# การวิเคราะห์วาทกรรมในชั้นเรียนภาษาจีน:
## กรณีศึกษามหาวิทยาลัยราชภัฏเชียงราย
# DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF CHINESE LANGUAGE CLASSROOM:
## A CASE STUDY AT CHIANG RAI RAJABHAT UNIVERSITY

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## บทคัดย่อ

การวิเคราะห์วาทกรรมเป็นการวิจัยกระบวนการในชั้นเรียนลักษณะหนึ่งเพื่อให้เข้าใจการใช้ภาษาในห้องเรียน งานวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาคุณลักษณะของวาทกรรมการใช้ภาษาในชั้นเรียนภาษาจีนเป็นภาษาที่สองในคณะมนุษยศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยราชภัฏเชียงราย กระบวนการวิจัยประกอบด้วยการอธิบายและวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลวาทกรรมในชั้นเรียน โดยมีองค์ประกอบ คือ รูปแบบปฏิสัมพันธ์ในชั้นเรียน ปริมาณการสนทนาของครูผู้สอนและนักศึกษา ประเภทของคำถามที่ครูใช้ และการให้ข้อมูลย้อนกลับของครู กลุ่มตัวอย่าง ได้แก่ ครูผู้สอนชาวจีนหนึ่งท่าน และนักศึกษาไทยชั้นปีที่ 2 สาขาวิชาเอกภาษาจีนจำนวน 35 คนที่เรียนรายวิชาการฟัง–พูดภาษาจีน โดยผู้วิจัยได้เลือกบทเรียน 3 บทเรียนเพื่อเข้าสังเกตและบันทึกการเรียนการสอนในการศึกษาวาทกรรมในชั้นเรียน

ผลการศึกษาพบว่า รูปแบบของวาทกรรมในชั้นเรียนของกลุ่มตัวอย่าง ใช้รูปแบบ IRF และปฏิสัมพันธ์ระหว่างผู้สอนกับนักศึกษาเป็นปฏิสัมพันธ์หลักของวาทกรรมในชั้นเรียน นอกจากนี้ พบว่าการสนทนาของครูมีปริมาณมากกว่าการสนทนาของผู้เรียน และผู้สอนใช้คำถามประเภท Displayed Question และให้ข้อมูลย้อนกลับเชิงบวกมากในชั้นเรียนภาษาจีนของมหาวิทยาลัยราชภัฏเชียงราย ทั้งนี้ ผลวิจัยนี้จะมีประโยชน์ต่อการสอนของครูเพื่อชี้แนะและส่งเสริมให้นักศึกษาได้สนทนาในชั้นเรียนมากขึ้น

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## ABSTRACT

Classroom discourse analysis is an aspect of classroom process research. It helps us understand how a language is used in a classroom. This paper aimed to investigate the features of discourse in a Chinese as a second language learning classroom at Faculty of Humanities, Chiang Rai Rajabhat University (CRRU). The paper described and analyzed the structures of classroom discourse including interaction patterns, duration of teacher talk and student talk, types of teacher's questions and feedback. The participants were one native Chinese speaker and 35 second-year Thai students majoring Chinese at the Faculty of Humanities. The three lessons in the Chinese Listening and Speaking course were observed and video-recorded to investigate the classroom discourse.

The results showed that the interaction pattern in the present Chinese classrooms was Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF), and the teacher-student interaction dominated the classroom discourse. Moreover, the duration of teacher talk was much longer than that of students talk in the three lessons. The large amount of displayed questions and more positive feedback were used in the Chinese classroom at CRRU. The results in this study should be beneficial for Chinese language teachers' teaching to guide and encourage students to talk more in classrooms.

**KEYWORDS**: Classroom Discourse Analysis, Classroom Discourse Structure, Teacher Talk, Teachers' Questions, Teachers' Feedback

## Rational and Background

In recent years, due to the rapid economic growth in China, trade and investment between China and other countries have been increasing rapidly, on the looming large of the craze of Chinese language in the world. More and more students in Chiang Rai are learning Chinese as another foreign language. Chinese course at Chiang Rai Rajabhat University is attracting increased enrollment as students believe they will have better job opportunities if they can communicate in Chinese. Among the language learning around the world, Chinese language learning has become more popular among non-Chinese speaking learners.

