventional expression in the target language but another expression in the student’s native language and situations requiring a conventional expression in the target language but no remark in the native language.

The length of stay in the target culture environment only has a significant effect on non-heritage learners’ recognition of conventional expression but not on production.
for both heritage and non-heritage learners. This suggests that the length of exposure to the target language environment may enable non-heritage students to recognize more conventional expressions, but it does not ensure students’ ability to produce these expressions. The degree of exposure to and immersion in the target language and culture is more closely related to the production of conventional expressions. The type and the quality of interactions that learners have in the target language environment, learner’s language proficiency level, learner-specific personality traits, the strategies used by students and the kinds of relationships students have with the host culture may function together to determine their gains from the target language and culture environment.

4.5.3 Students’ receptive and productive knowledge of conventional expressions

Fisher’s exact tests show that participants’ recognition and production are significantly correlated with each other only in four out of the twenty-one test items. This suggests that the recognition of a conventional expression is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for its production. Comparing recognition and production scores reveals four types of combinations in the learners’ responses to the production and recognition tests. There is evidence of high recognition with high production, exhibiting native-like use; low recognition with low production, suggesting insufficient exposure; high recognition with low production, indicating the overgeneralization of a familiar expression; and low recognition with high production, suggesting an inability to distinguish the communicative intentions conveyed by a set of related conventional expressions. These results suggest three developmental stages for students’ ability to produce conventional expressions: recognizing the expression in context, distinguishing the communicative intention conveyed by a set of related expressions and producing the
expression automatically in typical contexts that call for the target expression. The first developmental stage may lead to high recognition with low production. When students are developing from the first to the second stage, low recognition with high production may happen. Once students achieved the third developmental stage, high recognition coupled with high production occurs.

4.5.4 Strategies used by students to study useful expressions

Results from the strategy questionnaire show that students use social strategies most frequently, followed by metacognitive strategies. Memory strategies are the least frequently used category. These results suggest that although students are trying to learn about the target culture, they are limited by the strategies they use. Moreover, their access to the target culture and to native speakers is limited. Therefore, their opportunities to ask for help from Chinese speakers, practice Chinese with others, and watch Chinese TV shows or movies pass without being exploited. Students are aware of the importance of planning, monitoring and evaluating self-learning, but their use of strategies to store and retrieve new information is inadequate. Generally speaking, students tend to use repetition, association of old and new knowledge, and review to remember a useful expression. But strategies involving deeper processing, such as summarizing what they have read or heard, finding patterns of the language or practicing a new expression in a conversation are less frequently used. Moreover, students seldom use the strategy of “physically acting out the expression,” the strategy of “making a mental picture of a situation in which the expression is used” and the strategy of “connecting a new expression to an image or picture of the expression.” to help them remember more effectively. The comparison between the strategy used by low performing and high
achieving students also shows that high achievers use the strategy of “making a mental picture of a situation in which the expression is used” and the strategy of “connecting a new expression to an image or picture of the expression” more frequently than low performing students do. The adoption of deep mental processing enables high performing students to store and retrieve useful expressions better than low performing students, and hence they are more likely to successfully produce/recognize conventional expressions.

In addition, high performing students use the strategy of “trying to talk like native Chinese speakers” more frequently than low performing students do. This indicates that high performing students are more willing to recognize and conform to the norms of target language usage. As a result, they are more likely to be socialized in the use of conventional expressions in the target culture.

Moreover, high performing students are more attentive to their mistakes and ranked their use of the strategy of “asking native speakers to correct me” as “usually true”; however, low performing students only ranked their use of this strategy as “somewhat true.” Previous studies have found that members of the host culture, in natural interactions, typically do not voluntarily offer feedback on students’ inappropriate or non-conventionalized language choices (Barron, 2003; DuFon, 1999; Siegal, 1994). Host families and friends from the target culture may offer students corrective feedback on vocabulary, grammar, or pronunciation, but inappropriate language choices in given contexts seem to be off limits, perhaps in association with the importance Chinese culture places on avoiding personal embarrassment. Without corrective feedback, students may believe that inappropriate language choices are, in fact, acceptable in the target language community. Therefore, the more frequent use of the strategy of “asking for corrective
feedback” enables high performing students to use more native-like expressions in the appropriate contexts.
Chapter Five Conventional Expressions in Current Textbooks

5.1 Analysis Methods

In order to find out whether the current pedagogical treatment of conventional expressions deals with students’ learning needs and difficulties identified in chapter four, this chapter reviews the selection, presentation and instruction of conventional expressions in popular Chinese language textbooks in America. This review attempts to answer the following questions:

1. Is there an agreed upon collection of conventional expressions among current popular textbooks?

2. What is the quality of these selected expressions?

3. How are conventional expressions presented in current textbooks? Is there an agreed upon order of introduction for them?

4. What instructional activities are designed for the expressions?

The first question aims to explore the selection criteria of conventional expressions. In order to answer this question, this chapter examines the number and range of conventional expressions selected in popular American textbooks and analyzes what speech acts are associated with these selected expressions. In this analysis, a speech act is a way of doing something using language in a culture, such as greeting, leave-taking,
apologizing, complimenting someone and so on. A dialog in a lesson might be composed of several different speech acts. For example, a first meeting between strangers may consist of several speech acts, such as greeting someone, introducing oneself, and leave-taking.

The second question examines the quality of the selected expressions in American textbooks. Specifically, this chapter aims to find out 1) whether the selected expressions reflect native speakers’ language use; 2) whether the selected expressions are suitable and useful for the target students; and 3) whether the selected expressions reflect students’ learning needs identified in chapter four.

The third question discusses the pedagogical presentation of the selected expressions. Since conventional expressions often tie to certain social situations in a given speech community, it is extremely important for students to understand the contexts in which the expressions are used. Therefore, this dissertation/chapter examines how the context of a given conventional expression is presented. It then analyzes what presentational formats are used to ensure attention, such as highlighting the target expression, having an index or presenting an expression in a list of phrases. This chapter will also ask what type (if any) explanations do American textbooks offer to help students better understand the target expressions. Moreover, where in the textbooks are these explanations presented? Are the explanations embedded in the main dialog or presented in a separate session, such as grammar notes, words & phrase note, or culture notes? How are the explanations presented? For example, are the explanations presented in the target language or base language; in audio or in written format? Finally, this chapter reviews
what order selected expressions are introduced and analyzes whether or not there is an agreed upon introduction order for selected expressions across various textbooks.

The fourth question investigates the instructional activities associated with conventional expressions. This question can be broken down into four sub-questions: 1) Are there drills or exercises designed to facilitate the noticing and learning of conventional expressions? 2) Are there drills or exercises designed to support the application of learned conventional expressions? 3) Are there activities designed to check or review the expressions? 4) How effective are these instructional activities? Do these activities deal with students’ learning difficulties identified in chapter four?

5.2 The pedagogical treatment in beginning Chinese textbooks

This section examines the selection, presentation and instruction of conventional expressions in four popular beginning Chinese textbooks: *Integrated Chinese (IC) level 1, New Practical Chinese (NPC) Level 1, Chinese Link (CL) level 1 and Chinese: Communicating in the Culture (CCC) volume 1 and 2*. Two criteria drove the selection of these books: the books’ popularity and the level of innovation in their approaches to language learning. The first two textbooks are the most widely used textbooks in North America. The last two are some of the most innovative textbooks. Intermediate textbooks are not discussed in the current study because they typically adopt a presentation and instruction style similar to their predecessors in a series.
5.2.1 Selection of conventional expressions

A total of 135 expressions are identified from the four beginning Chinese textbooks under review. These expressions are distributed over 28 speech acts (see Table 5.1). Because some expressions may be used in more than one speech act (for example, “不好意思 bùhǎoyìsi” can be used to apologize, to indicate gratitude or to get attention), this study classifies the expression only under the speech act that the textbook in which it appears. For instance, “不好意思 bùhǎoyìsi” occurs in the speech act of indicating gratitude in IC; therefore, it is counted as an expression of gratitude in this analysis.

This distribution indicates that all the textbook compliers agree that conventional expressions used in 17 speech acts, such as “greetings”, “introducing others”, “exchanging personal information” “leave-taking” and “expressing stances & evaluations”, are necessary for beginning students to learn. However, many other important conventional expressions used to, for example, introduce oneself, disagree with another person’s opinions, give a gift, order food, and ask for directions do not appear in all of the beginning textbooks.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speech Acts</th>
<th>IC</th>
<th>NPC</th>
<th>CL</th>
<th>CCC</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Greetings                   | 7  | 7   | 4  |     | 你(您)好  
A general greeting  
好久不见  
A greeting to a familiar after a long separation |
| Self-introduction           | 0  | 1   | 0  | 2   | 自我介绍一下  
An expression to indicate that the speaker will introduce himself/herself to the listener(s) |
| Introducing others          | 2  | 2   | 2  | 2   | 我(来给你们)介绍一下  
An expression to introduce people to each other |
| Exchanging personal information | 5 | 7 | 5 | 8 | 你姓什么?  
Asking someone’s last name  
你是哪国人?  
Asking someone’s nationality |
| Asking someone’s condition  | 2  | 2   | 1  | 1   | 你最近怎么样?  
A greeting inquiring one’s well being |
| Asking others’ opinions     | 3  | 2   | 1  | 2   | .......怎么样  
Asking what someone thinks |
| Leave-taking                | 2  | 2   | 1  | 2   | 再见  
An acknowledgment at parting  
明天见  
A farewell expression indicating that you will meet with the listener tomorrow |

Table 5.1 Number of conventional expressions selected in beginning textbooks

---

11 This number shows how many expressions of the indicated speech act are selected in each of the textbooks under review. For example, “7” here indicates that seven expressions of greeting are included in Integrated Chinese, Level one.
Table 5.1 Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speech Acts</th>
<th>IC</th>
<th>NPC</th>
<th>CL</th>
<th>CCC</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8 Expressing stances &amp; evaluations</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>还好 A mild evaluation indicating that the situation is passable or tolerable 太棒了！An evaluation indicating that the situation is great</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Maintaining or ending a conversation</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>就这样 An expression to end a conversation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Showing agreement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>你说得(很)对 Expressing that you agree with what someone has said</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Showing disagreement</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>不对吧 Indicating that you think what the interlocutor has said is not right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Responding to compliments</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>哪里，哪里 A traditional way to respond to compliments to show modesty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Making and responding to an apology</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>对不起 An expression of apology for something you have done wrong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Expressing gratitude</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>谢谢 An expression of appreciation or gratitude or an acknowledgment of favors given</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Responding to an expression of gratitude</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>不(用)客气；A polite response to gratitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Refusal</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>不用了 Declining someone’s offer of help / food / drink 不行 Indicating that the interlocutor’s suggestion or request is not possible</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Continued

161
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speech Acts</th>
<th>IC</th>
<th>NPC</th>
<th>CL</th>
<th>CCC</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17 Asking and responding to suggestions</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>...怎么办? A general question when you want to know how to proceed or what to do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Making a phone call</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>打错了 An expression to indicate to the listener that s/he has dialed the wrong number!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 Asking price</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>...多少钱? Asking the price of something</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 Comforting others</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>别担心! Suggesting that the interlocutor should not be anxious about something</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 Making an invitation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>我(想)请你...... Paying for something for someone or providing a repast for someone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 Identifying people</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>怎么称呼他? Asking how to refer to somebody</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 Expressing best wishes</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>祝你生日快乐! Conveying the good wishes to a person who is celebrating his/her Birthday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 Ordering food</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>点菜 A phrase used to order dishes at a restaurant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 Shopping</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>试(一)试 Indicating that you want to try on the clothes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 Asking for directions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>...怎么走? Asking for directions to a place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 Taking a bus/train</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>占个座 Asking someone to save a seat for the speaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 Giving gifts</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>这是我的一点儿小意思，不成敬意 Giving gifts in a modest way by minimizing the value of the present and suggesting that the present is not enough to show the gift giver’s full respect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech Act</td>
<td>Conventional expressions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1 Greetings                      | 你(您)好  
A general greeting  
认识你（我）很高兴  
A phrase to express you are pleased to be introduced to someone |
| 2 Introducing others             | 我（来给你们）介绍一下  
An expression to introduce people to each other  
这是…  
A phrase to introduce a third party to someone |
| 3 Exchanging personal information | 您贵姓?  
Asking someone’s surname politely  
…姓什么?  
A general form to ask someone’s last name  
…叫什么名字?  
A general form to ask someone’s full name |
| 4 Asking others’ opinions        | 你呢?  
Asking the listener’s opinion about what has said before |
| 5 Leave-taking                   | 再见!  
An acknowledgment at parting |
| 6 Making an apology              | 对不起!  
An expression of apology for something you have done wrong |
| 7 Responding to an apology       | 没关系!  
A relief of the interlocutor’s concern |
| 8 Expressing gratitude           | 谢谢!  
An expression of appreciation or gratitude or an acknowledgment of favors given |
| 9 Responding to an expression gratitude | 不(用)客气!  
A polite response to gratitude |

Table 5.2 Common conventional expressions selected in beginning textbooks

However, what specific expressions are selected in each speech act is not consistent across the four books. Only 12 expressions appear in all of the four beginning Chinese textbooks (see Table 5.2 above). This reveals that textbook compilers have not
reached an agreement on the selection criteria of conventional expressions, excluding basic expressions commonly used when meeting others for the first time. Some expressions collected in the HSK test (the standardized test of Chinese language proficiency for non-native speakers created by the Chinese government) as basic level phrases are not included in any of the four textbooks, such as “没事 méishi. It doesn’t matter” and “用不着 yòngbùzháo, it is not necessary.” Some conventional expressions which are specially called for in Chinese culture are also not included.

As mentioned earlier, conventional expressions are usually used to realize certain speech acts. Although beginning Chinese textbooks often include typical speech acts like leave-taking, complimenting, requesting, apologizing, suggesting and ordering, many of these speech acts are oversimplified in the textbooks (Yu, 2009). Two typical examples are leave-taking and refusing a suggestion or request. Wang (2005) examines the presentation of leave-taking cases in three major beginning- and intermediate-level textbook series and compares them with 87 video clips of leave-taking from five Mandarin TV series. She finds that the complexity of the Chinese leave-taking behaviors and the differences in American and Chinese leave-taking conventions are largely ignored and over-simplified in textbooks. Due to this decision, many conventional expressions used in leave-taking are not included in most of the reviewed textbooks, including important phrases such as “我先走了 wǒ xiān zǒu le. An expression of departing a group of people.”, “慢走 mànzǒu! An expression used when seeing someone out (Literally, walk carefully)” and “我送你 wǒ sòng nǐ. Let me see you out.” As a result, most of the
students in the production test described in chapter four were not able to produce the expression “我先走了 wǒ xiān zǒu le. An expression of departing a group of people.” even after living in China for several months.

