

Error Analysis and Chinese Teaching as a Second Language

in Europe

(汉语在欧洲作为第二语言教学的错误分析)

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Teachers of Chinese understand that the contexts in which they are teaching--institutional, political, social, cultural, and curricular--in order to be effective. They need to understand the needs, goals, and proficiency levels of students and others who have a stake in the language learners' success (e.g., parents, employers, institutions of higher education).

Developing teachers need to learn how to communicate well in a classroom setting, to manage and engage large numbers of students, and to demonstrate their empathy, interest, and competence to students. With time, teachers must develop the maturity and experience to see themselves as credible teachers.

At a more micro-linguistic level of contrast between English and Chinese, one of the fundamental differences between the two, from the perspective of functional, discourse-level grammar, is related to information flow and how it is organized and grammaticalized at the sentence and discourse (multi-sentence) level.

Whereas English is subject-prominent (typically requiring the appliance of a grammatical subject each sentence, closely connected to the predicate), Chinese is topic-prominent and commonly uses topic chains with deleted subjects(zero pronouns).

English speakers have a tendency to overproduce subjects that are unnecessary or even ungrammatical. Yet heritage and non-heritage learners of Chinese are often unaware of this aspect of Chinese. Therefore, teachers must have a good metalinguistic understanding of pedagogical/functional grammar to help make their students aware of such phenomena in Chinese.

A generation of research on the teaching and learning of Chinese has examined the challenges of teaching written Chinese (pinyin or another romanized script vs. simplified characters vs. traditional characters, or concurrent vs. consecutive exposure to all of these orthographies), especially to learners whose first language uses an alphabetic orthography.

Some recent scholarship, for example, recommends that students gain a solid foundation in oral Mandarin and a romanized orthographic system, such as pinyin, before being required to read and write Chinese characters. When, in what sequence, and in what manner to most effectively teach aspects of Chinese literacy has therefore been a primary concern of researchers and teachers because of the complexity of Chinese literacy, particularly for those with an alphabetic first language.

In addition, the extent to which students should be expected to produce written Chinese using characters, and at what level, has been controversial, as well as whether students should be able to use Chinese word processing tools that will help them produce written characters using pinyin

input with character recognition/selection in order to produce the correct character output. It is noted that new computer programs can help students convert simplified to traditional characters (or vice versa) or to convert character-based texts to pinyin.

Thus, the goals and context of an educational program, the demographics of the student population (age, ethnic background and prior exposure to the language/culture), and the typological similarities or differences between students' home/first language and the language being studied are important factors in deciding on the age issue and the total number of hours of instruction necessary to reach mandated levels.

I. Errors in Chinese Teaching Caused by Intermediary Context

Chinese language is such a different language from European languages that European Chinese learners as second language find it incredible and unimaginable, with huge differences in nearly every phase of linguistics.

Language is the reflection of the way of thinking. Comparison between Chinese language and European languages reveal the huge difference in grammar concept, the concept "time and being" leading first.

The following is the concept of "time and being" by European people reflected in European languages:



Figure 1 Concept of Time and being in European cultures.

*Note: I draw this figure based on my study of European language and culture, esp. English and Polish, in order to reveal vividly the contrast between the concept of time and being in European languages and that in China.

"Time" goes continually along a straight line from past to future via now, and "future" is coming towards us, nearer and nearer.

While in China and some other Asian countries people traditionally maintain that "time" flows in the way of a circle, as following:

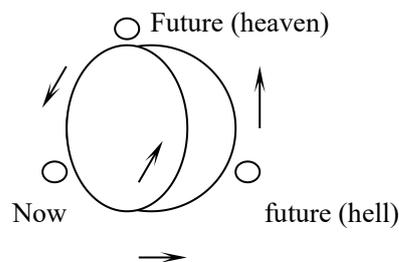


Figure 2 Concept of Time and being in Chinese cultures.

*Note: I draw this figure based on my study of Chinese language and literature, esp. English and Polish, in order to reveal vividly the contrast between the concept of time and being in European languages and that in

China.

And “we” are going towards the far away “future”.

Inevitably the different concepts of “time and being” will be reflected in Chinese and European languages.

That may account for the lack of “tense” in Chinese language.

The next is the comparison about grammatical category between Chinese and English:

	Gender 性	Num- ber 数	Case 格	Per- son 人 称	Tense 时	Aspect 体	voice 态	mode 式	Non- finite 非 限 定	degree 级	order 序
Engli sh	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Chin ese	/		/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/

Note: “/” presents nothing

Table 1 Comparison about grammatical category between Chinese Language and English Language

*Note: I draw this comparison table on bases of my knowledge of Chinese grammatical system and English grammatical system in order to indicate the big gap between the two grammatical systems.

Thus in English there are policeman and policewoman while in Chinese there is only the unique term“警察”for both:

He is a policeman, and she is a policewoman.

他是警察，她也是警察

Similarly, in English there are student and students while in Chinese there is only the unique term “学生” for both:

I am a student. We are students.

我是学生，我们都是学生。

And in in English there are cold and colder, as well as coldest, while in Chinese there is only the unique term “冷” for the three:

It is cold today. It is colder than yesterday.

