



Wei-lun Lu

Block overview

Overview of Chinese language:

1. Section of *Mandarin* and *Chinese* (languages): Define the difference between *Mandarin* and *Chinese*.
2. Section of pluricentricity: Find out where Mandarin is spoken.
3. Section of writing: Please define *characters* as a writing system.
4. Typological features of Chinese:
 - monosyllabicity
 - homophony
 - classifier language
 - tonal language
 - tenseless language
 - the Chinese TIME
5. Culture: the love of numbers

Check test (session 1)

- Define the difference between Mandarin and Chinese.
- Define characters as a writing system.
- What is meant by *monosyllabicity*? More precisely, give examples of a monosyllabic word.
- Define *homophony* in language and give a couple of examples.

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Overview: linguistic facts

- Sinitic (Sino-Tibetan language family)
- Chinese and Mandarin?
Mandarin being a form of Chinese (a standard variety).
- Other forms of Chinese (dialects)

Proportions of first-language speakers^[24]

Mandarin (65.7%)

Min (6.2%)

Wu (6.1%)

Yue (5.6%)

Jin (5.2%)

Gan (3.9%)



Hakka (3.5%)

Xiang (3.0%)

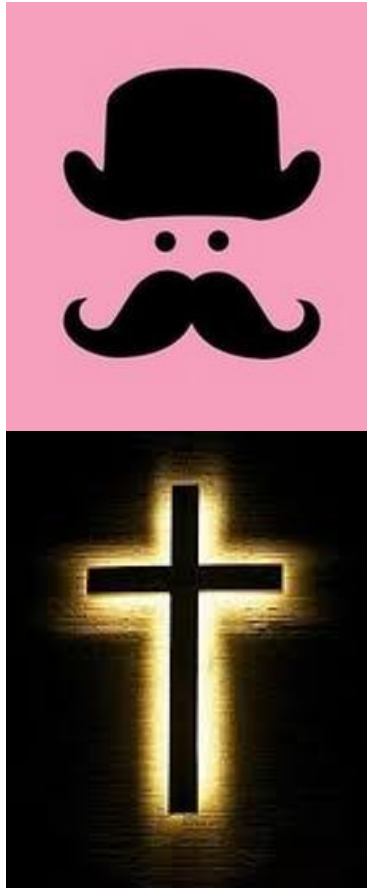
Huizhou (0.3%)

Pinghua, others (0.6%)

Lack(!) of mutual intelligibility

- Lack of mutual intelligibility.
- Example recordings
- Mandarin 
- Yue/Cantonese 
- Mutual intelligibility: a relationship btw languages or dialects.
- Factors:
 - China's size (9.6 mil km²); Europe's size (10.5 mil km²)
 - China's imperial system (until the early 20th century)
- Mandarin as the official language and the character system as a unifying force.

Characters and thought: Chinese Numbers



- 8
- 八 (as in 八字鬚 '(lit.) 8-character-mustache')
- Think of MUSTACHE in terms of EIGHT. Conceptual association motivated by imaginstic similarity (based on the writing system)

- 10
- 十 (as in 十字架 '(lit. 10-character-structure)')
- Think of CROSS in terms of TEN. Conceptual association motivated by imaginstic similarity (based on the writing system)

- Writing system helps people understand the world!

Chinese characters

- The Chinese script is a writing system that was developed to record the language spoken around the Yellow River around the 2nd millennium BC. Cr.
- The oldest evidence of the use of Chinese writing around 1200 BC. Cr.
- jiǎgǔwén 甲骨文 (oracle inscriptions on armor and bones)
- Chinese is NOT the oldest script, but it is recorded as the longest continuous tradition of script use.
- *Syllable*-based.
- Question: character = word? (HINT: look up words in Chinese)

Sinosphere

- Chinese characters (한자; 漢字; *hanja*) entered Korea (possible date: 300-100 BC), remained in use in the 20th century, has declined since the turn of century.
- 辛
- Chinese characters (*kanji*; 漢字) entered Japan around 57 AD (earliest known date), remain in use as of today (along with hiragana and katakana).
- Chinese characters (Chữ Hán; 漢 / Chữ Nôm; 喃) entered Vietnam around 111 BC, remained in use until early 20th century.