Similarly, Yang (2007) finds that a number of conventional expressions that are used to refuse a suggestion or request in Chinese are not represented in current popular Chinese textbooks. These expressions include direct refusal phrases like “不用了 búyòng le. It is not necessary” “不可以 bù kěyǐ. Can’t be done!” and indirect refusal phrases like “我们再研究研究 wǒmen zài yánjiū yánjiū. Let us think over it.” These indirect refusal phrases are ritually used to indicate that there may be some difficulties in complying with the interlocutor’s suggestion or request without giving an outright refusal. When these expressions are employed in Chinese culture, there is no expectation for subsequent action as would be the case in American culture. Therefore, American learners of Chinese often report that refusing a request in Chinese culture is confusing and often causes misunderstandings. They often feel that Chinese speakers sometimes say "yes" when they really mean "no," or mean "no" without saying “no.” Except for CCC, none of these conventional expressions of indirect refusal are included in the reviewed textbooks. In the other three textbooks, only two direct refusal phrases are included: “不用 búyòng. Don’t need to” and “不行 bùxíng! No way!” The inclusion of these special conventional expressions in Chinese culture may even increase students’ difficulties to function successfully in Chinese social interactions.
As shown in Figure 5.1, except for CCC, although some of the conventional expressions presented in IC, NPC and CL can be used in multiple settings, their uses in professional settings are not discussed in these textbooks. For example, the expression

Figure 5.1 The distribution of conventional expressions in different settings: Beginning Textbook
“我(来给你们)介绍一下, 这位是…, wǒ lái gěi nǐmen jièshào yīxià，zhèwèi shì …, Let me introduce you. This is…..” can be used for an informal first meeting between friends. It can also be used to meet someone new in a professional setting. Although this expression is introduced in all four textbooks, how it can be applied in a professional setting is only presented in CCC. In professional settings, the introduction of a third party should always be accompanied by the third party’s term of address.

**Example 1:**

Context: A graduate student is introducing a professor from Qinghua University to an American professor when the American professor picks up the Professor from Qinghua University from the airport.

“我给你们介绍一下，这位是清华大学的林同教授。”

*Wǒ gěi nǐmen jièshào yīxià，zhèwèi shì Qīnghuá dàxué de Líntóng jiāoshòu.*

“Let me introduce for you. This is Professor Lin Tong from Qinghua University.”

In this example, the speaker should first figure out what terms of address should be used to introduce the third party. Since this is a formal meeting with the purpose of establishing a professional relationship, the choice of the professional title “清华大学的教授 Qīnghuá dàxué de jiāoshòu. The Professor from Qinghua University” is used to indicate the third party’s social identity in the professional network. In some cases, the introducer will intentionally escalate the third party’s social identity by modifying the professional title. For example, an assistant professor “副教授 fù jiāoshòu” will be introduced as a “教授 jiāoshòu professor” to show respect to the person being introduced.

---

12 This example is extracted from the dialog in Unit 1 stage 9 in *Chinese: Communicating in the Culture.*
However, such practice is not adopted in informal meetings between friends. As seen in example two, when introducing a new friend to one’s peers, the practice of escalating the social identity of the person being introduced is not necessary:

**Example two:**
Context: The speaker is introducing her roommate to a friend.
吴小美: 文中，来！我来介绍一下。这是我室友，王红。这是我朋友，文中。
李文中: 你好！

Li wénzhōng: Nǐhǎo!

Wu Xiaomei: Wenzhong, let me introduce. This is my roommate, Wang Hong, this is my friend, Wenzhong.
Li Wenzhong: Hello!

If the realization of “introducing others” in professional settings is not presented in the textbook, students may not know how to choose the appropriate terms of address to introduce a third party. They may not understand why an assistant professor is introduced as professor and hence may annoy their Chinese interlocutors. More importantly, as discussed in chapter four, most college-level students take Chinese language courses in order to find a job related to China. This purpose requires Chinese language courses to prepare students for successful interactions in professional settings. However, the results obtained from chapter four indicate that students’ management of conventional expressions in professional settings is much lower than that in campus/home settings. This is the case even for students who have stayed in the target language environment for a long time or heritage students who are exposed to Chinese culture at home. These

---

13This example is extracted from the dialog of lesson five in China Link.
results indicate that if the use of conventional expressions in professional setting is not presented in a student’s textbook, it is unlikely that the students will acquire the necessary knowledge outside of class in a short-term study abroad program. In most of the regular short-term study programs, the opportunities for students to acquire expressions in professional settings are scarce.

Some textbook compliers may argue that language use in professional settings can be taught at intermediate or advanced levels, after students have built a foundational knowledge of the Chinese language. However, not all students have the time and opportunities to take intermediate or advanced Chinese courses. Furthermore, as discussed above, some conventional expressions can be used in both professional and informal settings. If the use of these expressions in professional setting is not presented, students may have difficulties in switching between the expression’s uses in unprofessional settings to professional settings. In cases where professional use differs from unprofessional use, such as the example of “introducing others” discussed above, students would assume that the phrase would be used in the same way in both settings. Furthermore, compared to interactions at home, on campus or in a service encounter, most college students have few opportunities to engage in interactions in a professional setting. Some basic conventional expressions used in professional settings would be useful tools for students to navigate the unfamiliar situations in their future career.

5.2.2 The presentation of conventional expressions

Conventional expressions in beginning Chinese textbooks are presented through three major channels: dialogs, language notes, and culture notes. A closer examination of
the contents of these channels reveals four areas of concerns: 1) the shortage of reasonable and realistic contexts; 2) the authenticity of the language use presented in the textbooks; 3) the lack of instruction on the cultural value or cultural perspective associated with the conventional expressions; and 4) the lack of an index of conventional expressions.

In some of the textbooks reviewed, the presentation of conventional expressions lacks reasonable or realistic contexts. As discussed earlier, conventional expressions are usually tied to certain situations, and understanding these situations will help students interpret the conventional expressions. However, among the reviewed textbooks, CCC is the only textbook that gives detailed and realistic contexts for all of its dialogs. The other reviewed textbooks link most of the dialogs through continuing interactions of a few central characters and their stories. This design may provide a storyline for the dialog to make logical sense, but it fails to offer detailed information on when, where, why and to whom a conventional expression can be used. As shown in the following dialog extracted from lesson two of NPC, the textbook provides no information on when or where this dialog occurs. It’s unclear whether this dialog occurs at a Café when the speakers are discussing what to order or whether it occurs at someone’s home when a host asks the guests what they want to drink.

In the following language note, the expression “你要……吗? Nǐyào .....ma? Do you want……?” was explained as a sentence pattern commonly used when asking what others want, but when, where and to whom this expression can be used is unclear. Based
on this explanation, students could potentially use this expression to ask a guest what to
drink in a formal business setting, which may sound blunt or rude in Chinese culture.

![Dialog extracted from NPC (Lesson Two, Dialog Three)](image)

This lack of contextual information often reduces dialogue to mere linguistic
vehicles to carry the conventional expressions without specifying the social components
associated with the use of the target expression, such as the time, place, purpose and roles
of people related to the target expression. Gao and Stella (1998: 70) point out that

---

**Figure 5.2 A dialog extracted from NPC (Lesson Two, Dialog Three)**

---

171
“Chinese communication is situated in relationships rather than in individual persons, and others’ perceptions and views are critical to the interpretation of various messages.” Therefore, without detailed contextual information about the people who engaged in an interaction, it is impossible for students to correctly understand the communicative intention conveyed by a conventional expression.

Another issue of the examined beginning textbooks is the authenticity of the use of conventional expressions presented. Authenticity reflects how well the presentation of a conventional expression represents its typical use in the target culture. However, some of the reviewed textbooks adopt the expressions to the norms of American culture, thus creating unrealistic dialogs in Chinese. The following illustrates the greeting conducted between two classmates presented in IC and NPC.

**The greeting presented in IC, Lesson Four**

王朋：小高，好久不见，你好吗？
高文中：我很好。你怎么样？
王朋：我也不错。

*Wáng Péng:* xiǎo Gāo, hǎojiǔbújiàn, nǐhǎo ma？
*Gāo wénzhōng:* Wǒ hěnhǎo。Nǐ zěnmé yàng？
*Wáng Péng:* Wǒ yě bùcuò。

Wang Peng: Little Gao, long time no see. How are you?
Gao Wenzhong: I am fine. How are you?
Wang Peng: I am fine too.

**The greeting presented in NPC, Lesson One**

力波：林娜，你好吗？
林娜：我很好，你呢？
力波：也很好。

*Lìbō:* Lín Nà, nǐ hǎo ma？
*Lín Nà:* Wǒ hěnhǎo, nǐ ne？
*Lìbō:* Yě hěnhǎo.
Li Bo: Línna, nǐhāo ma?
Línna: Wǒ hěnhǎo, nǐ?
Li bó: Yě hěnhǎo。

Li Bo: Linna, How are you?
Linna: I am fine. And you?
Li Bo: I am fine too.

The language notes in the two textbooks further explain that “你好吗？nǐhāo ma? How are you?” is a form of greeting typically for people that you already know. And the response is usually “我很好。Wǒ hěnhǎo. I am fine.”

In order to find out how “greeting” is conducted by native speakers, I examined the realization of “greeting” in The HKUST Mandarin Telephone Speech Corpus. This corpus includes 1206 ten-minute natural Mandarin conversations between either strangers or friends. There are 2412 speakers in the corpus, of which 1252 are male and 1154 are female, who are native and fluent Mandarin speakers with very slight accents and aged from 16 to 60. Each conversation in the corpus focuses on a single topic. Most topics relate to daily life, such as life partners, hobbies, travel and movies. My investigation shows that “你好吗？nǐhāo ma? How are you?” only occurs twice in the corpus (see the following):

A: wèi, wèi, %14, nǐhǎo.
B: ā, wèi, nǐhǎo ma?
A: nǐ, qíngwèn nǐ guìxìng ya?
B: miànguì xìng chén.

---

14 “%” indicates a filled pause that speakers employ to indicate hesitation or to maintain control of a conversation while thinking of what to say next.
A: Hello? Uhh, Hello
B: Ah, Hello, How are you?
A: You, may I ask your honorable Last name?
B: My humble last name is Chen.

A: 喂, 你好吗?
B: 喂, 你好。
A: 喂, 听说 ((你好像在)) 学校的是吧?
B: % 呃……
A: Wèi, wèi, nǐhǎo ma?
B: Wèi, nǐhǎo.
A: 你, tīngshuō ((nǐ hǎoxiàng zài )) xuéxiào de shìba ?
B: % eh……
A: Hello? Hello? How are you?
B: Hello!
A: Oh, I heard that you seem to live on campus
B: Uhh…

In both cases, “你好吗 Nǐhǎo ma?” was used as a greeting on the phone. Neither of the two respondents replied to “你好吗 Nǐhǎo ma?” with “我很好。Wǒ hěnhǎo. I am fine” as suggested in the language note of IC. Instead, both of them started to inquire about the listener’s background after the greeting. Apparently, IC adopts the American way of greeting ------“-How are you? – I’m fine!” to present the use of “你好吗 Nǐhǎo ma?” and fails to reflect the expression’s authentic use in Chinese culture.

A further examination of greetings between acquaintances in the HKU corpus shows that native speakers usually adopt conventional expressions like “最近怎么样？Zuìjìn zěnme yang? How are you lately?” or “最近好吗？zúijīn hǎoma? Are you good lately?” to greet an acquaintance whom the speaker has not seen for a while.

Subsequently, a mild evaluation like “还好 háihǎo, not bad” “还行 háixìng, just so-so” or
“还可以 hái kěyǐ, just Okay” rather than “我很好。Wǒ hěnhǎo. I am fine” is used to respond to the greeting. For example,

A: 嗯, 好久不见。
B: 嗯, 最近好吗？
A: 嗯, 还行吧！
B: 还行呀, 嗯, 现在要放假了。
A: èn , háojiǔbújiàn.
B: èn , zuījīn hǎomǎ?
A: èn , háixíng ba!
B: háixíng ya , èn, xiànzài yào fàngjiǎ le.
A: Uhh, long time no see.
B: Uhh, how are you lately?
A: Uhh, just so-so!
B: Just so-so? Uhh, it’s time for break now

A: 嗯, 最近怎么样?
B: %呃, 最近还可以呀
A: 还可以
B: 你现在怎么样啊?
A: 我现在也还可以呀.
A: èn , zuījīn zěnmē yang?
B: È, zuījīn hái kěyǐ ya.
A: hái kěyǐ.
B: nǐ xiànzài zěnmē yàng ā?
A: wǒ xiànzài yě hái kěyǐ ya .
A: Uhh, how are you lately?
B: Uhh， I am just fine lately
A: Just Fine?
B: How are you lately?
A: I am just fine too.

A: 嗯 {laugh} 你好!
B: 嗯, 好久不见, 你最近过得好吗
A: 唉, 还好.
A: èn {laugh} nǐhǎo!
A: Uhh, Hello
B: Uhh, long time no see. How are you lately?
A: Uhh, not bad.

However, this use of mild evaluation to respond to the conventional expression “how are you lately?” is not presented in the reviewed textbooks. The lack of accurate representation of conventional expressions might be the major reason for students’ inappropriate language uses in Chinese culture.

The third concern is related to the lack of instruction in the reviewed textbooks on the cultural values or perspectives associated with conventional expressions. Many conventional expressions are often associated with particular cultural values or perspectives in particular situations so that when these expressions are used, they invoke not only the linguistic form but also the sociocultural dimensions. For instance, as discussed in chapter two, caretakers often socialize children to gain understandings of related cultural values or perspectives through prompting, modeling and recasting the use of certain conventional expressions in daily social interactions. However, the instruction of these cultural values or perspectives are often neglected in the reviewed beginning textbooks, especially when the associated cultural values/perspectives are components of the “ignored culture” (Walker, 2000), i.e. cultural knowledge a native is generally unaware of until the behavior of a nonnative brings it to light. For example, IC introduces the conventional expression “别乱跑 bié luàn pǎo literally ‘Don’t go running around’ ” in the following dialog15:

---

15This dialog is extracted from dialog I of lesson 20 in Integrated Chinese, 3rd edition.
(Wang Peng is leaving for Beijing. At the airport, his sister Little Hong is seeing him off)

小红：哥哥，你们去北京了，就我一个人在这儿。

王朋：小红，别哭，我们几个星期就回来，你好好儿地学英文，别乱跑。

**Xiao Hong:** Gege, nimen qu Beijing le, jiù wǒ yīgè zài zhèr。
**Wang Peng:** Xiao Hong, biē kū, wǒmen jǐ xīngqī jiù huílái, nǐ hǎohǎo dì xué yīngwén, biē luànpào。

Little Hong: Big brother, you are all leaving for Beijing. I’ll be all alone here.

Wang Peng: Little Hong, don’t cry. We’ll be back in just a few weeks. Work hard on your English. Don’t go running around.”

There is no explanation as to why this expression is used here and what sociocultural meaning is indexed by this expression. Consequently, American students often have difficulties in understanding this expression when reading the dialog. In my class, only some heritage learners who had been exposed to Chinese culture at home are able to recognize this expression and interpret it as a typical way for Asian parents to instruct their children. In fact, this conventional expression reflects the belief in bringing up compliant children in Chinese culture. Without any instruction on this cultural belief, it is hard for American students who have little experience with Chinese culture to correctly interpret this expression.

Another example is related to the use of mild evaluation in Chinese culture, such as 还好 háihǎo, not bad” “还行 háixíng, just so-so” or “还可以 hái kěyǐ, just Okay.” As one of the major theories in Confucianism, the doctrine of the Mean (中庸), which is rendered by Chan (1963) as “equilibrium,” is often manifested in the communicative strategies in Chinese culture. In Confucian belief, equilibrium is to withhold all kinds of strong feelings while harmony is to express those feelings in a moderate manner (“喜怒哀乐之未发，谓之中，发而皆中节，谓之和”). Therefore, Chinese speakers tend to
withhold strong feelings and remarks that are incompatible with others in the group. Without the instruction on this cultural perspective, students would think these mild evaluations convey the same meaning as their English counterparts and interpret them as legitimately mild.

