Panel II Language and Literature

Chair: Xiaojun Wang, Professor,
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Reading divorce letters from Dunhuang

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Abstract: This paper studies a dozen divorce letters preserved in Dunhuang that are dated from the 9th and 10th centuries. The letters are formulaic: written in the voice of the husband, they begin with a description of ideal marriage, continue with the problem of current marriage, and end with divorce settlement. The views expressed in these letters regarding the meaning of marriage, husband-wife relationship and the meaning of divorce differ significantly from those expressed in contemporary ritual, ethical legal texts. They see marriage as unions of individuals more than families, they base conjugal relationship on mutual affection rather than the subordination of women, and they portray divorce as an opportunity for the couple to gain freedom to start a new life. In this paper I analyze the structure and vocabularies of these divorce letters and discuss how these letters may enrich our understanding of the norms and practices of marriage and divorce in Tang and Song China.

Key Words: marriage, divorce, gender, medieval China

On “resurrection” of the imperial honorific hogyo at the passing of Emperor Hirohito in Japanese newspapers

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Abstract: Throughout the modern period most newspapers in Japan have used honorifics or grammatical encodings of high social status in referring to Japanese imperial family members. Right wing extremists’ violent attacks of the press upon catching a mistake in honorific use have been continued since the early twentieth century, and honorific use in media is political.

Hogyo (majestic death) is a well-known example of an imperial honorific. This term was used referring to deaths of top-ranked imperial family members, such as the emperor, until Japan’s defeat in World War II. However, the use of imperial honorifics has been simplified in the postwar period. Even so, when referring to the passing of Emperor Hirohito in 1989, most Japanese newspapers “resurrected” this reactionary wartime language used when everyone was taught to believe the emperor was a living divinity.

When analyzed using newspaper articles only, this “resurrection” may appear to be a reflection of Japan’s rising nationalism (Sugimori 2008, 2010, In preparation). Avoiding such a simplistic view, this paper attempts to understand these dynamics toward the change in language use from various perspectives. In particular, this paper pays more attention to the workings of newspaper companies. The paper will reveal that, being guided by the Japan Federation of Newspaper Workers’ Unions, which aims for equal language use, newspaper workers opposed the use of imperial honorifics in newspapers.
Although the newspaper administration suppressed the workers’ opposition, their discourse served as a springboard to a subsequent discontinuation of other newspaper honorifics from the 1990s onward. This delayed influence of the workers’ discourse on newspaper language use provides insight into the analysis of the macro and the micro in discourse analysis. This paper will analyze newspaper articles reporting the emperor’s death, articles in the Newspaper Workers’ Unions bulletin, and interviews with individuals who were involved in decisions regarding honorific use in newspapers, as well as newspapers’ style manuals. Aiming at the understanding the phenomena in critical ethnographic sociolinguistics, concepts such as resources, discursive space, and trajectory (Heller 2011) will be utilized in the analysis.

**Key words:** honorifics, newspaper, imperial family, newspaper unions, nationalism.

**Integrating Culture Perspective with English Teaching**

---On Methods of Designing the Reading Course to Chinese English Majors

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**Abstract:** A cultural perspective indicates the particular lifestyles, customs, beliefs, values, and attitudes underlie a society, which represent a culture’s view of the world. Cultural perspectives differ in distinct cultures; something assumed to be normal and acceptable in one culture may be strange and unacceptable in another. Therefore, cultural perspectives are shared by particular cultural groups. Studies on cross-cultural communication demonstrate that cultural ignorance causes misunderstandings. In a global community, since people of different cultures interact with each other, awareness of different cultural perspectives is much more in a need. Numerous scholars have discussed the importance of cultural understanding in language learning process. In this sense, how to integrate culture with language teaching is both a task and challenge to language teachers.

Based on the communicative approach and the audio-visual approach, the presenter intends to show how to design a class from a culture perspective when teaching English to Chinese English majors in the reading course which is an essential and compulsory course for English majors in China. Apart from a relatively conventional passage-study-oriented teaching method, it is possible to extend the content of teaching in that a lead-in of cultural backgrounds and an introduction to related cultural information is a must, and materials such as movies, video clips of the latest news and entertainments, and literature could be employed in English learning class. It is an effective way to impress students on what they are required to learn but also to create good learning atmosphere, captivate their attention and motivate them in and outside class.