What is a Chinese character made of and how to write it?

- Chinese is written with characters (汉字),
- Character = basic carrier of lexical or grammatical meaning and also captures pronunciation to an extent (and only to an extent)
- characters are a unifying element between different parts of the PRC
- 95% of characters have some internal structure
- there are roughly 500 building blocks (components) of characters

Mono-syllabicity of Chinese

- 15% Chinese words are monosyllabic.
- 15% Chinese words are of one syllable/one character.
- That means, a lot of words sound the same in Chinese! >>
Homophony

Homophony in New Year rituals (spring)



- 春
- Homophony of 到 *dào* “arrive” and 倒 *dào* “reverse”
- “Spring arrive”



- Homophony of 魚 *yú* “fish” and 餘 *yú* “remain”
- “Every year we have so much that remain.”
- Linguistic basis of cultural convention and reasoning.

Homophony in traditional patterns



- Bat 蝠 *fú* as auspicious animal, given its homophony with 福 *fú* “blessing”.



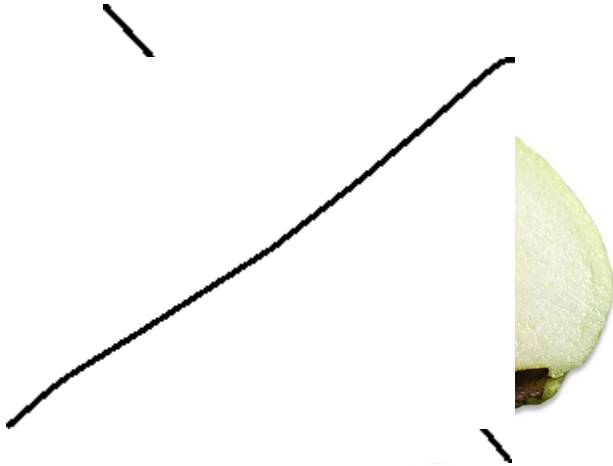
Homophony in New Year rituals (cake, orange, apple)



- Homophony: 糕 *gāo* “cake” and 高 *gāo* “high”
- “Every year we go up (in career)”
- Homophony: 蘋 *píng* “apple” and 平 *píng* “peace”
- Near-homophony of 橘 *jú* “orange” 吉 *jí* “auspice”.
- Linguistic influence of what people think about and do with food.



Food that brings a curse in a ritual...



- Guava: 芭樂票 “(lit.) guava-cheque (dishonored cheque)”
- Japanese *fuwatari* “dishonored”
- Phon. borrowed into Taiwanese, finally into *pát-á* “guava”
- After Nationalist takeover of Taiwan (end of WWII), into Mandarin



Radicals (in characters)

- Categorizes the characters
- The radical as a semantic identifier of a character in the lexicon.
- Show a dictionary
- <https://dict.revised.moe.edu.tw/searchR.jsp>
- Example: radical 女 ‘female’ contains 奶 ‘milk’, 奴 ‘slave’, 妃 ‘second wives of emporor’, 妇 ‘housewife’, 奸 ‘manipulative’, 好 ‘good’, 妈 ‘mother’
- Radical 人 contains 个 ‘general classifier’, 从 ‘to follow’, 会 ‘to meet’, 伞 ‘umbrella’ 傘 (traditional version)

Categorization: an issue of worldview

- Radical (indexing component) as a semantic tag in Chinese.
- 女
- Kinship terms:
 - with radical 女 : 妈、姥、姐、妹、姨、姑
 - with radical 男 : 舅、甥
 - 爸、爷、兄、弟、叔、伯
- Classnotes: Scan QR code.



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Preparation for session 2

- Define the numerical classifier.
- Define categorization as a human cognitive capacity.
- Does your language have some numbers that its speakers prefer? Are there symbolic meanings in the numbers?

Check test for session 2

- Define the numerical classifier.
- Define categorization as a human cognitive capacity.
- Does your language have some numbers that its speakers prefer? Are there symbolic meanings in the numbers?

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Linguistic categorization

- allow humans to organize things, objects, and ideas that exist around them and simplify their understanding of the world. For humans, both concrete objects and abstract ideas are recognized, differentiated, and understood through categorization. Objects are usually categorized for some adaptive or pragmatic purposes.