The last area that requires attention is the lack of an index of the selected conventional expressions. Indexes provide an effective way for students to synthesize and review the expressions that they have learned. However, among the reviewed textbooks, only IC provides a summary of important conventional expressions in a review section called “that’s how the Chinese say” every five lessons. This review section lists several important expressions covered in the previous lessons. Each expression is accompanied by an English explanation on the use and several examples in Chinese and English. This summary provides a good opportunity for students to review and compare the old and new conventional expressions they have learned; however, it still fails to provide the contextual information necessary for the understanding and use of conventional expressions. None of the examples are presented in situations where they might occur. The following shows how conventional expressions of leave-taking are presented in this review part:

Saying goodbye to guests
再见！Zàijiàn! Bye!
明天见！Míngtiān jiàn! See you tomorrow!
回头见！Huítóu jiàn! See you later!
慢走！Mànzǒu! Take care! Literally, walk carefully!
Without specific contextual information, it is unclear in what situations these leave-taking expressions should be used. For example, “慢走！Mànzǒu!” can be used by a younger speaker to see off an older interlocutor or an interlocutor of higher social status, but it is seldom used between peers. This contextual constraint on the use of “慢走 Mànzǒu” is not made clear through the English translation provided in the textbook.

### 5.2.3 Instructional activities for conventional expressions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional activity</th>
<th>Delivery Mode</th>
<th>Target skills</th>
<th>IC</th>
<th>NPC</th>
<th>CL</th>
<th>CCC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading aloud the target expression</td>
<td>Characters</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filling in blanks to complete a dialog</td>
<td>Pinyin Characters</td>
<td>Reading Writing</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answering questions presented in Chinese characters</td>
<td>Characters</td>
<td>Reading (Speaking)</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answering questions delivered through audio</td>
<td>Audio Picture cues</td>
<td>Listening Speaking</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matching Chinese sentences with their English translation</td>
<td>Characters</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translating an English dialog into Chinese</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating a dialog based on a given situation</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.3 The instructional activities for conventional expressions in beginning textbooks

---

16 In the instruction, students are required to answer the questions orally, but there is no special design to ensure student’s oral production and no further steps to help students check if their oral production is correct.

17 In this type of drill, the accompanied audio file have 20 seconds pauses allowing students to respond the question orally. After that, the correct answer to the question is delivered through audio so that students can compare their own answer to the correct one.
Eight types of instructional activities are related to the teaching of conventional expressions in beginning textbooks: reading aloud the target expression, filling in the blanks to complete a dialog, answering questions presented in Chinese characters, answering questions delivered through audio, matching Chinese sentences with their English translations, translating an English dialog into Chinese and creating a dialog based on a given situation. These activities are delivered in different modes targeted at different language skills. As shown in Table 5.3, except for CCC, most of the instructional activities in the reviewed textbooks are delivered through Pinyin and Chinese characters so that their focused skills target reading and writing. Exercises that practice oral production are limited. Only the activity provided by CCC practices students’ ability to aurally recognize and orally produce the target expression.

Another issue found in the textbook review is the usefulness of these eight instructional activities. Both IC and CL include English translation as one type of instructional activity with the aim of checking student’s comprehension of a conventional expression. However, such practice increases the likelihood of students habitually translating English phrases into Chinese. Sometimes, the translation of a phrase in one culture may be interpreted totally differently in another culture. Considering that conventional expressions are often used by speakers of a given community to establish their own intention and interpret others’ intentions more effectively, practices to help students to associate a conventional expression with its intention are more useful for students to understand the use of the target conventional expression than translation.
5. 3 The pedagogical treatment in advanced Chinese textbooks

This section reviews the selection, presentation and instruction of conventional expression in five advanced textbooks: *All Things Considered (ATC), Beyond the Basics (BB), China Scene (CS), Discussing Everything Chinese (DEC) and Tell It Like It Is: Natural Chinese for Advanced Learners (TILII)*. The selection of these textbooks is based on two aspects: the textbooks’ popularity and attention to teaching conventional expressions. The first three books are examined because their popularity. DEC is selected because it includes a number of conventional expressions in spoken language, and TILII is selected because its use of spontaneous language materials.

5.3.1 Selection of conventional expressions at advanced level

A total of 183 conventional expressions are selected in the four textbooks. These expressions distribute in 21 speech acts (see Table 5.4). Among them, only five speech acts occur in all of the reviewed textbook: persuading, expressing stance or evaluation, expressing opinions, conjecturing and showing agreement. Moreover, only two expressions used for conjecturing are selected in all of the four textbooks: “看(起)来 kànqǐlái, a phrase used to introduce a conclusion or opinion based on a previously stated fact or previously described situation” and “这样下去 zhèyàng xiàqù, a phrase used to introduce a consequence or a result caused by previously described situation.” This indicates that current textbook compliers have not reached an agreement on the selection criteria for conventional expressions.

Furthermore, except for DEC and TILII, only a small number of conventional expressions are selected in the reviewed advanced textbooks (ACT 19 expressions; BB
This reveals that the teaching of conventional expressions is neglected in many popular advanced textbooks for Chinese. However, this treatment is inconsistent with our finding about the importance of conventional expressions to advanced learners of Chinese. More importantly, among the five reviewed textbooks for advanced learners, only TILII exposes students to spontaneously uttered language exchanges rather than simplified scripted utterances. TILII adopts a popular China Central Television (CCTV) talk show 实话实说 (Tell It Like It Is) as a core component to its lessons on how to deal with unscripted utterances and exchanges in debates on controversial social issues important to contemporary Chinese people. It features colloquial or dialectal expressions, repetitions, repairs, negotiations and adjustments of intention and expectation found in unrehearsed speech encounters. Accordingly, compared to other reviewed textbooks, this book contains more conventional expressions frequently used to maintain a conversation, to elicit opinions and to express stances and evaluations.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speech Act</th>
<th>ATC</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>CS</th>
<th>DEC</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>L</th>
<th>II</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Persuading</td>
<td>1 2 1 8 3</td>
<td>…也是为你好啊</td>
<td>Indicating that what has been done is on the concern of the listener</td>
<td>死了这条心吧！</td>
<td>Telling someone to stop hoping and give up on something</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Expressing stance or evaluation</td>
<td>4 2 6 7 12</td>
<td>太过分了！</td>
<td>A phrase used to show one’s anger when something has gone wrong and far beyond what s/he can endure</td>
<td>不怎么样！</td>
<td>Expressing that something or someone is not especially good</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Expressing opinions</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 12</td>
<td>我看</td>
<td>An expression to state one’s personal opinion</td>
<td>开诚布公地讲……</td>
<td>Indicating that someone is speaking in a frank manner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Conjecturing</td>
<td>3 4 2 6 4</td>
<td>这么说来……</td>
<td>Introducing a consequence or a result caused by previously described situation</td>
<td>看(起)来</td>
<td>Introducing a conclusion or opinion based on a previously stated fact or previously described situation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Showing disagreement</td>
<td>2 2 2 4 3</td>
<td>我不这么看</td>
<td>Indicating that your opinion is different from what has been stated by the interlocutor</td>
<td>有没有搞错</td>
<td>Indicating that the speaker thought something must be wrong with the statement s/he just heard or the situation just happened</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Continued

Table 5.4 Number of conventional expressions selected in advanced textbook
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speech Act</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>L</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indicating agreement</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>An expression used in a situation where the speaker accepts the interlocutor’s offer of a gift or invitation after several turns of ritual refusals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicating partial agreement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Indicating that the speaker only partially agrees with what s/he just heard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concurring</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Indicating that the speaker strongly agree with what s/he just heard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making complaints</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Expressing the speaker’s strong anger when something or some situation annoys or irritates him/her.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting attention</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>An expression used when giving a warning, or a clarification.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eliciting opinions</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Seeking advice, information or guidance from an expert or a person of higher status.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiating a turn in conversation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Introducing another topic or an aspect related to the previous topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining the turn in conversation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reverting to the original topic of the conversation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Continued
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speech Act</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>L</th>
<th>II</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14 Ending a turn in conversation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>你有完没完啊。 Expressing that you are really fed up with something and want it to be stopped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Comforting others</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>想开点儿 Suggesting that someone should relax and not fret over trifles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Criticizing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>你怎么能这样！ Indicating that the speaker is discontented with what the interlocutor has done/said</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Clarifying misunderstandings</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>你想哪儿去了！ Expressing that the interlocutor might have misunderstood the speaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Expressing and responding to gratitude</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>多亏了…… Expressing gratitude when something good happened to the speaker because of something or someone ……还客气什么！ Indicating that the speaker and the listener are very close and don’t have to thank each other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 Responding to compliments</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>过奖了 A response to compliment in a modest way and indicating that the compliment makes the speaker feel honored and pleased</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 Responding to an invitation or an offer of gifts / help</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>让您破费了 An expression to show gratitude when receiving an expensive gift or being treated something expensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 Greeting</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>我向大家致以诚挚的问候 A greeting at a formal speech. Literally meaning “I would like to extend my sincere wishes to you all.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Further analysis shows that the selection of conventional expressions in current advanced textbooks fails to meet advanced students’ learning needs. As mentioned in chapter two, MacAloon (2008) analyzed how five advanced English speakers used Chinese language at work through interviews with the subjects and two colleagues of each subject. He reports that the tasks that Chinese-speaking foreigners in China seemed to do most often were: 1) negotiating; 2) managing staff; 3) holding internal and external meetings; 4) establishing/maintaining relationships; and 5) bridging cultures. Furthermore, he points out that tasks that the Chinese-speaking foreigners could do better include handling embarrassing situations, negotiations, formal events/situations, actively directing conversation flow, reading between the lines and getting Chinese people to do what the foreigners want them to. Similarly, Wang (2011) conducted an investigation on Chinese language use by learners of Chinese working at different levels, including 4 graduates from China Executive MBA program at University of Hawaii, 8 foreign employees working and using Chinese in various business environments in China and 8 supervisors or managers of expatriates working in China. Her investigation identified the following necessary abilities to help students navigate the daily routine and operations in a company: (1) establish rapport with colleagues in a workplace environment, (2) participate and interact in company and group meetings, including debriefing with their team, (3) use specific protocols for phone behavior, (4) make public speeches and break the ice, (5) interact with all related departments, (6) interview prospective clients and negotiate with clients and 7) find suitable topics and make friends with Chinese people.
Based on the findings from the studies of MacAlloon (2008) and Wang (2011), this dissertation suggests six types of conventional expressions that are necessary for advanced students to learn: 1) expressions used for managing staff or working with colleagues, especially those dealing with embarrassing situations, such as persuading a coworker, apologizing for an error, refusing a task, disagreeing with a superior, delivering criticism and bad news, and dealing with confrontation and dissent; 2) expressions used for negotiation, such as how to show agreement and disagreement tactfully and how to force concession; 3) expressions used in formal events/situations, such as banquets or formal speeches; 4) expressions used to hold or participate in a meeting, such as expressions to start / end a meeting, expressions to actively direct conversation flow, and expressions to elicit opinions; 5) expressions used at casual social gatherings to establish rapport, such as chatting with a stranger or having an informal drink with a friend or colleague; 6) expressions with certain conventional implicature. This last type of expressions is significant because it helps students read between the lines when conversing with native speakers. For example, Brahm (2003) points out that Chinese people have a habit of saying some “yes phrases” such as “对 duì (Okay, Yeah or I see)” or “应该可以 yīnggāi kěyǐ (most probably, maybe)” to show that they are paying attention to you or that they are following what you say. It is a fine art to discern to what degree Chinese people are actually agreeing with what the other party is saying. Knowing the conventional implicature of these “yes phrases” is extremely important for learners to avoid misunderstandings. The following Table (5.5) shows some examples of the conventional expressions necessary for advanced students to learn:
### Examples

| 1) Managing staff or working with colleagues | 这个事情很难办。  
Indicating that the situation is hard to handle  
我会尽力为你争取的。  
Reassuring the interlocutor that the speaker will try his/her best to fight for opportunities for the interlocutor |
| 2) Negotiation | 让我们谈正题吧！  
Reverting to the original topic of the conversation  
就这样吧！  
Expressing the speaker’s intention to end the discussion |
| 3) Formal events or situations | 我敬您一杯酒  
An expression used to propose a toast to someone ......  
欢迎大家提问  
An expression used at the end of a presentation to elicit questions from the audience |
| 4) Holding/participating a meeting | 下面有请......发言  
An expression used to hand over to the next speaker  
就这么定了！  
An expression to indicate that the speaker has made the final decision and wants to end the discussion |
| 5) Casual social gatherings to establish rapport | 请多关照  
Indicating that the speaker recognized the interlocutor as an influential person, having the ability and power to take care of him/her when having good opportunities  
有空常联系  
An expression used to ask someone to keep in touch |
| 6) Expressions with implicature | “你可以问一下别人的看法。”  
Indicating that the speaker disagrees with what the interlocutor has said  
Literally means “you can ask others’ opinion” |

*Table 5.5 Examples of conventional expressions necessary for advanced students to learn*
However, very few of these conventional expressions are included in the reviewed textbooks. As shown in Table 5.4, most selected expressions are related to showing stances and evaluations and conjecturing; very few of them are used for persuading, refusing, complaining, delivering criticism and bad news or directing a conversation flow. Hardly any of them include conventional expressions in formal events or situations, such as banquets or giving formal speeches.

5.3.2 Presentation of conventional expressions at advanced level

In advanced textbooks, conventional expressions are mainly presented through three channels: dialogs, notes on words & phrases, grammar and culture notes. Only in DEC, conventional expressions are presented in a separate section of oral spoken language patterns. A closer examination of these channels suggests four areas of concerns.

First, similar to beginning textbooks, many advanced textbooks fail to provide the contextual information related to the use of a target expression either in the dialog or in the language or culture notes. As mentioned before, conventional expressions are often tied to certain contexts. The contexts specify when, where, why and to whom the conventional expressions can be used. However, many textbook compilers assume that the context of the target expression is the sentence where the expression is used. They tend to present the expression in a one-sentence example or a question-answer conversation, and thus fail to point out the sociocultural contexts in which the expression is used. These sociocultural contexts are extremely important for learning since they provide key information to help learners grasp the sociocultural constraints on the usage
of a target expression. To understand an expression, students must be able to iterate: what is the speaker’s purpose in using this expression? To whom can this expression be used? What are the social roles of the listener? How well should the speaker know the listener? Does the time and location matter when using this expression? However, conventional expressions are often presented in a single sentence without covering any of the aforementioned points. The following example exhibits how a conventional expression is typically presented in the grammar notes of most advanced textbooks:

“有完没完” is used to indicate a complaint and means “aren’t you going to stop?” or “can’t you just stop it?” It is used when you are really fed up with something and want it to be stopped.

同样一件事你都说了三天了，你有完没完？
*Tongyang yi Jian shi ni dou shuo le santi an le, ni youwan meiw an?*
You have been talking about the same thing for three days. Aren’t you going to stop?