今天很冷。今天比昨天冷。

There is gap between English and Chinese. The next is the comparison about cognitive categories between Chinese and English:

	Coun	Defin	Proxi	Trans-i	Dynam	Conti-	Displa-	Univer	Positiv
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	-table and unco- untab le 可 数和 不可 数	-ite and indefi -nite 特指 和泛 指	-mity and non- Prox- ymity 近指 和远 指	tive and intran- sitive 及物和 不及物	-ic state and non-dy -namic state 动 态和状 态	nuousn -ess and instant- aneity 延续和 瞬时	cement and non-dis -place- ment 趋向和 非趋向	-sality and non- univers -ality 周遍和 非周遍	-eness and non- positiv -eness 肯定和 非肯定
Engli sh	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Chin ese	/	/	√	/	/	/	/	√	√

Note: “/”presents nothing

Table 2 Comparison about cognitive categories between Chinese and English

*Note: I draw this comparison table on bases of my knowledge of Chinese cognitive system and English cognitive system in order to indicate the big gap between the two cognitive systems.

Thus in English there are much and many while in Chinese there is only the unique term“多”for both:

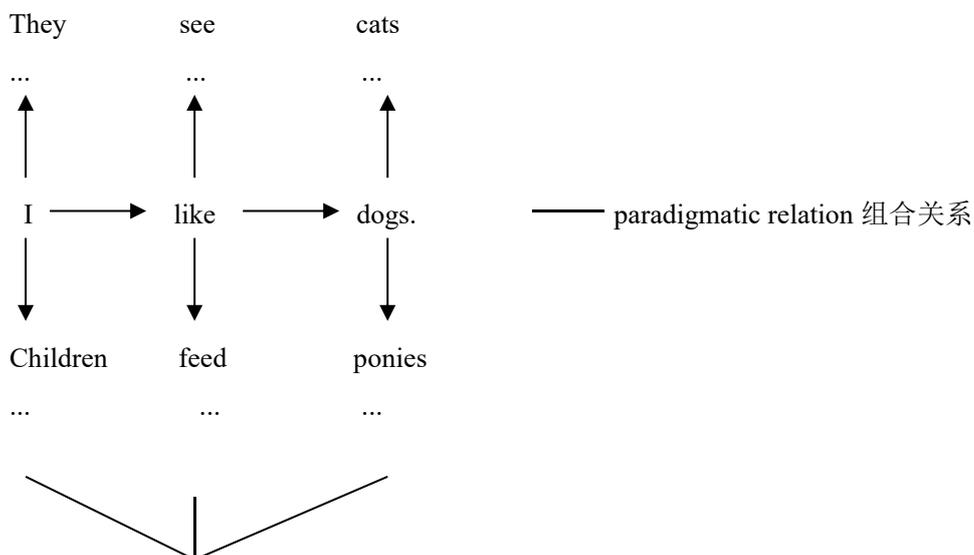
He has **much** money.

他的钱多。

I have **many** friends.

我的朋友多。

As for lexicon, there is still huge gap between Chinese and other languages in lexical combinatorial system, paradigmatic relation and syntagmatic relation involved. The following shows the lexical paradigmatic relation and syntagmatic relation in the sentences:



syntagmatic relation 聚合关系

Figure 3 Lexical paradigmatic relation and syntagmatic relation in sentences

*Note: I draw this figure on bases of my knowledge of Chinese and English Language structures aiming at better explanation on different language Lexical paradigmatic relation and syntagmatic relation in sentences.

Take English verb MAKE for instance.

MAKE, as a verb, can have many nouns as its objects, as is called collocation. When it is followed by the noun food, namely make food, the word group means “做饭” in Chinese, and English word group “make progress” means “取得进步”. The following are more word groups by “make” with Chinese equivalences, revealing different lexical combinatorial system of “make” in English and Chinese:

make sb's acquaintance结识某人	make an address发表演说
make an advance进步	make allowance体谅
make an announcement宣布	make an answer回答
make an appeal上诉	make an appearance露面
make arrangements安排	make an attempt尝试
make the bed铺好床铺	make a bet打赌
make a blunder犯大错	make bread做面包
make a cake做蛋糕	make a call打个电话
make camp扎营	make a change改变
make a choice进行选择	make coffee煮咖啡
make a cup of tea沏杯茶	make a comparison比较
make a contract订立合同	make contributions作贡献
make delivery送货；投递	make a discovery有了发现
make a display炫耀	make a distinction有区别
make efforts进行努力	make enemies树敌
make one's entrance入场	make an error犯错误
make one's escape逃走	make an examination进行检查
make an exchange进行交换	make a difference有差距
make an excuse找借口	make an experiment做实验
make an explanation进行解释	make a face作个鬼脸
make a fire生火	make a fortune发财
make friends交朋友	make a gesture打手势
make a guess进行猜测	make haste匆忙
make a hit博得好评	make inquiries进行询问
make investigations进行调查	make a joke开玩笑
make a journey旅行	make a landing着陆
make a leap跳跃	make one's living谋生
make love做爱	make laws制定法律
make the lunch准备午饭	make a mistake出错
make money挣钱	make a move开始行动
make a noise出声	make no doubt不怀疑
make no sense毫无意义	make a note笔记
make an objection反对	make an offer提供；报盘
make paper造纸	make a payment付款
make peace讲和	make a plan制订计划
make a poem作一首诗	make a price定价