The example of TEA

What kind of TEA do we have in English?

- Category of TEA (in English): *tea* as the category identifier:

- Black tea, green tea, white tea, milk tea, fruit tea...

- Category of 茶 'tea' (in Chinese): 茶 as the category identifier:

- 紅茶 '(lit.) red tea', 綠茶 'green tea'...

- But... 杏仁茶 '(lit.) almond tea', 冬瓜茶 '(lit.) winter melon tea'



Numerical classifiers in Chinese

Numerical classifiers: used when counting, highlighting the inherent properties of the noun.

In a non-classifier lg:

- *one student, two students, three students*
- *jeden student, dva studenti, tři studenti*

In a classifier lg:

- CH: [NUMERICAL] – [CLASSIFIER] – [NOUN]
- 一个/位 学生
- one-CL-student



Numerical classifiers

- Another categorizing device in Chinese (in addition to radicals).
- Highlights the inherent properties of the nouns.
- Categories created are culture-specific.

Numbers in Chinese dishes

Chinese lg love numbers (Chuah et. al, 2012)

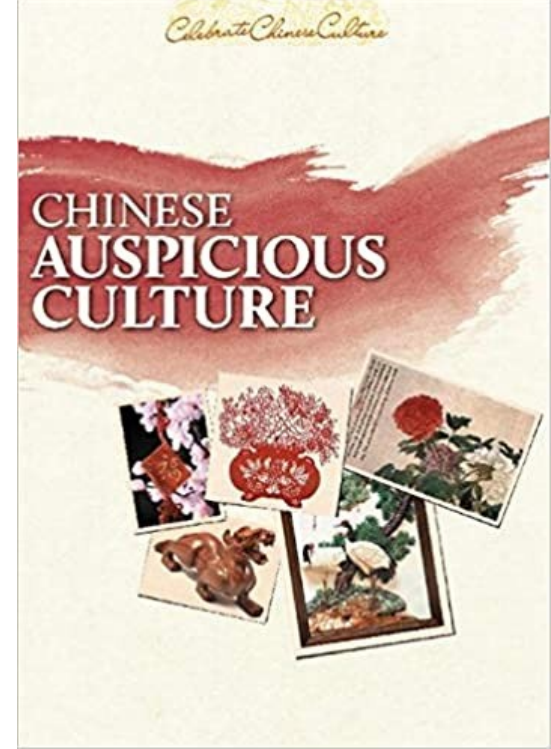
In FOOD: *sān-xiān* 三鮮 'three-fresh'

No reference to ingredients (pork, squid, mushroom) is made.

Profiling the attribute of ingredients.

Ad-hoc category of FRESH (PORK; SQUID; MUSHROOM).

Also profiled: RESULT OF ENUMERATION (THREE)



Profiling (Langacker 2008: 66)

A linguistic expression selects a body of conceptual content (the so-called *conceptual base*).

A substructure of the base that receives the focus of attention (so-called *conceptual profile*).

In FOOD: *sān-xiān* 三鮮 ‘three-fresh’

Anything about the dish = conceptual base.

xiān 鮮 ‘fresh’ = profiled (attribute of ingredients).

Ad-hoc category of FRESH (PORK; SQUID; MUSHROOM).

Also profiled: RESULT OF ENUMERATION (THREE)



Categorization (Langacker)



A human mental capacity of capturing what is common to certain previous experiences.

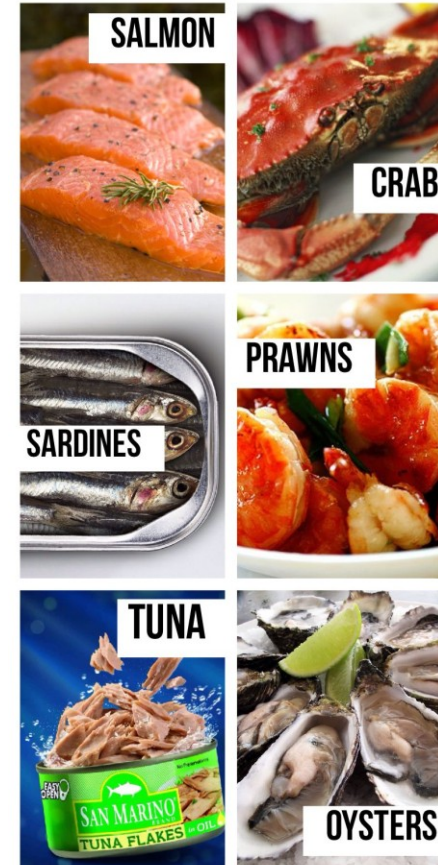
What is a *bird*?