你到底有完没完？不是告诉你别再给我打电话了吗?
*Ni dadoi youwan meiw an? Bu shi gan su ni bio zai gei wo dai dian hua le ma?*
Are you going to stop or not? Haven’t I told you not to call me again?18

The presentation begins with an explanation of the purpose of using the target expression, followed by two one-sentence examples. However, no information is provided regarding the circumstances where these examples occur. It is unclear about the social relations between the speaker and the listener as well as the time and place of the conversation. From the two examples, students would assume this expression can be used with anyone in any situation where they want someone to stop talking. In Chinese culture, however, this expression can only be used between close friends in casual

---

18This example is excerpted from lesson 9 (p. 207) in *Discussing Everything Chinese.*
settings. This failure to present the sociocultural contexts of the target expression often leads to students’ inappropriate language.

Secondly, many advanced textbooks oversimplify the operation of the selected expressions. The use of conventional expressions is often explained in words & phrases notes or grammar notes; however, some of the explanations either overgeneralize the usage or fail to reveal the sociocultural behavior/perspective related to the use of conventional expressions. Overgeneralization is often caused by a simplified explanation of the speaker’s intentions or attitudes conveyed through the use of the target expression. One example is the presentation of “你说的也是。Nǐ shuōde yě shì.” This expression literally means “what you said is right.” It is often used in situations where the speaker disagrees with a conversation partner at first but changes his or her opinion after hearing what the interlocutor has said. However, in the reviewed textbooks, the use of this expression is often simplified as an agreement with a preceding statement. For example, “This phrase is used to express the speaker’s agreement with the statement made in the preceding discourse.” (Excerpted from the grammar note in BB, page 121)

The change of opinion conveyed by this expression is totally neglected in its explanation. In some cases, the reviewed textbooks fail to reveal the special cultural behavior/perspective related to the use of the expressions. This is particularly important when the expression is especially called for in Chinese culture. For instance, one reviewed textbook states, “恭敬不如从命 gōngjìng bù rú cóngmíng literally means being respectful is not as good as being obedient” This expression is conventionally used in a situation where the speaker accepts the interlocutor’s offer of a gift or invitation after
several turns of ritual refusals. As discussed in previous studies (Mao 1992, Tseng 1999 and Yang 2007), gift giving and invitations often take a “tripartite structure” in Chinese culture. This structure involves a sequence of inviting/offering, refusing, inviting/offering, refusing, and finally inviting/offering followed by acceptance. The first two refusals are considered ritual refusals that show respect to and concern for the inviter or gift giver, the last acceptance is often expressed through certain conventional expressions like “恭敬不如从命 gōngjìng bù rú cóngmìng literally means ‘I will obey rather than insisting on being respectful’.” “麻烦你了 Máfàn nǐ le. I will trouble you.” or “让你破费了 Ràng nǐ pòfèi le. You really shouldn't have spent all this money.” However, this practice of Chinese inviting/gift giving is not reflected in the explanation of “恭敬不如从命 Gōngjìng bù rú cóngmìng.” In the textbook, this expression is simply explained by its English translation “It's better to obey than to insist on being respectful.” Such explanation neither helps the learners understand the situation where this expression can be used nor enables the learners to comprehend the real intention conveyed by this expression. Students who have not been exposed to the ritual refusal in Chinese culture may simply interpret this expression as a sign of obedience.

Among the five reviewed textbooks, the notes in TILII provide some good examples of how conventional expressions can be explained. The notes try to help students understand why a given expression takes on the meaning it does and why the speaker uses it in the way that he or she does. More importantly, it often helps students distinguish a set of related conventional expressions so that students understand which
expression is used in which situation. The following is an example of how a conventional expression is explained in TILII:

你怎么看这个？即“你怎么看这个问题”。“你怎么看”常用来询问对方的看法。“你怎么想”也有同样的意思，但后者问的更随意一些，即说话人不是问对方的很成熟的，很正式的意见，所以不需要很正式的回答。(Excerpted from TILII, page 337)

“Nǐ zěnme kàn zhègè?” is the abbreviation of “How do you think of this question?” It is usually used to ask for other’s opinion. “Nǐ zěnme xiǎng?” has the same meaning, but the latter is more casual. That is to say, the speaker is not asking for a mature and formal opinion. Thereby, a formal answer is not expected.

This note not only explains the meaning of the target expression but also analyzes the different expectations conveyed by these two forms of eliciting an opinion. In this way, students know not only what is said but also why it is said in this way and how a listener in that context should respond to it in a specific manner. Moreover, unlike the language notes in the other reviewed textbooks, the language notes in TILII are also written in Chinese. Since advanced learners have been equipped with the language abilities necessary for understanding simple explanations in Chinese, the notes in the target language are more likely to retain the original meaning in Chinese culture and to mimic the real situation that an advanced learner would have to confront in China.

The last concern regarding the pedagogical presentation of conventional expressions in advanced textbooks is the lack of explanation on the use of the expressions. Two of the reviewed textbooks (BB and ATC) did not provide any explanations about the usage of the selected expression, even though students might have difficulties in understanding how the expression can be used. For example, BB includes the expression “真不像话 zhēn bù xiànghuà” in lesson five. This expression literally
means that something is unspeakable. It is often used as a unit to express extreme dislike of someone’s behavior, especially when someone did not do what he or she was supposed to do. For example, if a student did not come to class for two days, the teachers would say:

他昨天没来上课，今天又没来上课，真不像话。

*Tā zuòtiān méi lái shàngkè，jīntiān yòu méi lái shàngkè，zhēn bú xiànghuà.*

He didn’t come to class yesterday nor did he come to class today. This is really outrageous.

Since this expression is a judgmental expression condemning someone’s behavior, it is seldom used in formal settings. However, none of these constraints on its usage are presented in the textbook. 18% of the selected conventional expressions in BB and 16% of the selected expressions in ATC are not provided with explanations on their usages. As discussed in the literature review, learners may have different interpretations on the meaning of conventional expressions, especially when the expression is not transparent. If a detailed explanation on the usage of a conventional expression in a given context is not provided, it might be difficult for students to correctly understand the expression, much less how to use it.

### 5.3.3 Instructional activities for conventional expressions at advanced level

Except for DEC, there are very few instructional activities designed especially for conventional expressions in the reviewed textbooks. Only a small number of the selected expressions are practiced through a component of grammar or vocabulary drills, such as choosing the most appropriate word/phrase to fill in the blank in a sentence, completing sentences using the provided words/phrases, answering a question using the provided
phrases and creating a dialog using the provided patterns and phrases. In many cases, the selected expression is not practiced in any of the drills or exercises.

A detailed analysis of the provided grammar or vocabulary drills suggests two areas that textbook compliers can do better: the contextualization and the authenticity of the drills.

In the reviewed textbooks, the practice of conventional expressions is often realized through completing sentences using the provided phrase or answering a question using the provided phrase. A typical example of this kind of drills is shown in the following example:

二．请用(   )里的词完成对话.
Please use the words in parenthesis to complete the dialog.
A: 最近天气真不好，连大家的情绪都受影响。
The weather is not good lately. Even everyone’s emotion is affected by it.
B: __________________________(说的也是).
______________________________ (What you said is right).

This drill did not provide any contextual information about where this conversation occurs and what the relationship is between the speakers. As we mentioned before, “说的也是 shuōde yě shì” is often used to indicate a change of attitude from disagreement to agreement upon further consideration. Usually, several exchanges are involved to make this change of attitude possible. However, in the above example, the change cannot be reflected without any detailed contextual information.
In the following example, students are required to ask a question according to the provided conventional expression in the response. Still, no contextual information is provided for the conversation. It is hard for students to know what question should be asked depending only on the response.

二．用提供的词汇和句型完成句子或对话。
Using the provided vocabulary and sentence patterns to complete sentences and conversations.
A: __________________?
B: 什么跟什么嘛 (How is that even relevant) !

The second area that needs improvement is the authenticity of instructional activities, which includes not only the authenticity of language use but also the authenticity of the learning task. The authenticity of language use considers whether the presented language use is contextually and culturally feasible. Task authenticity considers whether the task of the instructional activity resembles real life situations that students might encounter in the target culture. Many instructional activities in the reviewed textbooks involve situations that students will not often encounter in real life. For example, in each lesson of DEC, students are required to create a dialog based on a given situation using all the colloquial phrases introduced in this lesson. Many given situations are dialogs between a student and his/her parents. For instance, one dialog is centered on a male student trying to persuade his parents to allow him to marry a businesswoman. Another is about a student persuading his/her parents to let him/her quit college. However, except for heritage students, English-speaking learners may hardly have a Chinese conversation with their parents. Sometimes, the given situation involves social
roles that students may never perform in the target culture. For example, in both DEC and BB, students are asked to play the role of a policeman to discuss how to catch an escaped criminal. Sometimes, the given situation is a circumstance that will never happen in the target culture. For example, students are asked to play the roles of Hillary and Bill Clinton having a conversation in Chinese about the tabloids. Those unauthentic tasks cannot prepare students for situations that they will really encounter in the target culture and are likely to encourage them to produce base-language influenced expressions. Considering that most students view finding a job related to China as one of their major goals for learning Chinese, more situations related to professional settings should be presented in the instructional activities.

The authenticity of language use is often related to the inability to expose advanced students to spontaneous conversations that are not pedagogically controlled. Most reviewed advanced books assume that authentic materials should be tailored and contrived to suit pedagogical purposes. Accordingly, learners are shielded from natural utterances, unconstrained exchanges and conventionally-used colloquial expressions. As a result, once students have engaged in real-world exchanges in the target culture, they are often shocked to find how much the speech patterns of their Chinese interlocutors vary from their textbooks and classrooms. They are often faced with situations that require them to infer unknown expressions in the target environment. With this consideration, TILII sheds some lights on how to use uncontrolled raw material to train students to gain such an ability.
5.4 Discussions of the findings

This chapter discusses the pedagogical presentation of conventional expressions in textbooks of both beginning and advanced levels. The findings show that textbook compliers have not reached an agreement on the selection criteria for conventional expressions in either beginning or advanced textbooks. Only twelve expressions are selected in all of the four reviewed beginning textbooks while only two expressions are included in all of the four advanced textbooks. Detailed analysis of the selection shows that beginning textbooks include conventional expressions used in some everyday speech acts, such as greetings, introducing others, exchanging personal information, expressing opinions, leave-taking and asking for directions. But other commonplace expressions used to introduce oneself, disagree, identify others, ask directions, use public transportation, and give gifts are not introduced in all of the beginning textbooks. Moreover, except for CCC, most of the selected expressions pertain to either a residential, educational, or service setting. Very few expressions used in a professional setting—the setting most crucial to students who see Chinese as important to their future careers—are included. This is consistent with the findings in chapter four that learners performed better in home/campus settings and service encounters than in professional settings in both the recognition and production tests. A review of the textbooks and students’ performances suggests the necessity of including conventional expressions that are typically used in professional settings.

Similarly, most advanced textbooks include expressions that do not fully reflect advanced students’ learning needs. The expressions included mainly distribute in five
speech acts: persuading, expressing stance or evaluation, expressing opinions, conjecturing and showing agreement, based on studies (MacAloon 2008, Wang 2011) of English speakers’ Chinese language usage at work, this dissertation identifies five types of conventional expressions necessary for advanced students to learn:

1) Expressions used for managing staff or working with colleagues, especially those that deal with embarrassing situations such as persuading a colleague, apologizing, refusing, disagreeing, delivering criticism or bad news, and dealing with confrontation and dissent.

2) Expressions used for negotiation, such as those used to show agreement and disagreement as well as force concession.

3) Expressions used in formal events/situations like banquets or formal speeches;

4) Expressions used to hold a meeting, i.e. phrases that start or end a meeting, actively direct conversation flow, and elicit opinions.

5) Expressions used at casual social gatherings to establish rapport. For example, chatting with a stranger at a social gathering or having an informal drink with a friend or colleague.

6) Expressions with conventional implicature. These expressions are useful because they enable students to read between lines.

A detailed examination of the presentation of conventional expressions in popular beginning and advanced textbooks suggests the following areas of concerns: 1) the shortage of reasonable and realistic contexts; 2) the authenticity of the language use presented; 3) the lack of instruction on the cultural perspective/behavior associated with a
conventional expression; and 4) the lack of an index of the selected conventional expressions. Additionally, advanced textbooks tend to oversimplify the use of selected expressions and sometimes fail to provide any explanation on the use of non-transparent conventional expressions. These oversimplifications and oversights decrease students’ ability to make sense of the presented material.

Analysis of the instructional activities meant to teach conventional expressions reveals three areas in which textbook compliers can do better: 1) contextualizing the provided drills/exercises; 2) assuring the authenticity of the tasks involved and 3) providing more opportunities to practice oral production and aural recognition of the target expressions.

In conclusion, the analysis of the textbooks emphasizes the importance of paying attention to students’ learning needs when selecting conventional expressions for both beginning and advanced textbooks. In turn, this attention reveals several types of conventional expressions that must to be taught to students and the importance of contextualization, authenticity and the instruction of cultural value/perspective when teaching these expressions.

Contextualization should be realized by providing detailed information on the social-cultural circumstances in which an expression is used. What are the social roles of the interlocutors? What is the social distance between them? When and where does the interaction take place? What is the purpose of the interaction? This kind of social contextual information must be provided rather than a simple linguistic context where the expression occurs, such as a sentence or a question-answer conversation.
Contextualization should be operationalized in the main dialog of each lesson, in the examples provided in grammar or words & phrases notes, and the drills/exercises provided in the textbook, since these are the major channels for the presentation and practice of conventional expressions. Contextualization will not only help learners make sense of the contextual constraints on the use of a target expression, but also will help learners encode and retrieve the expression more effectively. This conclusion is supported by the findings of chapter four, which reveals that the visual strategies—“making a mental picture of a situation in which the expression is used” and “connecting a new expression to an image or picture of the expression”—effectively enable high-performing students to remember and recall conventional expressions.

Gauging authenticity requires attention to the authenticity of not only the language use but also the learning tasks. To determine language use authenticity, one must consider whether the presented language use of the conventional expression is culturally and socially feasible in the target language and target culture. To determine task authenticity, one must consider whether the designed learning tasks prepare students for the situations that they might conceivably encounter in the target culture. For example, the roles that students are asked to play in a role-play exercise should be social roles that students will perform in the target culture rather than random roles assigned by the instructor. Additionally, advanced students who are already prepared to navigate the target culture and learners who are facing immersion in the target culture should be trained to pick up conventional expressions from un-pedagogically controlled “raw materials.”
Considering that cultural barriers, as discussed in Chapter four, are one of the major factors affecting students’ learning of conventional expressions, the instruction of the cultural perspectives/values/behaviors associated with a the target expression is particularly important for its appropriate use. However, such instruction is often neglected in many textbooks, especially when these cultural conventions are “ignored culture” (Walker 2000), i.e. cultural behaviors that native speakers are generally unaware of until the behavior of a nonnative brings it to light.