Classroom discourse, which includes the interactions between language learners and

their teacher or other learners, has been one of the most discussed topics in both classroom research and L2 acquisition. It illustrates the joint contributions of teacher and students, rather than focusing only on the teacher's language. Classroom discourse analysis is an aspect of classroom process research. Lier (1988) described classroom discourse analysis as "an analysis of processes of classroom interaction by means of a close examination of audiovisual records of interaction."

According to Arthur (2008), the earliest systemic study of classroom discourse was reported in 1910. The first use of audiotape recorders in classrooms was reported in the 1930s, and during the 1960s, there was a rapid growth in the number of studies based on analysis of transcripts of classroom discourse. These early studies showed that the verbal interaction between teachers and students had an underlying structure that was much the same in all classrooms, at all grade levels, and in all countries.

As far as the structure of interaction between teacher and students in the classroom is concerned, Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) found that the language of traditional teacher–controlled classrooms is in a rigid pattern, where teachers and students speak according to very fixed perceptions of their roles and where the talk could be seen to conform to highly structured sequences. The exchange consists of three moves: the teacher's initiation, the student's response and the teacher's feedback, known as IRF. Consequently, as Nunan (1991) stated, If we want to enrich our understanding of language learning and teaching, we need to spend time looking in classroom.

## Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the classroom discourse in a Chinese language classroom at CRRU,

## Research Questions

This research focused on the following questions:

1. What kinds of interaction did dominate the Chinese language classroom at CRRU?

2. What was the duration of teacher talk and student talk in Chinese class at CRRU?

3. What kinds of questions were used by teacher in Chinese learning class at CRRU?

4. Which types of feedback were adopted when teacher evaluate students' classroom performances in Chinese class at CRRU?

## Significance of Study

This study, based on teaching Chinese as a second language (L2), mainly investigated and analyzed classroom

interaction, classroom discourse and interaction effects on Chinese language teaching. The teachers will gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between teaching and learning theory. The beneficial will reflect as follow: 1) Teachers can understand their own role and learn how to guide students to actively participate in classroom interaction. 2) Teachers can better understand how to create a classroom environment for information exchange and language expressions for students and to promote students' language acquisition. 3) Teachers can discover the characteristics and patterns of classroom interaction, so that can put forward positive proposals and the corresponding teaching strategies. Then they can contribute to the promotion of classroom interaction, strengthen classroom interaction effects.

## Methodology

### Participants

Data was collected from a Chinese teacher and second year Thai students majoring Chinese in the Faculty of Humanities, Chiang Rai Rajabhat University. There were 35 Thai students in the class; they could use simple Chinese to communicate with native Chinese speakers. The teachers was a female native Chinese speaker with more than 3 years' teaching experience in CRRU. So, 35 Thai students and one teacher were specially invited to participate as target subjects in an in-depth investigation. The reasons to choose the particular classes were: (1) the class focused on Chinese oral lesson; (2) the student's speaking ability in Chinese could allow more students output.

### Instruments

In this study, two instruments were used: non-participant observation and video-recording. In this present video-recording was the major research instrument to collect data due to the fact that note-taking was too much time-consuming. Also, it was very important to transcribe recorded data into written samples repeatedly in details. Classroom observation was defined as a family of related procedures for gathering data during actual language lessons or tutorial sessions, primarily by watching, listening, and recording (Bailey, 2010). As far as the non-participant observation was used in this study, this left the researcher free to take notes and made the recording during the observation.