make a profit获利	make progress取得进步
make a promise答应	make a proposal提议
make a recovery复原	make a remark作评论
make a reply答复	make a report作报告
make a request提出要求	make a resolution下决心
make a retreat撤退	make revolution进行革命
make a road修路	make one's rounds巡视
make a rush冲刺	make a search搜查
make sense有意义	make sentences造句
make a sign做手势	make a speech演讲
make a start出发	make a statement发表声明
make steel炼钢	make a stop停止
make a suggestion提建议	make a trip去旅行
make trouble捣乱	make a turn转弯
make a visit拜访	make war开战
make one's will立遗嘱	

Table 3 More word groups by “make” with Chinese equivalences

*Note: I draw this table from *Modern English-Chinese Dictionary*, Beijing Foreign Languages University Press, for purpose of revealing different lexical combinatorial system of “make” in English and Chinese

Another good example is English word “run”, which is said to have more than 90 Chinese words to match it, with different Chinese word in different context. Next are a English paragraph in which “run” is used many times and a Chinese version in which many different Chinese words are used for the same word “run”:

English:

The simple three-letter word “run”, up to this moment of writing, has more than ninety dictionary definitions. There are the run in your stocking, the run on the bank, and a run in baseball. The clock may run down, but you run up a bill. Colors run. You may run a race or run a business. You may have the run of the mill, or, quite different, the run of the house when you get he run of things. And this dynamic little word, we can assure you, has just begun its varied career with these examples.

Chinese:

RUN这个仅有三个字母的单词，迄今为止在词典中已经有 90 多种定义。有袜子的“抽丝”，银行的“挤兑”及棒球场上的“跑垒得分”。钟表也许会“停”，而你可以“欠款”。颜色会“发散”。你可以参加“赛跑”或做“生意”。当你有权选择时，你可以“自由经营”磨坊，甚至可以“自由使用”房子。请你相信，以上只不过是这个无比活跃的小小单词的万端变化的一个开头而已。

As for lexical meaning, still there is gap between English words and Chinese words; generally speaking, an English word has more meaning than a Chinese meaning, and some Chinese words also possibly have more meaning than English, as following:

Chinese word	Meaning
草原	grassland/prairie

山	mountain/hill
港	port/harbor
老鼠	mouse/rat
学习	learn/study
认识到	realize/recognize
学生	pupil/student
灯	lamp/lights
校长	headmaster/president/principal

Table 4 Different language domain of Chinese words groups and English words

*Note: I draw this table myself according to my learning of Chinese and English Languages only to explain the big difference of language domains between Chinese words and English words.

Chinese character “笔” has more meanings, because it is the general word for all the writing tools in English as pen, fountain-pen, pencil, ball-pen, brush, etc.

Chinese sentences are quite different from those of European languages in word order, which has becoming difficulties for European Chinese learner to utter proper Chinese. It is known that European languages as English subject nearly all the time takes the initial place of the sentence, followed directly by predicate and object, modifiers of time, place etc. following; while Chinese is a language of end weight in sense of information structure. For instance,

People are going to work or school in a hurry around 7 o'clock every morning.

每天早上在七点钟左右人们都在急急忙忙的赶着上班或上学。

Here, Chinese order is as such: Every morning around 7 o'clock people in a hurry are going to work or school.

And as for time or place, in European languages as English, the order is starting with particular place name going to general place name, while in Chinese language, the order is just the opposite. For example,

I was born in a very small mountain village in Baotou, Inner Mongolia, China, on 12 Dec, 1980.

我1980年12月12日出生于中国内蒙古包头的一个小小的山村里。

Here Chinese order is as such: I 1980, Dec. 12, was born in China, Inner Mongolia, Baotou, a very small mountain village.

It is easily understandable that beginner of Chinese language as a second language will make errors both lexically and grammar system linguistically.

It has to be pointed out that idiom is the most difficult for European Chinese learners to utter correctly and the most possible for fossilization and overgeneralization to occur, as can be easily seen from the following expressions:

hang by a thread 千钧一发

at sixes and sevens 乱七八糟

break a deadlock 打破僵局

after a storm comes a calm 雨过天晴
it's no use pumping a dry well 徒劳无益
enough to wake the dead 震耳欲聋
hit the nail on the head 一针见血/击中要害
rack one's brains 绞尽脑汁。

And more:

a lion in the way 拦路虎
birds of a feather 一丘之貉
keep good hours 早睡早起
golden hours 幸福时刻
dead hours 半夜三更
be afraid of one's shadow 疑神疑鬼
bury one's head in the sand 掩耳盗铃
let the dead bury the dead 既往不咎
an hour in the morning is worth two in the evening 一日之计在于晨

1. Errors in Context

As is discussed above in this thesis, the intermediary context formed in second language learner's mind is different from the mother tongue context:

Since there are some differences between the schemata of the ST speaker and the second language learner, there must be some differences between the cognition of the ST speaker and the second language learner. So the context formed in the second language learner's mind can't be equal to the mother tongue context. It can only be infinitely close to the mother tongue context.