Ultimately, the review of the textbooks reveals the inadequacy of oral production and aural recognition in the instructional activities provided by most of the beginning and advanced textbooks. This partially explains students’ challenges in the production of conventional expressions identified in chapter four. With the development of the internet and mobile learning, new presentation modes, such as online conversations through cloud computing technology or cell phone applications, can be developed in addition to the traditional print presentation modes of Pinyin or Chinese characters in drills and exercises to ensure the oral presentation of target expressions.
Chapter Six Toward a Pedagogy of Conventional Expressions

As mentioned in previous chapters, training of students to recognize, to understand, and then to automatically use conventional expressions in typical social situations in Chinese culture can enable students to be effective communicators in Chinese, and thus shorten their time to achieving higher level of proficiency. However, the analysis in chapter five shows that the pedagogical treatment of conventional expressions in popular Chinese textbooks fails to reflect the learning needs identified in the empirical study of this dissertation (see details in chapter four). Based on the findings from chapter four and chapter five, the following sections discuss the possible pedagogical solutions of conventional expressions from two dimensions: the selection criteria of conventional expressions for instruction and the instruction of conventional expressions through four layers of performance.

6.1 The selection of conventional expressions for instruction

As discussed in chapter five, because they have not realized the role of conventional language in foreign language learning, textbook compliers have not reached an agreement on the selection of conventional expressions. Given the large amount of conventional expressions in any given language and the time-constraints of classroom instruction, it is important to discuss the selection criteria.
The first criterion that comes to mind for giving priority is usefulness. What expressions are particularly useful for a giving group of students depends ultimately on our understandings of why students are learning Chinese, their level of proficiency and the chances that they will encounter a target expression. Students’ learning goals determine what types of exchanges they should master. Accordingly, conventional expressions used in these types of exchanges are necessary for students to learn. As I discussed in chapter four, about 70.6% learners in this study consider “finding a job related to China” as one of their major motivations for taking Chinese. If many learners of Chinese prove to consider career development as their major motivation for studying Chinese, then conventional expressions used in professional settings should be taught to students at appropriate times. As their proficiency levels increase, students may develop different learning needs. The selection of conventional expressions in advanced textbooks should reflect the development of these learning needs. For example, advanced learners of Chinese may require expertise in different domains, thus they will eventually need to learn the expressions associated with their individual domains in addition to the six major types identified in chapter five. In order to identify expressions necessary for students to learn, we need to think what students might do in the target culture, and what kinds of people students might encounter in what kinds of places. Useful conventional expressions can be identified by thinking about what expressions are often used to do a particular thing with particular people at a particular place in the target culture.

In addition, the likelihood a student will encounter an expression in the target culture determines what specific expressions he or she should master. This likelihood can
be predicted by the frequency of the expression’s occurrence in the settings a student anticipates participating in. Expressions that occur frequently in the types of exchanges the learner needs to master are important for students to know. Considering that language corpora are now available for researchers to verify which expressions are highly frequent and which are seldom used, a list of the expressions occurring most frequently in a particular type of discourse can be compiled for the development of teaching materials.

However, using frequency as a criterion does not mean that the most frequent expressions will be those that the students must learn. Researchers have found that the frequency of words and expressions in a corpus rapidly levels off beyond the highest-frequency items. Thus, the frequency criterion for selection becomes hard to apply once the initial highest-frequency ones are selected (Shin and Nation, 2008). Moreover, researchers have found that conversation fillers, such as “you know” and “stuff like that” are usually the highest-frequency expressions in informal speech. These fillers may not be ideal candidates for classroom teaching since they are not difficult for students to understand due to their transparent meanings. These fillers tend to be picked up by learners incidentally due to their high frequency of occurrence. Consequently, “medium-frequency” expressions should be considered prime candidates for classroom teaching.

The second selection criterion is how difficult a given expression is to learn, which can be determined by the transparency and the cultural specificity of the target expression. If the usage of an expression can be inferred from the meaning of its inner components, this expression can be considered transparent. Otherwise, it is viewed as non-transparent, for example, the meaning of the conventional expression “自我介绍一
下 zìwǒ jièshào yíxià, let me introduce myself” can be inferred from its inner components, and hence can be considered transparent. Non-transparent expressions are usually difficult for students to remember. Cultural specificity refers to whether or not an expression is particular to a specific culture. As mentioned in chapter four, students will usually encounter a cultural barrier when learning conventional expressions, especially when the expressions convey different intentions or attitudes from its counterpart in a student’s base language or when the expression is specific to the target culture. As discussed in chapter five, native speakers are sometimes not aware of these cultural differences until the behavior of a non-native reveals it. Conventional expressions that reflect this kind of ignored culture are particularly difficult for students to learn since they are usually ignored by textbook compliers and language teachers (detailed examples can be seen in Section 5.2.)

The following diagram (Figure 6.1) illustrates the trade-off between the two selection criteria: usefulness and level of difficulty for learning. The shaded area represents the expressions that would be most beneficial for students to learn in both productive and receptive ways. For beginners, expressions within the most useful band are the prioritized targets to learn. These expressions include the ones used in social routines necessary for a student’s navigation of the target culture, such as greeting, leave-taking, shopping, etc. The use of expressions particular to professional settings should be presented to students as well, considering that most learners of Chinese identify their professional goals as an important motivation for taking Chinese. Intermediate students will begin to participate in exchanges with different levels of formality; therefore,
expressions used in those exchanges should be included. Such expressions include those used in a formal self-introduction, a formal oral report on a familiar topic or interviews with other speakers. Advanced students should be trained to perform in social events that foreigners participating in Chinese culture are likely to find important in satisfying their goals and meeting their obligations. Usually, expressions with high or medium frequency used in formal meetings, banquets and negotiations should be targeted.

The white area is the zone of expressions that are beneficial for students to recognize. These conventional expressions may not be targeted in textbooks but are

Figure 6.1 Priority zone for conventional expressions targeting in instruction

The white area is the zone of expressions that are beneficial for students to recognize. These conventional expressions may not be targeted in textbooks but are
useful for students to understand contemporary TV programs, films, novels and online discourses. These expressions can be presented through a digital dictionary that students can easily refer to when they encounter an unknown expression. Compared to traditional phrase books, the digital format allows students to more efficiently search for a phrase. Given the purpose of this dictionary, its entries can be selected from TV programs, films, and novels. With the sociocultural change in a speech community, the use of conventional expressions often evolves and new expressions tend to emerge rapidly. Accordingly, the digital dictionary should allow users to upload a new expression and share their observations regarding its usage. However, current online dictionaries for learners of Chinese mainly focus on individual words. Only a small number of phrases are included, preventing these dictionaries from serving a referential purpose for students who want to understand conventional expressions occurring in TV programs, films and novels. More importantly, most examples in conventional phrase books are presented without their contexts. Considering the situational nature of conventional expressions, an example without context may not allow students to understand the intentions conveyed by a given expression.

The diagram presented in Figure 6.1 is only an attempt to demarcate the zone of expressions that might be good for textbook compliers or language teachers to target. Further decisions as to which particular expressions in the priority zone should be taught to students should be determined by some other factors, such as the length of instructional time, instructional environment (domestic or study abroad), students’ special learning interests and so on.
6.2 The instruction of conventional expression: a multilayer approach

Based on the findings stated by the previous chapters, this dissertation proposes a blended, multi-layer approach to teaching of conventional expressions. This approach views the use of conventional expressions as a routinized cultural performance and approach the teaching of conventional expressions in a multilayer mode. Accordingly, conventional expression uses are presented through blended media including print, computer delivered instruction and commercial videocassettes from Chinese cinema or television segments accompanied by pedagogically prepared scripts. A multilayer-performance approach is suggested to help students achieve a high degree of competence in the use of conventional expressions.

6.2.1 Viewing Conventional expression as a routinized cultural performance

Whatever personal motivations people may have for learning a foreign language, the ultimate goal of most foreign language learners is to effectively interact with individuals in the target society. To achieve this goal, foreign language learners need to learn not only a language, but, more importantly, they need to learn to do things in language and how well they can do in language is judged by the native speakers in the target culture. In other words, students need to understand how to generate desired meanings in forms recognizable to the members of the target culture, and know how to behave in ways familiar to Chinese people.

As mentioned in chapter two, through repeated routine interactions with adults or experts, children and adult novices are socialized to use conventional expressions in particular situations to convey certain intentions (e.g. establish rapport with a customer)
or to show certain cultural values (e.g. respect the social hierarchy). This socialization enables children or novices to successfully participate in the target speech community. In this way, conventional expressions can be considered a component of a particular culture, which Tomasello defines as including “the kinds of social interactions the members of society have, the kinds of behaviors they conduct, the kinds of information they value and the kinds of inferences they will draw about the world” (Tomasello, 2000:79).

Accordingly, the use of conventional expressions in a given society can be viewed as a routinized cultural performance of that society.

During the 1960s and 1970s, the term “performance” was applied from theatre background to social science in the writings of Richard Schechner, the anthropologists Victor Turner and Dwight Conquergood, and the sociologist Erving Goffman. According to these writers, social behavior is a way to present self that, to some extent, resembles a performance. As a result, various social relationships can be seen as the roles of a performance. Turner (1987: 81) stated "the basic stuff of social life is performance.”

Goffman (1959), who entitled one of his books The presentation of self in everyday life, viewed all social interactions as performances shaped by context and audience.

Walker (2000 a, b) applies this notion of performance in social science to foreign language pedagogy. According to him, to present self in the target culture requires “the conscious repetition of events that conform to the expectations of the target culture (Walker, 2000b:227).” Thus, in language pedagogy, performances “are conscious repetitions of situated events that are defined by five specified elements: 1) place of occurrence, 2) time of occurrence, 3) appropriate script, 4) roles of participants, and 5)
accepting and/or accepted audience (Walker, 2000b: 227-228).” “Roles of participants” refers to not only the person but also the social dimensions of that person, including social roles (e.g. speaker, doctor, teacher and so on), relationship (e.g. kinship, friendship, occupational relations and so on), group identities (e.g. gender, age, ethnic and religious group membership), and status (e.g. employer and employee). “Script” is a sequence of expected behaviors for a situated event, including all the participants’ verbal and non-verbal behaviors. It allows us to envision what will be done and said in a certain situation. “Accepting/accepted audience” is an essential quality of performance because it makes the performance a conscious production of certain social events. The individual’s performance of social events often has an actual or imagined audience and, moreover, is affected by performer’s understanding of that audience’s expectations. Taking all of this into consideration, a social performance must be recognized by a society and then function within the society. In the context of foreign language pedagogy, the performances conducted by foreign language learners need to be recognized by native speakers in the target culture so that learners can function successfully, i.e., achieve their intentions, within the target society.

As a routinized cultural performance, the use of conventional expressions is also defined by Walker’s five elements. Accordingly, the presentation of conventional expression use should be framed by these five elements and the instruction of conventional expressions should be approached in a performative mode. In other words, the biggest demand on the instructors is to create opportunities for learners to use conventional expressions in contexts defined by the five elements and help them improve
their performances. Instead of asking things like “How do you say this in Chinese?” learners should ask the more important question “What do Chinese people say and do in this situation?” Ultimately, learning success is not measured by the number of expressions a student can memorize. On the contrary, success is measured by a student’s ability to recognize culturally salient contexts and use conventional expressions to successfully perform social interactions and establish mutually comfortable relationships with members of that society.

6.2.2 Presenting Conventional expressions performances through blended media

As previously stated, the cultural performance of conventional expressions is framed by five elements: time, place, role, audience and scripts. However, presenting a performance does not mean simply pointing out the five elements. In fact, the relationships among these five elements are essential for interpreting a context, especially how these contextual parameters influence the use of conventional expressions. For instance, when seeking advice or consulting someone of a higher social status, a conventional expression like “请教一下 qǐngjiào yǐxià” (literally, “Could you instruct (me) on ……..?”) is usually used. However, when the role of interlocutor changes to a peer or fellow student, the expression “问一下 wèn yǐxià” (May I ask…..?) would be fine.

Additionally, presenting a cultural performance in the classroom setting necessitates placing an emphasis on the interpretation of the performance. This interpretation needs to articulate the intentions of the participants in the performance. In other words, the interpretation explains why the participants behave in the way they do.
Through the interpretation, students are able to understand the intentions and cultural values/perspectives conveyed by the conventional expression so that they can use the expression appropriately later. For instance, as mentioned in Chapter five, Chinese speakers tend to use a mild evaluation, such as “还好 háihǎo, not bad” or “还可以 hái kěyǐ, just okay” to respond to questions of greeting like “how are you?” When students are learning to perform this social interaction, they have to understand the cultural perspective behind such an utterance. Otherwise, they would simply interpret this response to mean what its English counterpart does, i.e., the speaker is not doing just okay. They would not understand that the use of this kind of mild evaluation is a social practice shaped by the Doctrine of the Mean in Chinese culture to withhold strong feelings and remarks that might be incompatible with others in the group.

Furthermore, the presentation of a cultural performance needs to illustrate how the elements of the performance are perceived differently in the target culture. For instance, in many East Asian cultures, the difference between in-group and out-group members often influences an individual’s choice of conventional expressions—a practice that is not as obvious in American culture. In Chinese culture, family members and close friends are often considered in-group members. Polite conventional expressions, such as “谢谢 xièxié, thanks” and “对不起 duìbùqǐ, sorry” are not used with these in-group members. Otherwise, the listener would think he or she was not considered an in-group member. Therefore, the practice of distinguishing between in-group and out-group members in Chinese culture should be emphasized and practiced by American students.
As addressed in chapter five, the use of conventional expressions is mainly presented through dialogs and grammar/vocabulary/culture notes in current textbooks. The presentation media are usually text and audio recordings. However, when treating the use of conventional expressions as a cultural performance, such a performance should be presented using blended media, including text, audio and video. Blended media will allow Walker’s five elements of a performance to be accurately portrayed, presented by the cultural scaffolding of instructor guidance or explication in the study material, and then interpreted by the students as a cultural event.

As the major presentation channel for the use of conventional expressions, the dialog of each lesson can be presented in both video and text. The inclusion of video as a major delivery method relies on two considerations. Firstly, videos are context rich and detail-oriented. They can seamlessly convey all the contextual information as well as the non-verbal behaviors of a dialog. They present not only linguistic expressions but also how these expressions are actually uttered in certain contexts. They can mirror actual speech (that is, speech with errors or accents), which learners will encounter in real life situations. Through watching and then imitating the video, learners’ primary language abilities, especially the listening and speaking skills, are improved. Video is also a powerful tool for stimulating a learner’s memory. Previous research suggests that visual images can be very readily coded and stored in an individual’s memory, and hence he or she associatively arouses memory images of the things they represent (Paivio, Rogers and Smythe, 1968). By watching the video, learners can store, sort and associate what they have seen with other information in their memory. When encountering a new situation
that is similar to the situation presented in a video, the previously stored information is available for recall to help in handling the new situation. The contextual information presented in the video provides important clues for learners to identify the new situation and then relate it to situations stored in their memory. As mentioned in the findings from chapter four, the use of the learning strategies “making a mental picture of a situation in which the expression is used” and “connecting a new expression to an image or picture of the expression” enables students to remember more effectively. The use of video creates the natural environment for students to form a mental picture of the situation and how the expression is used.

In addition to the language or culture notes of each lesson that focus on individual linguistic forms, the interpretation of the whole dialog specifying its five elements and the influence of the change of these elements on the use of conventional expressions should be provided. These interpretations can be delivered through an audio or text format, depending on students’ preferred study style. Examples in the interpretation should also be situated in a context that students are likely to encounter in the target culture. The purpose of the example is to help students answer the question “what do Chinese people say and do in this situation?” rather than the question “how do you say this in Chinese?”