What is a *fish/seafood*?

PORK = FRESH; SQUID = FRESH; MUSHROOM = FRESH

Ad-hoc category of FRESH.

Also profiled: RESULT OF ENUMERATION (THE



Linguistic sample

Only restaurants with a Chinese-Czech menu.

10 restaurants (7 in Prague; 3 in Brno).

Name in source lg

Name(s) in target lg

Simple frequency counts

Appendix: Items from the Menus

Chinese Dish Name (or its part)	Occurrence	Czech Dish Name
<i>sānxiān</i> 三鲜 “three fresh ingredients”	M1, M7, M8	<i>tři druhy masa</i> “three kinds of meat”
	M2, M3, M5, M7, M8	<i>(maso) tři chutí</i> “(meat) of three flavours”
	M8, M9, M10	<i>tři pochoutky</i> “three delicacies”
	M10	<i>masový mix</i> “the meat mix”
<i>wǔxiāng</i> 五香 “five spices”	M4, M8, M9, M10	<i>pět vůní</i> “five smells/fragrances”
	M7, M10	<i>pět chutí</i> “five tastes”

Numbers in Chinese-Czech menus

TWO; THREE; FIVE; EIGHT

FIVE, EIGHT are cross-linguistically perfectly stable.

THREE not perfectly stable.

TWO not at all consistent.

TEN as an irregularity.

五香 *wǔ-xiāng* ‘five-fragrance’

Found in 6 menus.

Attribute of FRAGRANT profiled.

Ad hoc category: FRAGRANT.

RESULT OF ENUMERATION (profiled): FIVE

Rendered as *pět vůní* “five smells/fragrances” or *pět chutí* “five tastes”

Cognitive operation perfectly stable across lgs (6 out of 6).



八宝 *bā-bǎo* ‘eight-delicacy’

Found in 8 menus.

Attribute of DELICATE profiled.

Ad hoc category of DELICACY.

RESULT OF ENUMERATION (profiled):
EIGHT.

Rendered as *osm pokladû* “eight treasures” or
osm pochoutek “eight delicacies”.

Cognitive operation perfectly stable across lgs
(8 out of 8).



三鲜 *sān-xiān* ‘three-fresh’

Found in 10 Chinese menus.

Attribute of FRESH.

Ad hoc category of FRESH.

RESULT OF ENUMERATION (profiled): THREE.

Rendered as *tři druhy masa* “three kinds of meat” or (*maso*)

tří chutí “(meat) of three flavours” (9 out of 10)

masový mix “meat mix” (1 out of 10)

Cognitive operation highly stable across lgs (9 out of 10)



双冬 *shuāng-dōng* ‘pair-winter’

Found in 9 menus.

Bamboo shoots and mushrooms.

Use of *dōng* ‘winter’ as a metonymy.

SEASON → FOOD.

Ad hoc category: WINTER (FOOD).

RESULT OF ENUMERATION (profiled): TWO.

Semantic complexity of *shuāng*: not a cardinal number but means “pair”.

Equal status btw BAMBOO SHOOT = MUSHROOM.



Cxs of TWO:

二 *èr* 、 两 *liǎng*.

TWO-WINTER does not make sense in Czech menus!!

Cultural metonymy: WINTER → MUSHROOM

Consistently rendered as *bambus a houby* “bamboo and mushrooms”.

Czech linguistic tool not receptive to the encoding strategy (0 out of 9).

Cognitive operation completely different.



Czech invention: TEN

Not found in the Chinese sample

Found in 1 Czech menu (out of 10)

rybí plátky deseti barev “fish slices of ten colours”.

Chinese original: *shíjīn yú* 什锦鱼 “assorted fish”.

拾

Found in 4 menus

Rendered as *rybí směs* “fish mixture” or *ryba se zeleninou* “fish with vegetables” (3 out of 4).