And as is discussed above in this thesis, the intermediary context formed in second language learner's mind is different from the target language context:

Obviously, even the literary masters may encounter the situation when they can't express what they think fully and exactly. As to second language learning, due to the linguistic competence of the second language learner, there must be some distance between the context formed in the second language learner's mind and the second language context.

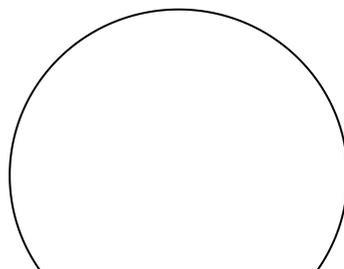
Cultural presupposition is also an important reason leading to the differences between the second language learner's mind and the second language context. Sometimes in extreme cases, deep-rooted cultural presuppositions and dogmatically held cultural values may even prompt the second language learner to misrepresent the source message purposefully.

So errors in context in Chinese learning as a second language will be discussed first.

Since the modern theory of context was first put forward by Bronislaw Malinowski, renown Polish linguist, context has been viewed as key aspect in research of linguistics, didactics, and translation, and has been attached more attention.

Generally, context has three strata, that is, context of culture, context of situation and context of co-text, shown as following:

Culture



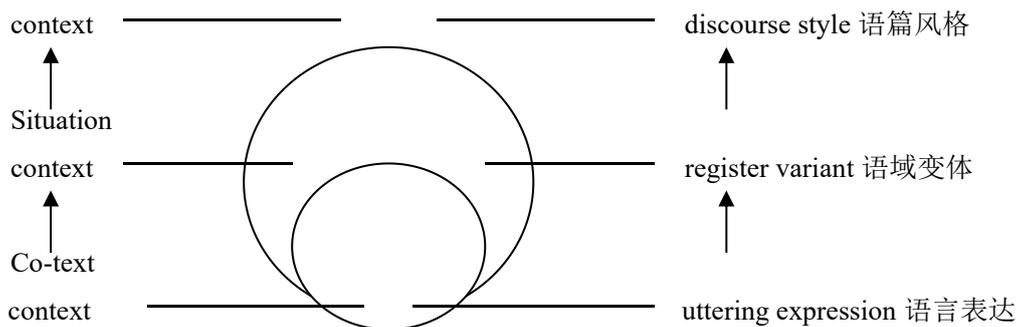


Figure 4 Three strata of context

*Note: I draw this figure myself according to my understanding of context theory, following the theory of Systematical Function Linguistics elaborated by M. A. K. Halliday.

In the course of second language learning, particularly in the process of learning and teaching of Chinese as a second language, more attention will be attached to intermediary context, as has been discussed above.

As has been talked about above, intermediary context, which is the new notion about context in seconding language learning first put forward in this thesis, is not iner-context, which is the ST context and TT context shared by the two sides of source language speaker and target language learner, often viewed as cross-cultural context. However, intermediary context, not the same as the context of the mother tongue and the context of the target language, is the particular context between the ST context and TT context, formed only by second language learners themselves in their minds according to their own understanding of the ST context, as a medium during the process of transfer between the ST context and TT context.

The intermediary context construction is a comprehensive process in second language learning, including the construction of the cultural context and the situational context. Since second language learning is a cross- cultural communication, the thesis will put the emphasis on the illustration of how the construction of the cultural context in the intermediary context is applied in practical second language learning.

For example, a Chinese learner wishes to utter his idea:

I love my wife the most. Before I knew her, I was really bad. But to make her happy, I had a new personality.

First in his min a context formed and it is followed by an intermediary context in order for him to utter in Chinese language. According the his intermediary context derived from SL context, his Chinese uttering is as this:

我最爱我的太太。我认识她以前，我真坏。但是为了她的高兴，我得到一个新性格。

But this uttering will sound strange to a native Chinese, because native Chinese may get a strange context different from Chinese way of thinking and expression. The corrected Chinese should be as this:

我太太是我最爱的人。我认识她以前，我很不好。但是为了使她高兴，我的性格改变了。

In Chinese teaching in Europe, teachers will often find such Chinese by Chinese learners:

不管我怎么晚上床，第二天我不晚起床。

Naturally, once again influence from SL context can be found in Chinese:

“No matter how I late go to bed, I do not get up late the second day.”

And the correct Chinese should be like this:

不管我睡得多晚，第二天我都能早起。

or: 不管我睡得多晚，第二天我都能按时起床。

Another typical example is the next Chinese by a Polish learner of Chinese as second language:

我的妻子是在一个小的狗感兴趣，我是一个中型尺寸狗感兴趣。狗需要空间的奔波。你每天要步行它们。

From the Chinese he is supposed to say:

“My wife is interested in small dogs. I am interested in medium-sized dogs. Dogs need space to run. You have to walk dog every day.”