Moreover, as mentioned above, contemporary TV programs and films contain a large number of colloquial conventional expressions, which are typically not included in textbooks. Accordingly, video clips from contemporary TV series and films accompanied by pedagogically prepared scripts provide good supplementary material to textbooks’
presentation of conventional expressions. By taking advantage of the rich contextual information provided by the performances of professional actors, students can get a fairly concrete idea of how conventional expressions are uttered and used. More importantly, students will learn how to deal with unknown conventional expressions appearing in unpedagogically controlled materials during a student-teacher question session after watching a segment of the video. Students can be trained to make inquiries that will allow them to infer the meaning of an unknown expression and associate it with ones they have already learned. For instance, after a period of training on making inquiries, students will progress from the initial stage of “I have no idea of what they are saying” to more specific questions like “What is the woman saying?” or “What does this expression mean?” Ultimately, the students’ questions will involve the contextualization of the expression, such as “Can I use this expression in another situation like…..?” Or “Is this expression like X? Can I use X in this situation?”

6.2.3 Developing competence through multilayer performances

6.2.3.1 How is a high degree of competence developed?

Previous literature (Ambrose, et al, 2010) reveals that a high degree of competence within a particular area is normally developed through extensive practices coupled with targeted feedback. According to these scholars, “practice” refers to any activity in which students engage their knowledge and skill to solve a problem or to accomplish a task. “Feedback” is the information given to students about their performance that will guide their future behavior. They point out that learning is best fostered when students engage in practice that 1) focuses on a specific goal stated in a
way that students’ learning outcomes can be monitored and measured; 2) is of sufficient quantity and frequency to meet the goal; and 3) targets an appropriate level of challenge relative to students’ current performance.

The findings from chapter five reveal that the aforementioned features of effective practice are not observed in the instructional activities provided by many popular Chinese textbooks. First of all, most of the reviewed textbooks, especially textbooks at advanced levels, fall short either in quantity or in frequency of opportunities to practice conventional expressions. In fact, even students who have engaged in practice with high-quality presentations still need a sufficient quantity of practice opportunities to achieve the level of automaticity. Most students tend to underestimate the need for practice in foreign language study. They often assume that when they can perform a task on one occasion in one context, their knowledge and skill are secure. But it is much more difficult than that. It takes much more than one successful attempt to learn something new.

Secondly, as mentioned in chapter five, instructional activities in the reviewed textbooks lack the contextualized oral and aural practice needed to build up procedural knowledge of conventional expressions. Generally speaking, there are two types of knowledge in any learning process: declarative knowledge and procedural knowledge. Procedural knowledge is knowledge on how to accomplish certain tasks. Declarative knowledge refers to representations and explanations of something or some events. It focuses on what and why rather than on how. In the case of learning conventional expressions, procedural knowledge refers to the ability to use conventional expressions
appropriately in situations where the expressions are called for while declarative knowledge focuses on why the expression is used in that situation. Usually, the procedural knowledge associated with a communicative event is more challenging for students to acquire than the declarative knowledge. However, the challenge of acquiring procedural knowledge of conventional expressions is underestimated by many textbook compliers. In most of the reviewed textbooks, besides CCC, most drills/exercises are mainly reading/writing oriented. Practice for the oral production and aural recognition of the target expressions is inadequate. Students only spend a limited amount of time on areas that they need to improve and hence will face great challenges when they are trying to converse in Chinese. As unsuccessful experiences accumulate, so do negative expectations for success and students become demotivated. Given these concerns, the instruction of conventional expressions must incorporate sufficient high-quality oral and aural practice to compensate for the inadequacies in the textbooks. Practice should incorporate multiple opportunities to focus on areas that students need to work on and be coupled with targeted feedback.

Based on the findings of the development stage of students’ ability to use conventional expressions in chapter four (recognition of the target expression in context-> distinguishing a set of related expressions-> automatic and appropriate use in typical contexts) and the textbook review in chapter five, this dissertation proposes a series of practices that elicit and rehearse different layers of students' performances.
6.2.3.2 Multilayers of performances

Figure 6.2 illustrates the step-up process that engages students in four layers of performance toward attaining a high degree of competency. These layers are 1) automatic use of conventional expressions in formulaic exchanges, such as greeting, leave-taking, etc.; 2) using a restricted set of high-frequency conventional expressions in exchanges simulated at different levels of formality, such as a detailed self-introduction to apply to a scholarship or a study abroad program, a conversation with a Chinese friend over dinner.
or a formal oral report on a particular topic; 3) managing unknown expressions in un-
pedagogically created and performed language; and 4) analyzing the possible outcomes
brought by the use or nonuse of certain conventional expressions in the kind of social
interactions that students are likely to encounter in the present or foreseeable future.

Instruction for beginning and lower-intermediate students can concentrate more
on the first two layers. These layers prepare students to handle daily tasks that are
necessary for navigating a target culture. Instruction for upper-intermediate and
advanced students should gradually add in the last two layers of performance, and
ultimately develop students’ high competency in using a large number of conventional
expressions necessary for their communication needs. Beginning at the intermediate
level, students have already acquired a certain number of language use experiences,
which allows them to engage in mostly casual and some formal social interactions in
Chinese. They are also expected to be able to deal with more complicated language
artifacts, such as films, TV series and books. It is unavoidable for them to encounter
certain unknown conventional expressions in social interactions and language artifacts.
Repeated opportunities to deal with unknown expressions will train students to handle
similar situations with ease. As students reach advanced levels, their control of Chinese is
sufficient for them to judge the appropriateness and effectiveness of the verbal and non-
verbal behaviors of the participants in a given social interaction. Accordingly, it is
possible for them to analyze the possible outcomes of using or not using certain
conventional expressions in the given social interaction. Later on, they can apply these
analyses to their own production.
The bulleted items in Figure 6.2 are the suggested types of practices to elicit and rehearse the corresponding performance. “Practice” here refers to any activity in which students engage their knowledge and skill to solve a specified problem or to accomplish a specified task. Dialog practice, drills, role-play, and improvisations are the major channels to elicit and rehearse the first two layers of performance. Among them, dialog practice can be operationalized through memorization, acting-out the original or culturally appropriate variations of the dialog. Drills can be implemented in an interactive mode through visual and aural elicitations that require oral responses. In order to engage in exchanges with different levels of formality, students can be asked to participate in different types of interactions with speakers of Chinese out-side-of class, such as ordering food and drinks at a local Chinese restaurant, interviewing a native speaker on a particular topic, or setting up a meeting with a tutor. The third layer of performance is mainly elicited through the inclusion of language artifacts in instruction. Those language artifacts could be excerpts from film, TV programs, or books containing typical uses of conventional expressions that are new to students. Students will learn how to use the expressions using the contextual information provided by the selected artifact. Their ability to deal with unknown expressions can be developed through making increasingly revealing guesses based on contextual information, making inquiries about the use of an expression in discussions with the teacher and peer students and demonstrating understanding by interpreting the expression in their own words or using the expression in their own production. The last layer of performance requires students to analyze the use or nonuse of certain conventional expressions in a given social event that students are
likely to encounter in their future career. For most of the advanced students, these social events should focus on interactions that are likely to happen between students and their Chinese counterparts in corporate and governmental contacts, such as the six types of interactions we discussed in chapter five. The analysis can be facilitated by discussions with a teacher, peer students or other native speakers of Chinese. After the discussion, students can work collectively to produce annotations on the uses of selected important conventional expressions. Ultimately, students can apply this analysis to their own productions in a given social event.

The following section shows some examples of pedagogical solutions based on this multilayer approach to supplement the instruction of conventional expressions that currently appear in popular textbooks. These pedagogical solutions are different from materials used mainly for reference (such as phrase books or dictionaries) in a sense that they present a set of relevant entities in a certain sequence and provide a set of ordered activities designed to facilitate the learning process. The general goal of these pedagogical solutions is to train students how to effectively establish and interpret intentions in Chinese by using and responding to conventional expressions in Chinese communicative events.

6.2.4 Examples of pedagogical solutions to supplement current textbooks

6.2.4.1 Beginning level

The major inadequacy of current instruction of convention expressions in textbooks for beginning students is the lack of contextual information as well as oral and aural production of the target expression. Therefore, contextualized scaffolding drills can
be designed to compensate for these inadequacies. These drills can be delivered through online applications such as “VoiceThread.” The following presents two types of contextualized drills designed for conventional expressions. The first type is designed to practice a single conventional expression. It can be used as one of the drills for vocabulary and grammar in each lesson. The second type is designed to review the use of similar conventional expressions in various contexts. This type can be used as a component for review. Conventional expressions selected in *Integrated Chinese* are used as the examples since IC is one of the most popular Chinese language textbooks in the United States. Example one is targeted the expression of “你怎么了? *Nǐ zěnme le?* What’s the matter? / What’s wrong?” Students are expected to ask a question using this expression based on the given context. Through reading the context, students need to judge which conventional expression should be used to convey this intention and then produce a complete question based on the given picture. Example two targets the expression “是吗 *shìma?*”. In this drill, students should be able to understand the given question and then give a corresponding response. Example three helps student compare several conventional expressions related to asking someone’s name.

---

19“VoiceThread” is an application that allows people to post media artifacts for community feedback. The application, developed at the University of North Carolina, makes it easy for users to add voice annotation to an artifact, which might be a document, a slide presentation, a video, or a collection of photos. Students can give their audio response to a situation presented in video by means of microphone, webcam, or keyboard.

20This expression is selected in lesson 15 of Integrated Chinese Level I part II.

21This expression is selected in lesson 5 of Integrated Chinese Level 1 part I.

22Those expressions are selected in lesson 1 of Integrated Chinese level 1 part I.
Drill type one: practice of a single expression

Example one:
Instruction: Ask an appropriate question based on the given context.
Context: Your classmate seems to be unhappy, anxious or in pain. Show your concern by asking (Presented in print or in audio):
Elicitation: a picture of an unhappy student/a crying student/a student with red eyes.
Responses:
   1) 你怎么了？怎么那么不高兴？
      Nǐ zěn me le? Zěnme nàme bù gāoxìng?
      What’s the matter? Why are you so unhappy?
   2) 你怎么了？怎么哭了？
      Nǐ zěn me le? Zěnme kū le?
      What’s the matter? Why are you crying?
   3) 你怎么了？眼睛怎么这么红？
      Nǐ zěn me le? Yǎnjīng zěnme zhème hóng?
      What’s the matter? Why are your eyes so red?

Example two:
Instruction: Respond to the questions based on the given context.
Context: When having a conversation with your friend, your friend says something unexpected (Presented in print or in audio):
1) Elicitation: 我的英文老师不是美国人？(Presentation media: audio and picture cues)
   Wǒ de yīnwén lǎoshī bù shì měiguó rén?
   My English teacher is not American.
   Response: 是吗？他是哪国人？
   Shìma? Tā shì nàguó rén?
   Is that so? What country is he from?
2) Elicitation: 学校旁边的中国饭馆很好吃 (Presentation media: audio and picture cues)
   Xuéxiào pángbiān de zhōngguó fànguǎn hěn hǎochī.
   The Chinese restaurant near Campus is good.
   Response: 是吗？我明天去试试。
   Shìma? Wǒ míntiān qù shìshì.
   Really? I will try it tomorrow.

Drill type two: review a number of related expressions

Instruction: Initiate or respond to a question in the following situations.
   1) Ask a classmate what the teacher’s last name is.
   2) Ask a new student what his/her full name is.
   3) On the flight to China, you want to know the surname of the person sitting next to you.
   4) When you are checking in a hotel, the receptionist asks
Aural elicitation: 请问您贵姓？

*Qingwèn nín guìxìng?*
May I ask your honorable last name?

You respond: ……

The implementation of these drills in “Voicethread” is illustrated in the following Figure 6.3:

![Figure 6.3 The realization of spoken drills in VoiceThread](image)

6.2.4.2 Intermediate Level

As discussed earlier, segments of language artifacts containing typical uses of conventional expressions can be included in instruction to train students to deal with the use of unknown expressions. Given that most of the current textbooks only focus on
language uses in home/campus settings and service encounters, segments of exchanges in
TV shows or films featuring language use in professional settings can be used as
supplementary material to the textbook. The following shows how a segment selected
from a TV reality show “爱拼才会赢 The Winner” (premiered on 2013) can be
incorporated into a regular curriculum at the intermediate level. This TV reality show
features a group of aspiring entrepreneurs seeking investments for their business or
product from a panel of potential investors. This show is selected as teaching material
because it depicts a number of exchanges in professional settings that students might
encounter in China, such as introducing a company’s product, giving a tour to the visiting
delegation of a company, holding a meeting, talking to subordinates, negotiating
investments and so on. The participants in this TV reality show also mimic the social
roles of people that students might be or might interact with, such as the American
investor looking for a promising business in China, Chinese employees in a company and
Chinese clients of a company.

Students are expected to go through eight steps to learn the selected segment.
Each segment can be learned through two or three classes of instruction. Each class can
be scheduled after students have finished learning the corresponding lesson in the regular
textbook.

**Step One: Read or listen to the introduction for background information**
(Presentation media: text or/and audio)
**Step Two: Watch the segment of the TV show**
(Presentation media: video)
Step Three: Answer content questions about the segment  
(Presentation media: audio & text)

Step Four: Watch the segment of the TV series with the help of annotated notes  
(Presentation media: text)

Step Five: Discuss the content and the language use of the segment  
(Classroom instruction)

Step Six: Do contextualized drills to practice the use of selected conventional expressions  
(Presentation media: audio, picture and text)

Step Seven: Application  
(Classroom instruction)

In step one, students are required to read through a paragraph concerning the background of the segment, the roles of the participants and the general storyline of the episode. This introduction specifies the necessary background information for students to make sense of the video. Unknown words in the introduction will be accompanied with language notes to ensure students’ understanding. Here is an example of an introduction for the sampling segment.

一位美国投资人到一家中国公司考察该公司的运营情况，以决定是否投资这个公司。在美国投资人参观完整个公司后，美国投资人对中国经理说：
*Yīwèi méiguó tóuzī rén dào yījiā zhōngguó gōngsī kǎochá gāi gōngsī de yùnyíng qíngkuàng, yì juédìng shìfǒu tóuzī zhègè gōngsī. zài méiguó tóuzī rén cānguān wán zhènggè gōngsī hòu, méiguó tóuzī rén duì zhōngguó jīnglí shuō.*

An American investor came to a Chinese company to make an on-the-spot investigation on its operation in order to make a decision on the possibility of investing in this company. After a tour of the whole company, the American investor is talking to the Chinese Manager:

In step two, students watch the selected segment and try to get the gist of the video without the help of any notes on the unknown expression(s). The following shows the script of the selected segment.
美国投资人：谢谢啊，今天参观了很多地方，也占用您不少时间了。
中国经理：接下来，有没有可能投我们的企业呢？
美国投资人：我觉得肯定是有这个可能啊，我得再考虑一下。

Two conventional expressions are included in this segment: “……占用您不少时间了 zhànyòng nín búshǎo shíjiān le” and “我得再考虑一下 wǒ dé zài kǎolù yīxià.” The former is conventionally used to show speakers’ gratitude for the listener’s investment of time and energy in formal settings while the latter is often used to dodge a request.

In step three, students check their comprehension of the segment with the help of guided questions. Those guided questions can be related to the content of the segment or the language use of the target expression. Students can check the answers to see if their comprehension is correct. If they have questions concerning the content or the language use in the segment, they can also prepare some questions to ask the instructor in class.