Czech invention (1 out of 4).



Multiple motivations of the Czech invention

Phonological level: Homophony between 十 *shí* and 十 *shí* (in SL).

Semantic level: TEN → FULLNESS/AUSPICIOUSNESS (in SL).

TEN in TL (Czech) motivated by arbitrary phonological similarity and culture-specific cognitive association from SL (Chinese).

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Preparation for session 3

- Define the lexical tone. How many tones are there in Mandarin?
- Define an analytic language.
- Find out (maybe through Google Translate) how to say “last week”, “this week”, and “next week” in Mandarin. What does each of the characters literally mean (again, you may use Google Translate or an online dictionary)?
- Where is Mandarin used as an official language? What scripts are used in these parts of the world?

Check test

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Analyticity of Chinese

Chinese as an *analytic* language (very little inflection).

Inflection: word formation through modification of word form (tense, case, person, number, gender, etc.)

Vague language...

The Chinese TIME

Grammatical: (lack of) tense marking

Cultural: metaphorical understanding of TIME

Case 1: Tense and Narrative Viewpoint

- Tense in narratives extensively studied in SAE languages.
- Past as narrator's and (historical) present as character's consciousness (Fleischman 1990; Fludernik 2012).

STR in a glimpse



“From now on I will do the job myself!”



N: *“Wei-lun: ‘From now on I will do the job myself!’”*

Narrator: distant, less involved in narration; little trace of narrator in narration.
Direct discourse.

N: *“Wei-lun shouted that from then on, he would do the job himself.”*

Narrator: distant, less involved in narration; little trace of narrator in narration.
Indirect discourse.

N: *“Wei-lun shouts that from now on, he will do the job himself.”*

Narrator: proximal (even embedded), more involved in narration.
Free indirect discourse (FID).

Tense marking as an important tool in STR.

Research issue

- Tense shifting (past/present) being a hallmark of FID (among other lexico-grammatical cues).
- TIME being an important dimension in the encoding of narrative distance.
- Chinese being a language without systematic tense marking.
- Question: Does Chinese operate on narrative distance using TIME?

Sample FID feature (in SL): tense shifting

From Chapter 9 of *David Copperfield* by Charles Dickens and its 9 published Chinese renditions.

(1) *If the funeral had been yesterday, I could not recollect it better. The very air of the best parlour, when I went in at the door, the bright condition of the fire, the shining of the wine in the decanters, the patterns of the glasses and plates, the faint sweet smell of cake, the odour of Miss Murdstone's dress, and our black clothes. Mr. Chillip is in the room, and comes to speak to me.*

Renditions in TL: Reduplica

Out of the 9 renditions, 9 use reduplication.
Reduplication has a function of *intensifying* the perceptual content (Liu 2012; Melloni and Basciano 2018), which creates narrator involvement.
In addition to simple full reduplications (AA), other types of reduplications are identified:
AABB (e.g. 清清楚楚)
ABAC (e.g. 各式各样 and 有声有色)

我 一 走进 那间 最好 的 客厅，
wǒ yī zǒu-jìn nà-jiān zuì-hǎo de kètīng
I as soon as walk-enter that-CL best LK best parlor
屋 里 的 气氛 就 迎面
wū lǐ de qìfēn jiù yíng-miàn
house in LK atmosphere PRT towards-face
扑来：
pū-lái wàng-wàng de lúhuǒ píng zhōng
spring-come blazing-RED LK fire bottle in
闪闪 发光 的 葡萄酒， 杯盘
shǎn-shǎn fāguāng de pútao-jiǔ bēipán
shine-RED radiate LK wine dishes
的 式样， 糕饼 的 微微 甜 香，
de shìyàng gāobǐng de wēi-wēi tián xiāng
LK style cake LK faint-RED sweet aroma
默德斯通 小姐 衣服 上 的
mòdésītōng xiǎojiě yīfú shàng de
Murdstone Miss clothes on LK
气味， 以及 我们 穿 的 黑色
qìwèi yǐjǐ wǒ-mén chuān de hēisè
smell and we wear LK black

Implications for cross-linguistic FID research

FID: varying degrees of narrator involvement in discourse

Achieved via diff linguistic means in diff lgs (EN: tense; CN: reduplication)

Tense marking as *obligatory*;

Vpt *per sentence*;

Switching/mixing of vpts;

reduplication as *optional*

less obvious demarcation of vpt

unspecified/context-dependent vpt

Language-specific vpt representation of the same(!) narrated content.

