

I. Overall message to students (from Wei-lun Lu):

Dear students, you are absolutely free to be creative when approaching me to discuss your idea, as long as the thesis is about the study of language. If you do not have a concrete idea, feel free to consider the possibilities offered below.

I supervise theses written in English or in Chinese (simplified or traditional). If you compare Chinese with another language, I can try to work with any language of the world with you 😊.

II. Range of possible topics (just in case you ran out of ideas...):

1. Comparing similar words or idioms (the so-called *near-synonyms*) in Chinese

Possible method: To build a representative language sample and study the sample (the so-called *corpus-based* research).

Examples:

<https://is.muni.cz/th/18pej/?lang=en> (student thesis)

https://www.jstor.org/stable/42889201?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents (my work)

2. Comparing a word or a grammatical construction in Chinese with that in another language (the so-called *translation equivalent* research)

Possible method A: To build a representative language sample in each language and to study them (corpus-based).

Examples:

<https://is.muni.cz/th/vshdt/?lang=en> (student thesis)

<https://is.muni.cz/th/xoql5/?lang=en> (student thesis, on dish names in Chinese and Czech)

Possible method B: To find a world masterpiece translated from or into Chinese, and to study part of the masterpiece (the so-called *Multiple Parallel Text* approach).

Examples:

<https://is.muni.cz/th/iejtp/?lang=en> (student thesis)

<https://benjamins.com/catalog/cogls.00060.lu> (my work)

<https://benjamins.com/catalog/cogls.00054.kno> (my work)

3. Discourse analysis of a representative sample of language (corpus-based) that involves a concept or phenomenon that is exclusively Chinese

Method: Corpus-based.

Examples:

<https://is.muni.cz/th/rfjqd/?lang=en> (student thesis)

<https://is.muni.cz/th/zrxug/?lang=en> (student thesis)

<https://is.muni.cz/th/y0x8i/?lang=en> (student thesis)

4. Linguistic creativity (jokes, puns, humor, poetry) that involves the Chinese language as the medium of representation

Examples:

<https://benjamins.com/catalog/rc1.00058.lu> (my work)

<https://is.muni.cz/th/wcf1t/?lang=en> (student thesis, on homophones in Chinese)

5. If none of the topics suits your need/interest, feel free to take a look at my list of publications on [ResearchGate](https://www.researchgate.net) for inspirations. Those works of mine mentioned above are also available on ResearchGate.

III. Note: As you create your thesis proposal, the following points are what to keep in mind.

- A. *Linguistic phenomenon to study*: Your thesis needs a well-defined scope. Be as focused as you can. Don't just say "synonymy" but "the synonymy of Chinese classifiers". You may as well be more specific and say "the synonymy of the Chinese classifiers 棵 and 株", and so on. The more precise, the better.
- B. *Representativeness of the language sample analyzed*: Convince me and the thesis reviewer of the rigor of your data sampling process. If you want to study Chinese political/education/media discourse, make sure that the sampling of your data gives your research sufficient validity. If you study persuasive/poetic/humorous effects in Chinese, give a clear account of where your data came from and how that can be representative of the Chinese way of argumentation/aesthetics/social interaction.
- C. *Potential value of the research*: Justify why your thesis is worth a read. There may have been a lot of research done in your field, but you must convince me and your thesis reviewer of the value of your research. Therefore, try reading extensively in the field to identify issues that is worth exploring. Typical questions to think about: What has been done on the topic, and what is still lacking?
- D. *Existing works that may be useful to your research*: Please do a quick search online and find out what existing works may be useful and relevant to your research.
- E. *Hypothesis and expected results*: Based on your understanding of the gap in the current literature (Section C above), hypothesize what you think you can find in your language sample. Also say (in a preliminary fashion) how you think your finding can fill the gap in the field.
- F. *Justification of your choice of supervisor*: Please let me know in what way my research profile (expertise) makes me a good candidate to supervise your thesis. Be specific and try to identify relevance between my publications and your proposed research. Do not just say "because you are a linguist".

IV. Finally, after you have thought things through, if you would like for me to supervise your thesis, please fill the form below (be as detailed as you can) and e-mail it to me. The form will be the basis of our further discussion. I will agree to supervise your thesis only when you and I have a version of the form that we are both happy with.

| Basic information | |
|--|--|
| Student name | |
| Student number (UČO) | |
| Tentative title in English | |
| Tentative title in Czech | |
| Tentative title in Chinese (if applied) | |
| Proposed content of thesis | |
| Linguistic phenomenon to study | |
| Description of the language sample | |
| Potential value of the research | |
| Existing works that you plan to read for your thesis | |
| Hypothesis and expected results | |
| Justification of supervisor choice | |

V. Once I agree to take you as my advisee, please have a look at the additional student writing guide (written in English, on writing in English):

https://libguides.uvic.ca/ld.php?content_id=15339154

For preparing your proposal, see especially Choosing Something to Study (p.87) to Making Outlines (p.91).

If you are already in the stage of writing your thesis, focus on Working Parts of a Paper (p.25 on) and The Larger Independent Research Paper (p.85 on). That should tell you how to present your research in a strategic and attractive way.

In addition, it can be very helpful for you to bring (parts of) your writing to The Writing Lab of MU CJV (<https://www.cjv.muni.cz/en/foreign-students/writing-lab>) from time to time. The people there are experienced teachers of academic writing (I know some of them) and I'm sure they are full of useful tips!