The following shows two examples of these guided questions:

1. 美国投资人同意对这家公司投资了吗？你是怎么知道的？
   Měiguó tóuzī rén tóngyì duì zhèjiā gōngsī tóuzī le ma? nǐ shì zěnme zhīdào de?
   Did the American investor agree to invest in this company? How do you know?

2. 为什么美国投资人在参观后要说“占用你不少时间了？”
   wèishénme měiguó tóuzīrén zài cānɡuǎn hòu yàoshuō “zhànyòng nǐ búshǎo shíjiān le”?
   Why did the American investor say “It took you a lot of time” after his tour of the company?
The first question intends to check students’ comprehension of the conventional expression “我得再考虑一下 wǒ dé zài kǎolǜ yǐxià” while the second questions aims to help students think about the communicative intention conveyed by the expression “占用你不少时间了 zhànyòng nǐ bùshǎo shíjiān le.”

In step four, students watch the video again with the help of notes. The students’ understanding of the use of the target expression is consolidated and clarified through the study of the notes. Examples of using the same expression in variant contexts are provided. The intention conveyed by the expression, including the rhetorical effect that was achieved in the example, is also discussed.

In step five, students are trained to understand the content, the language use and cultural perspectives reflected in the segment through a question and answer session in class. The first half of the class can be used for students to ask questions in the target language. Questions asked by students could include “Can I use this expression in another situation like…?” and “Is this expression like X?” or “Can I use X in this situation?” The second half of the class can be devoted to the teacher’s guided questions that draw students’ attention to the use of the target conventional expression and its conveyed intentions. These questions could include “Can you think of a situation where you can use this expression?” and “What other expressions can be used in this situation to convey the same intention?”

In step six, students do drills at home to practice the use of the target conventional expression(s). The following presents an example of a drill designed for the expression “占用你不少时间了 zhànyòng nǐ bùshǎo shíjiān le.”
You are an American manager working in an international company. Your Chinese client accompanied you on your visits to many places. In order to show your gratitude, you say,

Students initiate the following responses based on the stimuli:

1) 今天参观工厂，占用你不少时间了。
   *Jīntiān cānguān gōngchǎng, zhànyòng nǐ bǔshāo shījiān le.*
   Today, (we) visited the factory today. It took you a lot of time.

2) 今天开会讨论了很多问题，占用你不少时间了。
   *Jīntiān kāihuì táolùn le hěnduō wèntí, zhànyòng nǐ bǔshāo shījiān le.*
   Today, (we) had a meeting to discuss a lot of questions. It took you a lot of time.

3) 今天游览这里的名胜古迹，占用你不少时间了。
   *Jīntiān yóulǎn zhèlǐ de míngshènggǔjì, zhànyòng nǐ bǔshāo shījiān le.*
   Today, (we) visited a lot of places of interests. It took you a lot of time.

In step seven, students will be trained to apply what they have learned through class activities. The activity could be a narration of the segment that demonstrates students’ understanding of the use of the conventional expression in the dialog. It could also be a role-play using the target expression in a context different from the selected segment.

6.2.4.3 Advanced Level

As mentioned before, advanced students have acquired a good control of language so that they can judge the appropriateness and effectiveness of the language use of the participants in a given social interaction. Accordingly, it is possible for them to analyze the possible outcomes of using or not using certain conventional expressions in a given social interaction. This analysis can be a component of an existing advanced course or can be developed as a new course. Materials for the analysis can be recordings of native speakers’ or previous students’ performances in a given situation or selected segments.
from “spontaneous” conversations from talk shows, reality shows, or documentaries. The selected segments should reflect situations that students are likely to encounter given their goals of learning Chinese. The following steps can be adopted to help students learn to analyze a given segment of a recording:

**Step one: Watch the video and be prepared to discuss it in class**  
(Presentation media: video)

**Step two: Discuss the video in class and practice the use of the selected conventional expressions**  
(Presentation media: video; classroom instruction)

**Step three: Work collectively to produce an analysis for the video**  
(Presentation media: text; homework)

**Step four: Apply the analysis to students’ own performance**  
(Presentation media: role-play; Classroom instruction)

In step one, students are expected to watch a video clip selected by the instructor before class and be prepared to discuss the video clip based on a number of guided questions. Those questions will draw students’ attention to the interpretation of the context of the given video clip, the intentions of the characters in the video clip, how they achieve or fail to achieve these intentions through the use of certain conventional expressions and whether there are other conventional expressions that can be used in the given situation. In the end, students can narrate some observations on verbal and non-verbal behaviors in the given situation in both Chinese and American culture. The following shows some sample questions for this step:

1) What is the context of the video based on the language of interaction?
2) What are the intentions of the characters in the scenes?
3) How could changing parts of the script drastically change the assumed intentions of the actors in this context defined by the language of interaction? For example, could the changing of “请教一下 qǐngjiào yǐxià, Could you instruct me on……?” to “我问一下 wǒ wèn yǐxià, May I ask…..?” drastically change the assumed intentions of the actors?
4) Is this context analogous to any other communicative contexts in the target culture? If so, which and how?
5) Are there other useful phrases that can be used in this context other than those spoken in the video?

In step two, one group of students can be assigned as discussion leaders to help the class discuss the video based on the guided questions. The role of the instructor at this stage is to direct the flow of the discussion and give feedback. If the situation allows, native speakers of Chinese can be invited to the class to participate in the discussion so that students can learn the opinions of people like those they will interact with in the future. In the end, the instructor can provide variations of contexts for students to practice important conventional expressions that occurred in the video and other useful expressions that can be used in the similar contexts.

In step three, students can work with one or two students to produce an analysis of the video with annotated notes on the use of conventional expressions in the given situation. They should also be expected to use the conventional expressions instructed in step three in their own language production.

In step four, students are expected to perform with their classmates in one or two situations resembling the interactions that students might encounter in their real life using what they have learned from the analysis. Other students can comment on each group’s performance to see if the presented uses of conventional expressions help the presenters achieve their assumed intentions effectively and appropriately. Students can also be required to think about the situations in which a particular expression can be used and practice narrating these situations in their own words. This kind of exercises can
effectively help students build a personal “story” of using a particular conventional expression.

6.3 Limitations and directions for future Research

I investigated students’ production of conventional expressions through a written discourse completion test to ensure that a large quantity of data was collected. An oral discourse completion test might provide some information that a written test cannot, such as the intonation of students’ production of conventional expressions and the preparation time for and fluency of the production. However, as mentioned in the methodology chapter, previous research provides evidence that data collected through a written discourse completion test accurately reflects, in many ways, the content expressed in natural data. It can provide the typical response that occurs in one’s actual speech in any given situation. Given that the focus of this study is not the intonation or fluency of students’ production, written discourse can stratify the research purpose to elicit students’ prototype use of a certain expression in a particular situation. Future research can be conducted to investigate if any factors might affect students’ production fluency of conventional expressions and the preparation time they need. These factors would include length of stay in the target language environment, the degree of students’ immersion in the target environment, students’ level of proficiency and students’ language background. A longitudinal study can also be conducted to investigate how students are socialized to use certain conventional expressions in the target environment.
In addition, non-transparent conventional expressions (expressions with special cultural connotations) often create challenges for students’ understanding. Future research may investigate the developmental pattern of students’ ability to interpret conventional expressions and examine if their ability is influenced by either their learning environment (domestic or target environment), level of proficiency or individual differences. Students’ use of strategies to interpret the unknown expression can also be investigated.

Further research can also explore how native speakers perceive and evaluate CFL learner’s use of non-native like conventional expressions and examine what kinds of deviations from native use will dramatically affect native speakers’ evaluation of learners’ performances or lead to miscommunication. More specifically, future research may investigate native speakers’ judgment of the appropriateness of learners’ different types of non-native like uses and then explore which type of non-native like use is considered as the least appropriate. For example, when asking for directions, learners may use the general form for locations “……在哪儿？Zài nǎr? Where is?” rather than the conventional form “……怎么走 zěnme zǒu? How do I get to ……?” This kind of non-native like use may not cause breakdown of communication. Sometimes, learners only recall part of the conventional expression, for example, one learner in my class was trying to use the conventional expression “今天就说到这儿。Jīntiān jiù shuō dào zhèr. That’s it for today.” to end his oral report, but he only recalled part of it and said “今天说到了。Jīntiān jiù shuōdào le.” This unconventional use requires the listener to take extra
efforts to understand what the learner is trying to say. Sometimes, the non-native like use may cause misunderstandings, or even offend the interlocutor. For example, a native Chinese speaker who tutored several American students of Chinese in my course, reported that a student once asked him “嘿，怎样? Hēi, zěnyang?” at the beginning of a tutoring session. The tutor recalled that it took him a while to understand that the student was trying to greet him by using the English conventional expression “hey, what’s up?” in Chinese. Unfortunately, the translation of “what’s up” in Chinese would not work as it does in English. It can be predicted that if a Chinese speaker who knows nothing about English communicates with this student, he/she may encounter great difficulties in understanding this student.

Furthermore, this dissertation proposes two criteria to select conventional expressions that should be taught. Based on the two criteria, future research can develop a list of useful conventional expressions in different types of oral exchanges or written discourses that students need to manage. This list will benefit the compiling of textbooks as well as the design of communicative language ability tests.

Last but not least, this study suggests a multilayer approach to teaching conventional expressions and proposes a number of exemplar instruction methods to supplement the instruction of conventional expressions in current textbooks. Future research can investigate the effects of those teaching methods on students’ learning.
6.4 Conclusion

A shared culture provides the conventions that establish and interpret intentions for communication to members of that culture. Chinese people are often proud of their ancient history and often consider four-character idioms, proverbs, classicisms and conventional expressions as one important component of this legacy. Therefore, a foreigner’s ability to understand and use conventional expressions is often considered by Chinese speakers an important indicator of acculturation and high-language proficiency. This perception of a foreigner’s language use indicates the importance of the various types of conventional expressions in Chinese language teaching.

Given this importance, this dissertation provides a pedagogical solution for the teaching of Chinese conventional expressions through an investigation of students’ knowledge of conventional expressions and a review of the pedagogical treatment of conventional expressions in current popular Chinese textbooks. The investigation into students’ productive and receptive knowledge of conventional expressions reveals students’ learning needs and identifies several effective study strategies that help students remember the expression better. The review of pedagogical treatment of conventional expressions in both beginning and advanced textbooks suggests several areas that can be improved.

Based on the obtained results from the empirical study and textbook review, this dissertation views the use of conventional expressions as routinized cultural performances and tries to socialize students in the use of conventional expressions through four layers of performance. This multilayer approach enables students to develop
from mechanically responding to formulaic situations to adeptly participating in both formal and informal exchanges. Training on strategies for dealing with unknown expressions and analyzing the use of a certain expression are also included to prepare students to navigate in Chinese culture and to learn from immersion experiences in China. Ultimately, a number of practical instructional examples are provided to demonstrate how this multilayer approach can be implemented in different levels of Chinese language teaching.


239


Appendix A: Questionnaire to identify useful expressions for students in the study abroad program

Directions: Please list useful expressions that you find useful for your stay in China. (You can write either in Pinyin or in Chinese characters).

1) Useful expressions for dining out:

2) Useful expressions for shopping:

3) Useful expressions for taking Public transportation (e.g., bus, taxi, airplane, train):

4) Useful expressions for Entertainment (e.g., movie theaters, Karaoke,):

5) Useful expressions at a bank

6) Useful expressions for greeting

7) Useful expressions for leave-taking

8) Useful expressions for small talk

9) Useful expressions for request
10) Useful expression for compliments

11) Useful expressions at banquets

12) Useful expressions for interviewing native speakers of Chinese

13) Other useful expressions you find useful
Appendix B: Web-based survey to test Native Speakers’ agreement on the created scenarios

非常感谢您参加此次问卷调查。

请问您是不是中文老师：是否

您的常居地是：

以下问卷中包括了一些生活中的常见情景。请仔细阅读每一个情景，并在情景下方方框内，写下您在此情景下当场会说的话：

1. 你正在逛街的时候碰上了一个好长时间没有见的朋友，你对这个朋友说：

2. 你到一个新公司上班，第一天上班的时候，你向同事们介绍自己。同事们都和你差不多年纪，你说：

3. 在朋友的聚会。主人介绍你认识了一个新朋友，小王，你对小王说：

4. 你到老师办公室见张老师，可是不知道她不在。到办公室的时候，一个你不认识的老师开了门，你说：

5. 你是一家公司的实习生。有一个客人来想见你的经理，你想知道这个客人的名字，你说：

6. 你办公室的电话响了，打电话的人正好找你，他问：“（你的名字）在吗？”，你回答：

252
7. 你在一个好朋友家吃晚饭。走的时候，你好朋友坚持送你到车站，你不想他们再送你了，你对他们说：

8. 你在一个公司工作，现在已经是下班时间了。你准备回家的时候，有一个同事还在办公室。你走的时候对这个同事说：

9. 你和朋友一起吃饭。你的朋友不停地给你夹菜，让你多吃一点。你不想让她再夹菜了，你说：

10. 午休的时候，你的同事去星巴克买咖啡喝，他问要不要给你带一杯，你觉得不需要，你说：

11. 在公司的年终聚餐上，你想请你老板喝酒，你对他说：

12. 你和你的朋友一起吃饭。你的朋友正和你说话的时候，你的手机响了。你想要接这个电话，你对你的朋友说：

13. 你和你的老板星期一早上有一个重要的会议。可是你的闹钟没有响，所以你迟到了半个小时。当你见到你的老板时，你对他说：

14. 今天是你的同学小张的生日。你见到他的时候，你对他说：

15. 你的同事最近升职了。你见到小张时，会怎么祝贺他？

16. 你的手机响了，你接起来发现这个人拨了不对的号码。你对他说：

253
17. 你在一家公司实习。实习结束的时候，你的同事送给你一个很好的告别礼物。你对你的同事说什么？

18. 你的同事要调到一个新的分公司工作，你希望他走了以后能一直和你联系，你对他说：

19. 在中餐馆，你想要带十个饺子回家吃，你对服务员说：

20. 在中餐馆，你想把剩下的菜带回家，你对服务员说：

21. 你和朋友一起吃饭，你想付账的时候，他付他的，你付你的，你对朋友说：

22. 在中餐馆，你吃完了，准备付钱，你对服务员说：

23. 在一个百货公司。一个售货员过来问你想买什么。你不需要她的帮助，你对她说：

24. 你在一家服装店。你看中了一件T恤想穿上看。你对售货员说：

25. 你在一辆很挤的公车上，下一站你就得下车了，可是有人挡了你下车的路，你对他说：

26. 你打了一辆出租车，可是出租车司机没有用计程器。你对司机说：

27. 在一家宾馆，你今天就不住在这个宾馆了，你收拾好行李，对前台说：

28. 你住在北京的一家宾馆，你想去北京大学，可是不知道路，你问前台：
Appendix C: Production Test

Part One: Background information

1. Your English Name: ____________________________________________

2. Year of birth: ________________________________________________

3. When you were growing up, what language or languages were usually spoken at your home? (Check all that apply)
   a. English
   b. Spanish
   c. Chinese Mandarin
   d. Chinese dialect (Please specify ________________________________)
   e. Other (Please specify ________________________________)

4. Your major/area of study: _______________________________________ 

5. How long have you been receiving classroom instruction in Chinese?
   ( ) 1 year or less ( ) 2 years ( ) 3 years ( ) 4 years ( ) 5 years or more

6. Why do you study Chinese? (Check all that apply)
   a. to fulfill the foreign language requirement for my college study
   b. to get a job related to China
   c. to communicate with my relatives/friends who speak Chinese
   d. to enjoy Chinese culture, such as songs, movies, music, etc.
   e. others (please specify) ________________________________________

8. Have you ever visited China/Taiwan? Y N
   If yes, how long have you been in China/Taiwan for the longest visit?
   Years  Months
Part Two:

This part contains some situations that you might encounter in China. Please read each situation and write what you would say in Chinese in each situation. Respond as you would in an actual conversation. You can write either in Chinese characters or in Pinyin.