**Key words:** cultural perspective, teaching English to Chinese students, methods of teaching, communicative approach, audio visual.

**The Cultural Connotations and Classroom Teaching of Chinese Color-words**

**Part I**

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**Abstract:** Since the beginning of the 19th century, the study of color classification has been intrinsically involved in many other disciplines. The main contribution of this research is aiming to examine color
from the perspectives of philosophy, anthropology (culture and semiotics), and linguistics (semantics) in order to explore different views of color experience that will be supplements to introducing color-words in teaching Chinese as a second language. First, we all, in the visual world filled with colored objects, have rich experiences of colors. Colors are all perceived through variations of forms, such as trees, oceans, flowers, etc. In many scientific studies, color is also served as an important property to identify or classify objects because it can be regarded indispensible to an object’s appearance. The visual perception of color is also one of the important resources for us to acquire physical knowledge of this world. Therefore, the discussion of color involving the consideration of physical reality and mind will be profound and fundamental for our scientific cross-culture study of color categories. Second, culture is the background and context of the language we use. Culture and language are not separable. In addition, culture is not a static entity because of the changes of history, social values, and global communications. The changes of culture will affect on the changes of the language that is used to express the knowledge of that culture. Within the changes, at the same time, certain cultural symbolic meanings may stay still within the long course of history. Culture awareness is a significant attitude but the introduction of it into a language class is a challenging task. There has been a mistaken view that cultural understanding will be automatically perceived once the language is learned. This misperception will result in misunderstanding between cross-culture communications. Language, more than a vehicle of communication, may include a large amount of information of history, culture, aesthetics, gender and social ethics. The awareness of these factors will help us develop critical language pedagogy in helping students to explore Chinese culture. Finally, I will explain the meaning of Chinese color-words (“red”, “black”, “white”, “yellow”, “green”, “blue”) from the perspectives of Linguistics (semantics) and Anthropology (culture) in order to demonstrate their linguistic and cultural background that illustrate the static and changes of the language.

Part II

Presenter: Ruyuan Yang, Instructor
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Abstract: The Chinese color-words are endowed with different emotional and cultural symbols like other languages. Learners of Chinese language not only need to know basic meaning of the color-words, more should profoundly understand the color-words’ cultural connotations. Teaching color-words is a necessary and important step in Chinese teaching process for Chinese language teachers. To improve the teaching efficiency for Chinese color-words and help students further master the Chinese color-words’ meanings and get to know the words’ cultural correlation, we will discuss how to teach Chinese color-words in teaching Chinese as a second language. Therefore, the second part of this presentation is the demonstration of involvement of the culture awareness in the real classroom teaching. I will take the basic color-words (“red”, “black”, “white”, “yellow”, “green” and “blue”) as examples. Firstly, I discuss these kinds of color-words’ cultural connotation. Then I will focus on creating a specific teaching design of Chinese color-words and find out the effective teaching method or model.

Classroom teaching plays a very important role on the integrated Chinese acquisition with cultural awareness. The Color-words is the part of fundamental knowledge in Chinese language leaning. When teaching Chinese as a second language, the following steps are involved for teachers in the teaching process of Chinese color-words in the real classroom: 1. Inducting the new worlds. 2. Showing the words and explaining words’ cultural connotation. 3. Helping students build abilities to read and recognize the new words. 4. Establishing the specific situations and doing the exercises to consolidate. 5. Enhancing students’ understanding and strengthening the memory of the new words. These highly effective teaching ways are the keys to complete teaching objectives and accomplish teaching goals. I will demonstrate the color-words teaching for a real classroom in this presentation. By the teaching demonstration, analyzing the teaching design of Chinese language class in detail, and offering a self-examination of each teaching
step, recommending a unique and up-to-date teaching method or model to motivate students’ interests in leaning to the great extent.

**Key words:** Color-words; Linguistics and Anthropology; cultural and language; Cultural Connotation; Chinese Teaching.