Case 2: Metaphorical understanding of TIME in CN

Phrases

Last week

This week

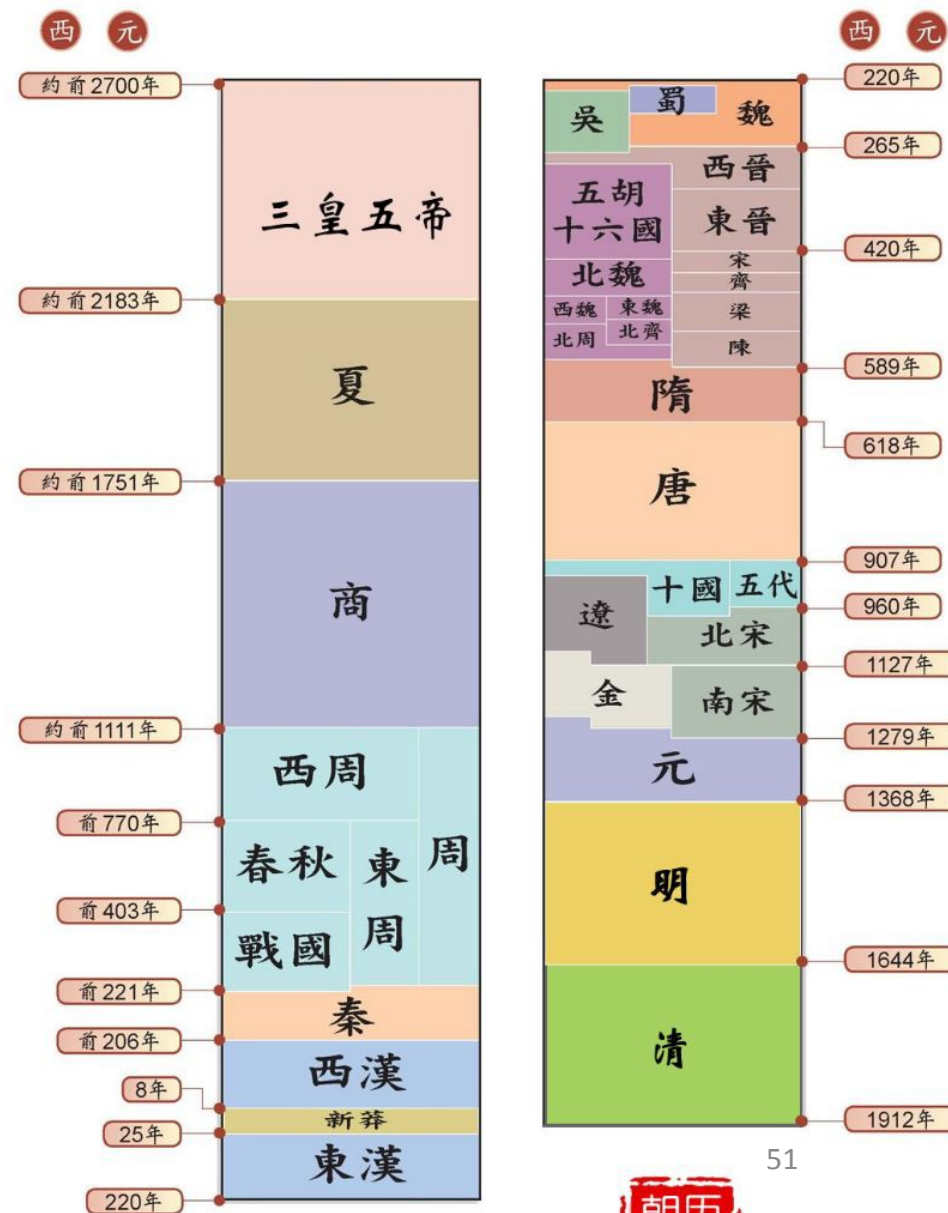
Next week

Understanding TIME using UP-DOWN

- English: *last month, next month*
- Chinese:
 - 上個月 *shàng-ge-yuè* 'up-CL-month',
 - 下個月 *xià-ge-yuè* 'down-CL-month',
- Czech: *minulý měsíc, příští měsíc*