1. When you are walking around campus, you run into one of your friends who you have not seen for a long time. You say to him:

2. You are a new intern at a company in China. At the first day of your work, you are asked to introduce yourself to the new colleagues who are pretty much at the same age as you are. You say to your new colleagues:

3. You come to the teachers’ office to meet with Teacher Zhang, but you don’t know if she is there or not. When you knock at the door, a teacher whom you don’t know opens the door. You say to the teacher:

4. You are an intern of a company in China. A guest is coming to meet with your manager. You want to know his name. You say to him:

5. You are working at a company in China. Your office’s telephone rings. The person who is calling says, “(your name) in or not?” you respond:
6. You are having dinner at a Chinese friend’s home. When you leave, your friend insists on sending you out and walking you to the bus stop. You don’t want him to walk you, you say to him:

7. You are working at a company in China. It’s the time to get off work now. Since you have some stuff to do after work, you have to be the first one to leave the office. As you leave, you say to your colleagues:

8. You are having dinner with your Chinese friend. Your friend keeps serving more food to you with her chopsticks and asks you to eat more. You don’t want her to do so, you say:

9. During coffee break, your colleague is going to Starbucks to buy a cup of coffee. He asks if you want him to buy one for you. You don’t want coffee now. You say to him:

10. You are having dinner with your Chinese friend. When your friend is talking to you, your cell phone is ringing. You want to answer the phone, so you say to your friend:

11. Today is your classmate, Little Zhang’s birthday. When you see him before class, you say to him:
12. You have an important appointment with your boss Monday morning. Unfortunately, your alarm clock didn’t go off and you arrive 30 minutes late. When you see your boss, you say to him:

13. One of your colleagues gets promoted recently. When you see him, you say to him:

14. Your cell phone rings. You pick up and find out the person who is calling dialed the wrong number. You say to him:

15. At a Chinese restaurant, you want the waiter/waitress to pack up the leftovers for you. You say to the waiter/waitress:

16. You are having a dinner with your friends at a restaurant. You would like to let your friends know you want to split the bill. You say to your friends:

17. At a Chinese restaurant, you want the waitress to bring the check to you. You say:

18. You are on a crowded bus. The next stop is where you get off, but someone is on your way out. You say to him:
19. You are taking a cab, but the driver does not run the meter. You say to the driver:

20. At a hotel, you are ready to check out. You say to the receptionist:

21. You are staying at a Hotel in Beijing. You want to go to Beijing University, but you don’t know how to get there. You ask the front desk:
Appendix D. Recognition test

This questionnaire tests how much you know about language use in specific situations. In each test item, a brief description in English of the context is provided, followed by three possible options. Select the best answer to respond to the given situation.

1. When you are walking around campus, you run into one of your friends who you have not seen for a long time. You say to him:
   A. 你好 nǐ hǎo
   B. 好久不见 hǎo jiǔ bú jiàn
   C. 你好吗 nǐ hǎo ma

2. You are a new intern at a company in China. At the first day of your work, you are asked to introduce yourself to the new colleagues who are pretty much at the same age as you are. You say to your new colleagues:
   A. 大家好，我是新来的 dàjiā hǎo, wǒ shì xīnlái de
   B. 大家，我是新来的 dàjiā, wǒ shì xīnlái de
   C. 同事们好，我是新来的 tóngshì men hǎo, wǒ shì xīnlái de

3. You come to the teachers’ office to meet with Teacher Zhang, but you don’t know if she is there or not. When you knock at the door, a teacher who you don’t know opens the door. You say to the teacher:
   A. 请问，张老师在吗? qǐngwèn, zhāng lǎoshī zài ma?
   B. 请问，张老师在哪儿? qǐngwèn, zhāng lǎoshī zài nǎr?
   C. 我想找张老师。wǒ xiǎngzhǎo zhāng lǎoshī。

4. You are an intern of a company in China. A guest is coming to meet with your manager. You want to know his name. You say to him:
   A. 请问，您是谁? qǐngwèn, nín shì shuí?
   B. 请问，您贵姓? qǐngwèn, nín guìxìng?
   C. 请问，您叫什么名字? qǐngwèn, nín jiào shénme míngzì?
5. You are working at a company in China. Your office’s telephone rings. The person who is calling says, “is this (your name)?” you respond:
A. 是我。shì wǒ.
B. 我是。wǒ shì.
C. 我就是。wǒ jiù shì.

6. You are having dinner at a Chinese friend’s home. When you leave, your friend insists on sending you out and walking you to the bus stop. You don’t want him to walk you, you say to him:
A. 不用送了。búyòng sòng le.
B. 你回家吧。nǐ huíjiā ba.
C. 我自己走。wǒ zìjǐ zǒu.

7. You are working at a company in China. It’s the time to get off work now. Since you have some stuff to do after work, you have to be the first one to leave the office. As you leave, you say to your colleagues:
A. 再见。zàijiàn。
B. 我去了。wǒ qù le。
C. 我先走了。wǒ xiān zǒu le。

8. You are having dinner with your Chinese friend. Your friend keeps serving more food to you with her chopsticks and asks you to eat more. You don't want her to do so, you say:
A. 谢谢，我吃太多了。xièxiè，wǒ chī tài duō le。
B. 谢谢，我自己来。xièxiè，wǒ zìjǐ lái。
C. 谢谢，别给我了。xièxiè，bié gěi wǒ le。

9. During coffee break, your colleague is going to Starbucks to buy a cup of coffee. He asks if you want him to buy one for you. You don’t want coffee now. You say to him:
A. 谢谢，不用了。xièxiè，bú yòng le。
B. 谢谢，我不要。xièxiè，wǒ bùyào。
C. 谢谢，不客气。xièxiè，bú kèqì。
10. You are having dinner with your Chinese friend. When your friend is talking to you, your cell phone is ringing. You want to answer the phone, so you say to your friend:
A. 不好意思。bú hǎo yìsǐ。
B. 对不起。duibúqǐ。
C. 抱歉。Bàoqiàn。

11. Today is your classmate, Little Zhang’s birthday. When you see him before class, you say to him:
A. 祝你生日快乐! Zhù nǐ shēngrì kuàilè!
B. 祝你生日好! Zhù nǐ shēngrì hǎo!
C. 祝你生日高兴! Zhù nǐ shēngrì gāoxìng!

12. You have an important appointment with your boss Monday morning. Unfortunately, your alarm clock didn’t go off and you arrive 30 minutes late. When you see your boss, you say to him:
A. 不好意思。bú hǎo yìsǐ。
B. 对不起。duibúqǐ。
C. 抱歉。Bàoqiàn。

13. One of your colleagues gets promoted recently. When you see him, you say to him:
A. 恭喜，恭喜。Gōngxǐ，gōngxǐ。
B. 祝好。Zhù hǎo。
C. 很好。Hěn hǎo。

14. Your cell phone rings. You pick up and find out the person who is calling dialed the wrong number. You say to him:
A. 你打不对的电话号码。Nǐ dǎ bùduì de diànhuà hàomǎ。
B. 你打错了。Nǐ dǎcuò le。
C. 你打电话错了。Nǐ dǎ diànhuàcuò le。

15. At a Chinese restaurant, you want the waiter/waitress to pack up the leftovers for you. You say to the waiter/waitress:
A. 打包 dā bāo
B. 拿回家 ná huí jiā
C. 带回家 dài huí jiā
16. You are having a dinner with your friends at a restaurant. You would like to let your friends know you want to split the bill. You say to your friends:
A. 我们都付钱。wǒmen dōu fùqián。
B. 我们一起给钱。wǒmen yīqǐ gěi qián。
C. 我们 AA 吧。wǒ men AAba。

17. At a Chinese restaurant, you want the waitress to bring the check to you. You say:
A. 买单。Mǎidān。
B. 我给钱。Wǒ gěi qián。
C. 我吃完了。Wǒ chīwán le。

18. You are on a crowded bus. The next stop is where you get off, but someone is on your way out. You say to him:
A. 对不起，请你让我走。Duìbúqǐ，qǐng nǐ ràng wǒ zǒu。
B. 对不起，下个是我的站。Duìbúqǐ，xià gè shì wǒ de zhàn。
C. 对不起，请你让一下！Duìbúqǐ，qǐng nǐ ràng yī xià！

19. You are taking a cab, but the driver does not run the meter. You say to the driver:
A. 请您打表。Qǐng nín dǎbiǎo。
B. 多少钱？Duōshǎo qián？
C. 请您用表。Qǐng nín yòng biǎo。

20. At a hotel, you are ready to check out. You say to the receptionist:
A. 付钱。Fù qián。
B. 我想出去。Wǒ xiǎng chūqù。
C. 退房。Tuìfáng。

21. You are staying at a Hotel in Beijing. You want to go to Beijing University, but you don’t know how to get there. You ask the front desk:
A. 请问，北京大学在哪儿？Qǐngwèn，Běijīng dàxué zài nǎr？
B. 请问，北京大学怎么走？Qǐngwèn，Běijīng dàxué zěnme zǒu？
C. 请问，北京大学怎么到？Qǐngwèn，Běijīng dà xué zěnme dào？
Appendix E. Study strategy questionnaire

This questionnaire is used to examine your strategies for learning a second or foreign language. Please read each statement and circle the response (1, 2, 3, 4, or 5) that tells HOW TRUE OF YOU THE STATEMENT IS.

Answer in terms of how well the statement describes you. Do not answer how you think you should be, or what other people do. There are no right or wrong answers to these statements. Work as quickly as you can without being careless. If you have any questions, let instructor know immediately.

1. I think of relationships between what I already know and the new expressions I learn in Chinese.

   1 Never or almost never true   2 Usually not true   3 Somewhat true   4 Usually true   5 Always or almost always

2. I use new Chinese expression in a conversation so I can remember them.

   1 Never or almost never true   2 Usually not true   3 Somewhat true   4 Usually true   5 Always or almost always

3. I connect a new Chinese expression and an image or picture of the expression to help me remember.

   1 Never or almost never true   2 Usually not true   3 Somewhat true   4 Usually true   5 Always or almost always

4. I remember a new Chinese expression by making a mental picture of a situation in which the expression might be used.

   1 Never or almost never true   2 Usually not true   3 Somewhat true   4 Usually true   5 Always or almost always
5. I use flashcards to remember useful Chinese expressions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never or almost never true</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually not true</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat true</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually true</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always or almost always</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. I remember a useful expression as a whole.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never or almost never true</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually not true</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat true</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually true</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always or almost always</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. I physically act out new Chinese expressions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never or almost never true</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually not true</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat true</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually true</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always or almost always</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. I often review the expressions I find useful.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never or almost never true</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually not true</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat true</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually true</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always or almost always</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. I remember new Chinese expressions by remembering their location on the page, on the board, or on a street sign.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never or almost never true</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually not true</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat true</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually true</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always or almost always</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part B

10. I say or write new Chinese expressions several times.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never or almost never true</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually not true</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat true</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually true</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always or almost always</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. I try to talk like native Chinese speakers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never or almost never true</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually not true</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat true</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually true</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always or almost always</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
12. I try to use the Chinese expressions I newly learn as much as I can.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never or almost never true</td>
<td>Usually not true</td>
<td>Somewhat true</td>
<td>Usually true</td>
<td>Always or almost always</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13. I watch Chinese language TV shows spoken in Chinese or go to movies spoken in Chinese.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never or almost never true</td>
<td>Usually not true</td>
<td>Somewhat true</td>
<td>Usually true</td>
<td>Always or almost always</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never or almost never true</td>
<td>Usually not true</td>
<td>Somewhat true</td>
<td>Usually true</td>
<td>Always or almost always</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15. I find the meaning of a Chinese expression by dividing it into parts that I understand.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never or almost never true</td>
<td>Usually not true</td>
<td>Somewhat true</td>
<td>Usually true</td>
<td>Always or almost always</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

16. I try not to translate word-for-word.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never or almost never true</td>
<td>Usually not true</td>
<td>Somewhat true</td>
<td>Usually true</td>
<td>Always or almost always</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17. I make up new expressions according to my native language if I do not know the right ones in Chinese.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never or almost never true</td>
<td>Usually not true</td>
<td>Somewhat true</td>
<td>Usually true</td>
<td>Always or almost always</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part D

18. I try to find as many ways as I can to use my Chinese.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never or almost never true</td>
<td>Usually not true</td>
<td>Somewhat true</td>
<td>Usually true</td>
<td>Always or almost always</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
19. I notice my Chinese mistakes and use that information to help me do better.

| 1 Never or almost never true | 2 Usually not true | 3 Somewhat true | 4 Usually true | 5 Always or almost always |

20. I pay attention when someone is speaking Chinese and try to remember the useful expressions used by him/her.

| 1 Never or almost never true | 2 Usually not true | 3 Somewhat true | 4 Usually true | 5 Always or almost always |

21. I try to find out how to learn more useful expressions in Chinese.

| 1 Never or almost never true | 2 Usually not true | 3 Somewhat true | 4 Usually true | 5 Always or almost always |

22. I plan my schedule so I will have enough time to study Chinese.

| 1 Never or almost never true | 2 Usually not true | 3 Somewhat true | 4 Usually true | 5 Always or almost always |

23. I look for people I can talk to in Chinese.

| 1 Never or almost never true | 2 Usually not true | 3 Somewhat true | 4 Usually true | 5 Always or almost always |

24. I have clear goals for improving my Chinese skills.

| 1 Never or almost never true | 2 Usually not true | 3 Somewhat true | 4 Usually true | 5 Always or almost always |


| 1 Never or almost never true | 2 Usually not true | 3 Somewhat true | 4 Usually true | 5 Always or almost always |
Part E

26. If I do not understand something in Chinese, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again.

1 Never or almost never true 2 Usually not true 3 Somewhat true 4 Usually true 5 Always or almost always

27. I ask Chinese speakers to correct me when I talk.

1 Never or almost never true 2 Usually not true 3 Somewhat true 4 Usually true 5 Always or almost always

28. I practice Chinese with other students.

1 Never or almost never true 2 Usually not true 3 Somewhat true 4 Usually true 5 Always or almost always

29. I ask for help from Chinese speakers.

1 Never or almost never true 2 Usually not true 3 Somewhat true 4 Usually true 5 Always or almost always

30. I ask questions in Chinese.

1 Never or almost never true 2 Usually not true 3 Somewhat true 4 Usually true 5 Always or almost always

31. I try to learn about the culture of Chinese speakers.

1 Never or almost never true 2 Usually not true 3 Somewhat true 4 Usually true 5 Always or almost always