The text book used in this class was published by Beijing Language and Culture University titled "language skills of Chinese as a Foreign Language Course". For classrooms, the teacher always required the students to read the new words one by one in the class. Meanwhile, the teacher corrected the wrong pronunciation immediately when the student

read the words. Before the teacher explained the text, she also let the students read the text one by one. Then she made some correction when errors occurred. The T–S interaction in Chinese was mainly based on the discussion of questions in the exercise. The researcher randomly chose three meaningful lessons as followed:

**Table 1** Topics and contents of the selected lessons

| Class | Content | Time /(min) | Topic |
|---|---|---|---|
| Lesson 1 | Integrated Course | 180 | Lesson 63 <Talk it later> |
| Lesson 2 | Newspaper Reading Course | 180 | Talk about Chinese News |
| Lesson 3 | Integrated Course | 180 | Lesson 68 <Eat grapes> |

### Data Collection

The following steps were involved:

Step 1: Joined in the class take video–recording and non–participant observation.

Before joining in the class, the researcher got the permission from the teacher, so that the camera and note book could be used to collect the data.

Step 2: Transcribed data

Three video–recordings were transcribed and translated.

## Research Results and Discussion

For quantitative analysis, the interaction patterns, teacher talk, question types, and the data of teacher feedback were presented below.

## Results

### Interaction Patterns

The interaction in Chinese class mainly based on the discussion of questions in the exercises, and other classroom activities. The main three (510 mins) classroom activities were shown in Table 2.

**Table 2** Classroom interaction and activities

| Teacher monologue (mins) | T–S Interaction (mins) | S–S Interaction (mins) | Reading & correction of words (mins) | Words explanation (mins) | Reading & correction of text (mins) | Text explanation (mins) | Total (mins) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 26 | 270 | 40 | 36 | 45 | 42 | 51 | 510 |
| 5.10% | 52.94% | 7.84% | 7.06% | 8.82% | 8.24% | 10.00% | 100% |

**Note:** Teacher monologue=Teacher just read the textbook, but no explanation, T–S=teacher–student, S–S= student–student

The results in Table 2 showed that Teacher–Student (T–S) interaction which took 270 minutes (52.94%) out of 510 minutes dominated the class activities. The interaction between students took 40 minutes (7.84%). It demonstrated that the teacher always encouraged students to take part in the activities, so that the students could get more chance to practice the Chinese. Additionally, the teacher could evaluate if the students had a better understanding about the lessons or not.

**Teacher Talk and Student Talk**

Almost all classroom behaviors were defined in terms of teacher–talk or learner–talk in which language was both medium and the message. The duration and the percentage of teacher talks and that of student talk were illustrated in Table 3

**Table 3** Duration and percentage of teacher Talk and student talk

| | Lesson 1 | | Lesson 2 | | Lesson 3 | | Average | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Duration (min) | % | Duration (min) | % | Duration (min) | % | Duration (min) | % |
| TT | 120 | 70.59 | 57 | 33.53 | 117 | 68.82 | 98 | 57.65 |
| ST | 40 | 23.53 | 109 | 64.12 | 29 | 17.06 | 59.33 | 34.90 |
| Other | 10 | 5.88 | 4 | 2.35 | 24 | 14.12 | 12.67 | 7.45 |

**Note:** TT=Teacher Talk, ST=Student Talk, Other =Other activities, time =Time of listening, writing, doing exercises and other activities in the classroom

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From Table 3, it demonstrated that the duration of teacher talk time was 294 minutes within 510 minutes and the average duration of teacher talk was 98 minutes or 57.65%. It could be seen that the total percentage of teacher talk was higher than that of student talk in the three Chinese lessons.

**Teacher's Questions**

The types of questions that the Chinese teacher asked in the three lessons were examined. The data were analyzed using frequency and the percentage of each type of questions and presented in table 4.

**Table 4** Frequency and percentage of different types of teacher questions in the Chinese class

| Lesson | Frequency of Display Questions | | Frequency of Referential Questions | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number | Percentage (%) | Number | Percentage (%) |
| Lesson 1 | 15 | 53.57 | 13 | 46.43 |
| Lesson 2 | 11 | 40.74 | 16 | 59.26 |
| Lesson 3 | 29 | 85.29 | 5 | 14.71 |
| Total | 55 | 61.80 | 34 | 38.20 |

Table 4 showed that two types of questions were used in three classes in the study. There were 55 display questions (61.80%) and 34 referential questions (38.20%). It illustrated that the teacher used more display questions than referential questions.