- English: *first half of the year, second half of the year*
- Chinese:
 - 上半年 *shàng-bàn-nián* 'up-half-year',
 - 下半年 *xià-bàn-nián* 'down-half-year'
- Czech: *první polovina roku, druhá polovina roku*

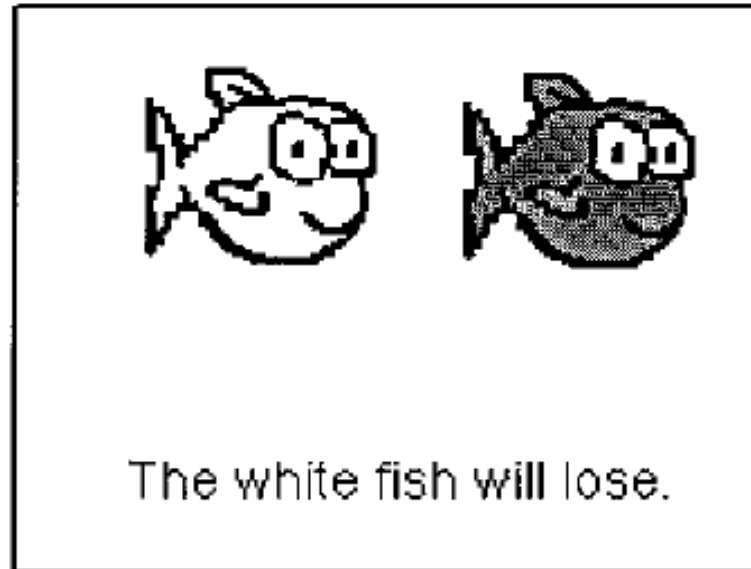
中國歷史朝代演進圖



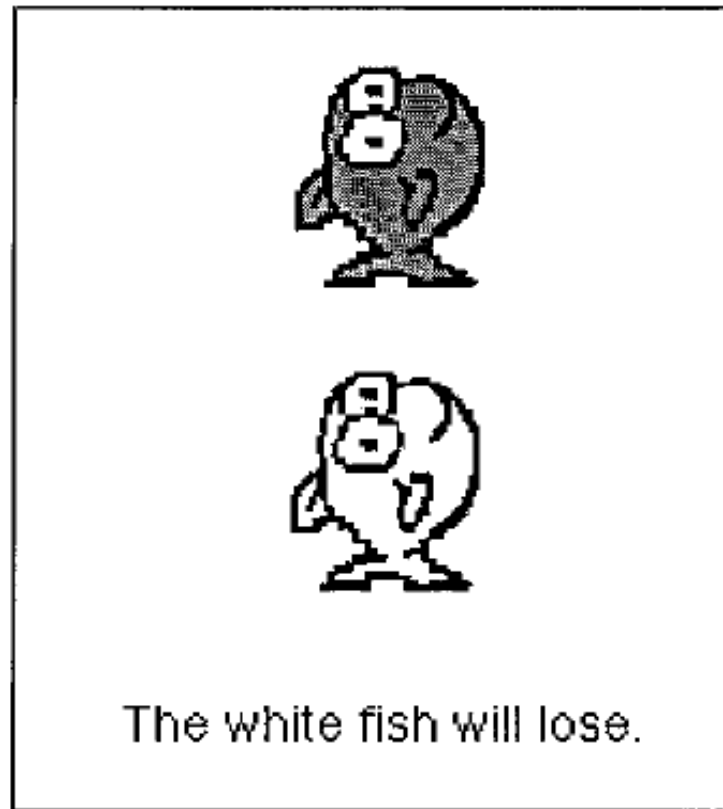
On reasoning about TIME

- Fish race experiment ([Boroditsky 2001](#)):
- Task: Below you will see a picture and a statement. Based on the picture, please decide whether the statement is true.

You will see a picture and a statement. Raise your left hand if the statement is true. Raise your right hand if the statement is false. Be as fast as you can.



You will see a picture and a statement. Raise your left hand if the statement is true. Raise your right hand if the statement is false. Be as fast as you can.