Obviously, influence from SL context can be found in the uttering in Chinese. And better Chinese should be as following:

我的妻子对小狗很感兴趣，而我对中等大小的狗感兴趣。狗需要活动的空间。所以你每天都需要溜狗。

2. Errors in Phonetics and Grammar

It is discussed above about analogy in thesis, overgeneralization is an important cause of errors in second language learning, in the course of the intermediary context formed in second language learner's mind:

According to the theory of second language acquisition, analogy is undoubtedly a commonly utilized skill and strategy for word recognition. Some skills that speakers use to identify printed words are widely acknowledged.

.....

In the progress of second language's teaching and second language acquisition, the proposing of errors analysis theory has greatly promoted the development of language teaching. Overgeneralization is one of the causes of errors in foreign language teaching, and in the development of Chinese teaching, researchers have paid more attention to the influence of overgeneralization in language teaching.

Overgeneralization, or the regularizing of rules, as termed in language two, is usually considered the most common cause of problem in language learning.

Experiences show that errors in phonetics and grammar are caused mainly by overgeneralization in the course of intermediary context by second language learners.

There will be literally errors and errors when a Chinese learner learns to use the target language.

With a good teacher he or she may learn how to overcome the difficulties very soon. Everyone makes many errors but some errors are more common than others.

Nearly all the errors made by Chinese learners as second language derived from intermediary context, in different forms. Such errors are often found in uttering by Chinese learners as second language in the form of pronunciation and grammar structure.

First come Pinyin and the 4 Chinese tones, that is "ˊ" "ˊ" "ˋ" "ˋ".

Chinese Pinyin is quite different from English phonetics. By Pinyin, it means to combine phonemes which are separated from syllables of a certain language into syllables again, according to the syllable combination laws of the language. For example, to combine 't' and 'a' which are separated from syllables of course, into "ta" (meaning "he" or "she")

The Pinyin of Putonghua¹ or Mandarin , that is, standard Chinese, is the combination of consonants and vowels. There are 21 consonants and 24 vowels in Pinyin. In Pinyin, we have four tones for the characters. The same sound in different tones represents different characters and different meanings. While in English, there are no tones for words except the stress. In sentences there are only two tones: falling rising. The Chinese has got used to the tones of the characters and it is not so easy to change to the simpler rising and falling tones. That is why most Chinese students tend to read English either word by word or in most cases in the falling tone whether it is within a sentence or at the end, even for general questions they tend to read them in the falling tone instead of the rising one. This is a typical Chinese way of reading English.

There are 4 peculiar tones in Chinese phonetics plus a neutral tone (no tone). These can be fantastically difficult to learn without help; that's the bad news to Chinese beginners.

But there is good news to a learner of Chinese - at least at the beginner level - a student can create potentially meaningful communication without them. This is because Chinese is heavily dependent on the context for understanding meaning. Phonetically speaking Chinese is a very small language, that is, everything sounds like everything else - that is actually part of the purpose for using the tones.

As a beginner the lack of tones can be interpreted for what it is - the limited knowledge and as such the Chinese will endeavor to interpret the meaning.

But it has limitations. For instance the *pin yin* (Romanization of Chinese characters) sound "shi" (pronounced like English 'sure' but shorter) has 41 pages of different meanings in the modern Chinese dictionary. So the importance of tones along with context cannot be overstated.

A good example of the challenge tones presents can be found with the antonyms 'buy' and 'sell'. In Chinese they have the same *pin yin*-“mai” (pronounced 'my') but with different tones. 'Buy' is “mai” with the 3rd tone and sell is “mai” with the 4th tone. When learning to use money or go shopping a necessary skill for the business person and tourist a learner needs to know the tones or there may be some confusion.

People may imagine that if one walked into a store and started telling the manager he or she wanted to sell of his/her goods because you were mispronouncing the word and therefore your meaning. Fortunately Chinese people are aware of these things and will laugh knowingly at this

¹Putonghua, common speech Literally, meaning utterance by common people or most of the people, referring to standard Chinese or Mandarin Chinese.

error by the Chinese beginner.

Another common Chinese pronunciation error made by European learners of Chinese as second language includes the similarity of the initial Chinese sounds (Chinese sounds are divided into initials and finals and the endless recombination of them makes up the vocabulary of the Chinese language).

For the instance the easiest ones to error include: ch-q/zh-j/sh-x. In Chinese these 6 sounds are all initials and each one from the different pairs makes the same sound. It is only when combined with a final that one can determine the meaning. For example, 'ch' + 'u' = chew and 'q' + 'u' = chu. To an untrained ear these sound exactly the same, especially in everyday conversation. Once isolated they are easier to distinguish but a thoughtful and helpful tutor may be needed.

Then comes the grammar structure.

According to the definition of language families, Chinese belongs to hieroglyph writing and English belongs to alphabetic writing.