**Teacher Feedback**

**Table 5** Number and percentage of types of teacher feedback

| T | Simple praise | | Praise and comment | | Praise and repetition | | Leading learners to Self–repair | | Asking another learners to answer | | Direct correction | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| L1 | 10 | 35.71 | 4 | 14.29 | 6 | 21.43 | 6 | 21.43 | 2 | 7.14 | 0 | 0 |
| L2 | 2 | 7.69 | 9 | 34.62 | 3 | 11.54 | 4 | 15.38 | 2 | 7.69 | 6 | 23.08 |
| L3 | 11 | 32.35 | 5 | 14.71 | 6 | 17.65 | 4 | 11.76 | 6 | 17.65 | 2 | 5.88 |
| A | 7.67 | 25.25 | 6 | 21.21 | 5 | 16.87 | 4.67 | 16.19 | 3.33 | 10.83 | 2.67 | 9.65 |

**Note:** T=Types, L=Lesson, A=Average, N=Number, %=Percentage

Table 5 illustrated the proportion of each type of teacher's feedback. The table revealed that 'Simple praise' (25.25%) was the most frequently used feedback by the teacher and 'Praise and comment' (21.21%) ranked the second place. The third place was 'Praise and repetition' with 16.87 %. The former three types of feedback were seen as positive feedback, which took up 63.33% altogether. The other three types of feedback including 'Leading learners to self-repair', 'asking another learner to answer' and 'Direct correction' were considered as negative feedback, which occupied 36.67% in total. It could be seen that "Direct correction" was the least frequently used by the teacher in three classes. On the whole, positive feedback was much higher than negative feedback in the present study.

## Conclusion

### Summary of the Findings

This research had answered the following questions: the interaction in the Chinese classroom; the duration of the teacher talk and student talk; the types of teacher's questions and the teacher feedback in the Chinese classroom. The findings were reported below.

The findings showed that the Chinese classrooms in CRRU were teacher-oriented. In the classroom, the teacher was the most active person. It was the teacher who controlled the subject matter, deciding whatever needed to be talked and orchestrating what the students should do, which, obviously, contradicted the current teaching approach which was students-centered. On the whole, the findings of this study provided an empirical evidence for realizing the four aspects of Chinese classroom discourse at CRRU. The findings also offered some suggestions to Chinese teachers to improve classroom interaction by using appropriate discourse in their teaching.

## Limitations

The present research still had certain limitations which may affect the results of the research. First, it was a small quantity of the subjects. Only three lessons from CRRU were observed. Variables such as classroom environment, teaching style and students' level had not been taken into consideration, which may have influence on the results of quantitative analysis. Therefore, the results of the present study were limited.

Second, the data presented in this study was only some basic descriptive statistics like frequency and percentage. The differences of the data were not tested.

Third, the authenticity of transcription analysis may be influenced by the subjectivity of the researcher. Because the teaching

context and the texts in this study were in Chinese, both the transcription and translation were done only by the researcher herself.

## Recommendation

### Future Research Directions or Recommendations

Classroom discourse is important for the organization and management of the classroom. Based on the results of this study, some feasible suggestions for teaching and future research were illustrated as follow:

### Recommendation for Chinese Teachers

In order to encourage the students to participate in the classroom interaction, the teacher should create the interaction atmosphere that can affect students, performance in classroom. Selecting some interesting and new topics by teachers may help students to increase their language output. Referential questions are thought more likely to elicit longer and more authentic responses than display questions; therefore, teachers should intentionally resort more to referential questions to encourage students to talk more.

In order to encourage student involvement in classroom activities, be confidence to learn Chinese, the teacher should adopt the appropriate strategies of evaluate feedback and strategies of corrective feedback to evaluate students, performances.

### Recommendation for the further research

In this study, the researcher analyzed and discussed the Chinese as L2 classroom features and the discourse structures for the Chinese teachers to improve their Chinese teaching efficiency. However, there are still many issues to be further studies and analyzed. For example, attention should be paid to how teachers teach in big classes through classroom discourse and how teachers lead the students to initiate the interaction in the classroom.

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