Mandarin-English bilinguals

- Mandarin Chinese as L1, English as L2.
- Strong vertical bias for CN-EN bilinguals who started English late.
- Learning EN gives those CN speakers a “horizontal bias”.
- Learning a different language does make one reason about TIME differently.
- Lera Boroditsky’s [TED talk](#) (recommended!)

Summary of Chinese TIME

- Tenseless
 - Analytic
 - Grammar-driven cognitive consequence (vagueness)
- Metaphorical (SPACE > TIME)
- Up-down temporal orientation

Tonal language

What is a lexical tone?

Tone is the use of pitch in language to distinguish lexical or meaning – that is, to distinguish words.

(East) Asian tonal languages: Chinese, Vietnamese, Thai, among others.

4 lexical tones in Chinese (marked by diacritics over vowel):

High tone (*mā*)

Rising tone (*má*)

Dipping/low tone (*mǎ*)

Falling tone (*mà*)

Tonal tongue twister

Tongue twister with tonal variation:

<https://www.instagram.com/reel/CoJJz5VA6kt/?igshid=YmMyMTA2M2Y%3D>

Māma

Mom

qí

ride

mǎ

horse

Mǎ

Horse

màn

slow

Māma

Mom

mà

scold

mǎ

horse

'''

Pluricentricity

A pluricentric language: lg officially used in at least two countries and thus develop national varieties with specific linguistic and pragmatic features.

Mandarin as an official language in:

China (incl. Hong Kong, Macau); Beijing
Singapore; Singaporean
Taiwan; Taiwanese

Also used in various parts of the world (lg of the diaspora).

Thailand	9,392,792 (2012) ^[2]
Indonesia	8,010,720 (2011) ^[1]
Malaysia	6,712,200 (2021) ^[3]
United States	5,143,982 (2018) ^[4]
Singapore	2,675,521 (2020) ^[5]
Myanmar	1,725,794 (2011) ^[1]
Canada	1,715,770 (2021) ^[6]
Australia	1,390,639 (2021) ^[7]
Philippines	1,350,000 (2013) ^[8]
South Korea	1,070,566 (2018) ^[9]

Mandarin Chinese spoken and script used

Standard Chinese spoken as an official language in:

- China (incl. Hong Kong, Macau)
- Singapore
- Taiwan

Used by the United Nations as one of the official languages.

The simplified script.

Writing system

Evolution:

Traditional version used till end of WWII.

In 1950s, 1960s, the Chinese communist gov. started simplification process, resulted in the current system.

- Used also in Singapore and Malaysia.

Traditional version has remained:

- Taiwan
- Hong Kong (British colony until 1997)
- Macau (Portuguese colony until 1999)

Diaspora and varieties of CN in Western countries

Cantonese (+trad. script) for earlier arrivals (1984, 1989)

1984: Sino-British Joint Declaration

1989:

Standard Chinese (+simp. script) for later arrivals

United States	Chinese American , American-born Chinese	5,025,817
Canada	Chinese Canadian , Canadian-born Chinese	1,769,195
France	Chinese French	600,000
United Kingdom	British Chinese	433,150
Russia	Chinese people in Russia	28,943
Italy	Chinese people in Italy	288,923
Spain	Chinese people in Spain	197,390
Germany	Chinese people in Germany	145,610
Netherlands	Chinese people in the Netherlands	94,000

Variation of Chinese characters

- 2 standard sets of Chinese characters:
- 1) Fántǐzì 繁体字 so-called traditional characters (Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau)
- 2) Jiǎntǐzì 简体字 so-called simplified characters (PRC, Singapore) (they are the result of reforms from the 1950s)
- Difference: number of strokes (types of simplification to be covered later)
- Traditional/simplified: 馬 / 马; 國 / 国 (complicated characters simplified in 50s)
- 人 / 人; 月 / 月 (easier ones remain unchanged)

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 - rare affixation (analytic language)
 - The Chinese TIME
5. Culture: the love of numbers

Preparation for next week (JP block)

1. What words of Japanese origin can be seen in Czech/Slovak?
Give at least 5 examples.

2. What toponyms (names of places) or names of companies, brands etc. of Japanese origin do you know? Give at least 10 examples.