Comparatively speaking, Chinese has much less grammar rules than European languages. In Chinese there are grammatical units like characters, words or terms, phrases and sentences. Chinese depends mainly on its characters to realize its grammatical functions. There is no changes in affixes. In fact, there is no affixes for Characters. But there are many changes with the terms or words which are formed with characters. All the grammatical changes depend on characters or terms, e.g. we use auxiliaries to show the tenses, voices, moods, cases, etc. In one word, Chinese grammar depends mainly on different parts of speech to realize its syntax.

On the contrary, grammar of European languages as English, depend mainly on the changes of the words themselves to show different grammatical elements. For example, the tenses are realized through the changes of verbs; the numbers of nouns are realized by adding -s to the end of nouns or through the changes of the nouns themselves, etc.

European languages as English emphasizes on the structure, while Chinese focuses on the meaning. In English, several meanings can be expressed clearly with complicated structure in just one sentence. In Chinese, a sentence is usually short with little modifier, or it will cause confusion in meaning.

When expressing the meaning, long sentence is regularly used in English and short sentence is used in Chinese. From point one above, we could conclude that European languages as English sentences are usually long and Chinese sentences are usually short. One should "Get the meaning, forget the words" in Chinese learning.

It has many clauses in European languages as English sentences which are often separated in small sentences in Chinese way of expression. In a European language as English sentence, except some modifiers, it has a lot of clauses which makes a sentence much more complicated. In Chinese, one meaning is usually expressed in separated sentences connecting with comma.

In European languages as English people use pronouns a lot, but in Chinese people often use noun. In European languages as English, people not only use "we", "you", "she", "they", but also

use "that" and "which" to keep a sentence well structured and clearly, and avoid repeat meaning. Due to short sentence structure, a pronoun is commonly replaced by a noun in Chinese expression.

The passive voice is often used in European languages as English expression; In Chinese, one usually uses the active voice. The passive voice is widely used in European languages as English, especially in some scientific articles. For example, "It is (always) stressed that..." is generally expressed as "People (always) stress that..." in Chinese.

For the people whose first language is European language trying to learn Chinese they very quickly notice that the grammar doesn't really match up when they are trying to form the Chinese language sentence in their mind.

For example, in a simple sentence such as: '我吃了饺子² (Wo chi le jiao zi.)', that means 'I ate dumplings.' The word order is the same and so is the grammar structure.

But in a slightly more complex sentence as '屋子里太热 (Wo zi li tai re.)', that means 'It is too hot in the room'. But the Chinese structure is 'Room is too hot.' Here the sentence is missing some English grammar features; notably the lack of a verb, which is of course not really a Chinese sentence structure and would not be well understood by a Chinese native speaker.

As is mentioned above, Chinese verbs do not have tense as in European languages. When discussing time relationships in Chinese a speaker must add time related characters like “了/过 (le/guo)”. These are very easy to overlook when speaking and especially easy to miss when writing.

One Polish learner of Chinese as second language had the feeling and experience about errors made in the course of Chinese as following:

This is the most serious problem you can ever encounter, but you're still likely to meet many of them during your language-studying life. I've had problems like this many times in all areas of learning Chinese and I suspect I still have a few, although they are gradually being changed to isolated errors. A systematic error means that you make a certain error every time, perhaps without even knowing it. For instance, if you pronounce the third tone before a fourth tone as a rising tone, this is a systematic error and you're going to make that mistake every time you pronounce this combination of tones. This is very serious indeed and you need to take decisive action.

Chinese language is quite different from European languages in the way in which time is presented with the help of nouns, structural words or context, instead of verbs themselves as in European languages by means of tense. Some structural words like adverbs can indicate tense.

The European learners of Chinese as second language will find 又 (again) and 再 (once again), 不 (no) and 没 (not yet), very difficult to distinguish from each other, and very often easy to be used wrongly, as typical example of errors by means of fossilization in inter-language. For example,

1. error: 我来中国以前不学过汉语。(不 indicates an action that does not yet happen)

²More similar to Polish food "pierogi".

- Corrected: 我来中国以前没有学习过汉语。(没有 indicates an action that has completed).
2. error: 他昨天病了, 所以不去上课。
Corrected: 他昨天病了, 所以没有去上课。
3. error: 那个地方一年四季没下雨。
Corrected: 那个地方一年四季不下雨。
4. Error: 她的男朋友从来没抽烟, 没喝酒
Corrected: 她的男朋友从来不抽烟, 不喝酒(smoke is an everyday action, so 没 indicating a completed action should not be used here.)
5. Error: 他读错了, 所以再念了一遍。
Corrected: 他读错了, 所以又读了一遍。(The action reading is completed, so 再 should not be used here.)
6. Error: 今天再发烧了, 所以还不能去上课。
Corrected: 今天又发烧了, 所以还不能去上课。
7. Error: 老师, 我没听清楚, 请又说一遍。
Corrected: 老师, 我没听清楚, 请再说一遍。
8. Error: 别着急, 又等一会儿他就回来了。
Corrected: 别着急, 再等一会儿他就回来了。

As for the usage of words, there are different patterns of usage of words in Chinese and European language. For example, the word“marry” in English is a transitive verb followed by the object of marriage, as in the English sentence:” He married Mary.”, and many European Chinese learners will make Chinese sentence via fossilization:” 他结婚玛丽”。 Thus more such English Chinese errors committed by European Chinese learners through fossilization and overgeneralization could be seen and heard here and there:

1) I wish to marry her.

Error: 我想结婚她。

Corrected: 我想和她结婚。

2) I will call (phone) you once I get the news.

Error: 一旦有了消息我电话你。

Corrected: 一旦有了消息我会给你打电话的。

3. Errors in Words

In comparison Chinese and European languages, especially about lexicon, there is huge gap between Chinese and European languages in lexical combinatorial system, paradigmatic relation and syntagmatic relation involved, which mainly cause the errors in words by Chinese learners as second language.

For example, in English there is term “motherland” for one’s native land, but in Chinese there are terms “祖国 zuguo” and “故乡 guxiang”used in different situation, difficult for Chinese beginners to distinguish. English word “ambition” means 野心 in Chinese with negative meaning and “雄心” with positive meaning. It is imaginable that European Chinese learners will confuse the use of 野心 and 雄心 very often. For more examples:

Nature: 本质, 自然;

Consume: 消耗, 消磨, 消费;

Approach: 逼近, 临近, 靠近;

Visit: 参观, 访问, 拜访, 拜见;

Wife: 妻子, 夫人, 太太, 老婆, 爱人

Take HEAVY for example. When European Chinese learners try to say something with the “heavy” meaning in Chinese, they are likely to commit errors by fossilization and overgeneralization, because “heavy” in Chinese context may be transferred into some different Chinese words, as following:

1. heavy rail 重轨
2. heavy weather 阴沉沉的天气
3. heavy load 重担
4. heavy industry 重工业
5. heavy rain 大雨
6. heavy weapons 重型武器
7. heavy water 重水
8. heavy element 重元素
9. heavy oil 重油
10. heavy lose 重大损失
11. heavy hydrogen 重氢
12. heavy blow 沉重的打击
13. heavy burden 重负
14. heavy features 浓眉大眼
15. heavy snow 大雪
16. heavy casualties 重大伤亡
17. heavy taxation 重税
18. heavy traffic 交通拥挤
19. heavy penalty 重刑
20. heavy smoker 抽烟很多的人; 烟鬼
21. heavy offense 重罪
22. heavy sea 汹涌的大海
23. heavy crop 大丰收
24. heavy applause 热烈的掌声
25. heavy money 大笔钱
26. heavy news 愁人的消息
27. heavy metal 重金属
28. heavy heart 沉重的心情
29. heavy truck 重型卡车
30. heavy responsibility 重任
31. heavy-duty machine 重型机床

*Note: I draw this table from *Modern English-Chinese Dictionary*, Beijing Foreign Languages University Press, for purpose of revealing different lexical combinatorial system of “make” in English and Chinese

In English, word “by” is frequently used in various situations, as can be seen in any dictionary; but in Chinese different Chinese words will be utilized in different sentence though in these different sentences “by” means quite the same, e.g. “用”, that is, with the help of:

You can pay by check. 你可以用支票来支付。(Here, 支付 means “by”);

Chinese beginners will probably use “用” in every case in target language expression when they come across “by” in the source language context through overgeneralization:

1) I will fly to Warsaw by air.

Error: 我要用飞机去华沙。

Corrected: 我要乘坐飞机去华沙。

2) You may go to Poznan by bus.

Error: 你可以用公共汽车去波兹南。

Corrected: 你可以坐公交车去波兹南。

Another typical example is the use of the word “Story” with Chinese equivalence “故事” and “往事” in different context, and many European Chinese learners use them in improper way:

1) This is a story about pets.

Error: 这是一个关于宠物的往事。

Corrected: 这是一个关于宠物的故事。

2) The days spent in Poland are unforgettable story in my life.

Error: 在波兰度过的这些日子是我一生难忘的故事。

Corrected: 在波兰度过的这些日子是我一生难忘的一段往事。

“Experience” is also a good example, with Chinese version “经历”, “经验”:

During the stay in Poland I have experienced a lot of interesting events.

Error: 在波兰停留期间我经验了很多有趣的事情。

Corrected: 在波兰停留期间我经历了很多有趣的事情。

From the account above, it is obvious that the words wrongly used by Chinese learners are not applicable and cannot describe a specific situation.

A basic error of this kind very often seen in second language learners’ utterance would be saying “他六年” (he is six years old), when it should be 他六岁. Certainly, it is correct in thinking that 年 means year, but in the above case 岁 must be used to describe someone’s age.

Some more errors seen in the utterance by second language learners:

1) Every time I swim, I swim about 1000 meters. I slowly build up distance and gradually rebuild my swimming stamina.

Error: 每次我游泳, 我游大约一公里。我会慢慢建立起来的距离, 我逐渐重建我游泳的耐力。

Corrected: 每次我游泳, 我游大约一公里。我会慢慢增加距离并逐渐恢复我游泳的耐力。

2) My family and I celebrated together in China.

Error: 我和我的家人在中国庆祝一起。(wrong word order)

Corrected: 我和我的家人在中国一起庆祝。

3) After class, I run on the sports ground or walk along the beach.

Error: 下课以后, 我们跑步在操场或是走路在海边。(wrong word order)

Corrected: 下课以后, 我们在操场上跑步或者在海边散步。

3) At Mickiewicz University my day starts with exercising.

Error: 在密茨凯维奇大学我的天开始练习。

Corrected: 在密茨凯维奇大学我的每一天都从锻炼身体开始。

4) Then we played Beer PingPong. We finished the party really late.

Error: 然后我们玩啤酒乒乓球, 最后我们完成了聚会真的迟到。

Corrected: 然后我们打啤酒乒乓球, 我们玩到很晚。

5) I attended college there. I was three credits short to receive my Bachelor's degree.

Error: 我在那儿上大学, 我少了三学分拿到单身汉。

Corrected: 我在那儿上大学, 再有三个学分我就拿到学士学位了。

6) I had a lot of rest, but this morning I did not feel I rested enough.

Error: 虽然我得到了很多的休息, 但是今天上午我不觉得休息足够。

Corrected: 虽然我休息了很长时间, 但是今天上午我还是觉没有休息够。(还是觉得很累)(The real meaning is that I had a lot of rest, but I still feel tired this morning.)

4. Errors in metaphor

Metaphor is the mapping of the structure of a source model onto a target model. It is the outcome of human's long-term cognition of world. Due to the different national cultural psychology, metaphorical mappings have similarities and differences between languages.

It is helpful to reveal respective national cultural psychology by contrasting the metaphorical mappings of Chinese term “黄色 (yellow)” and English “blue” to reflect differences of cultural psychology motivation.

1) Yellow is the color of the earth, representing royal and noble in Chinese traditional culture, even Chinese people like to call themselves “descendants of The Yellow Emperor”, and during the over 1000 years history emperors wore yellow clothes, which in turn is forbidden to wear by common people.

While, in other languages, for example, in English BLUE color is connected with royal and noble, thus the expression as have blue blood, a blue-blooded family, and also Blue Book, blue uniform, boy in blue, blue ribbon, blue room, etc.

2) Yellow is the color of Chrysanthemum flower, blooms in autumn and winter, thus representing loyalty and justice or truth in Chinese traditional culture, thus in China the term 黄花闺女, unmarried loyal young lady, implying the meaning chastity.

While in English, blue also implies the meaning of loyalty, because in English speakers' eyes, the blue color of the sky will never change into other colors, and thus a true blue, meaning an honest guy, derived from an ancient saying “True blue will never stain”, and thus the idiom “between the devil and the deep blue sea”, meaning difficult to decide whether marching or withdrawing.

3) Yellow is thought to be the color sick man, thus the word yellow gets the metaphor meaning “sick and dirty”, and so there exist in Chinese words like “yellow movie”, “yellow joke”, “yellow

book”, “yellow novel”, “yellow news”, “sweep the yellow”; here yellow is connected in meaning with “sick and dirty”, because in the old days knowledge or action about sex is considered to be sick and dirty.

While in English the word blue also has the meaning about “sick” or “ill”, thus “beat sb. Black and blue”, “blue baby”(sick infant especially with heart trouble when born), “blue movie”(meaning erotic movie), blue joke, blue balls(men with sexually transmitted disease), blue revolution(sexual revolution), blue gown(prostitute, hooker), etc.

In addition, in Chinese culture the word yellow has its peculiar metaphor such as faint or dying, naïve and inexperienced, while in English the word blue has its own peculiar metaphor meaning concerning depression or sadness just like blue Monday, rank of jobs just like blue collar or blue worker.

From the discussion above, it is easy to imagine that how often the European learners of Chinese as a second language confuse the words yellow and blue in their uttering in the target language.

Color in different language and culture differs in meaning, so European learners of Chinese language may commit errors when they transfer the context by fossilization and overgeneralization. The following context with color words in English may not have color words in Chinese:

1. red book 电话号码簿
2. red face 难为情
3. red cap 火车站搬运工
4. in the red 赤字
5. pink slip 解聘通知书
6. blue blood 出身名门望族
7. feel blue 发愁
8. go into the red 亏本
9. call white black 混淆黑白
10. once in a blue moon 偶尔
11. paint the town red 寻欢作乐
12. white-collar worker 脑力劳动者
13. blue-collar worker 体力劳动者
14. blue-ribbon beer 特级啤酒
15. show the white feather 表现胆怯
16. roll out the red carpet 隆重欢迎
17. black sheep of the family 败家子

Apart from words about colors, second language learners also made metaphor errors out of lack of knowledge about the metaphor of some words such as ear in Chinese. For example,

1) The government should lend an ear to the complaints of the people.

Error: 政府应该对人民的不满借给一个耳朵。

Corrected: 政府应该倾听人民的意见。

2) We kept an ear to the ground near the borders.

Error: 我们向边界地方保持一个耳朵。

Corrected: 我们关注着边界附近的动向。

3) I don't think you can have his ear.

Error: 我想你不会有他的耳朵。

Corrected: 我认为他只是把你的话当作耳边风。

4) My suggestion fell on deaf ears.

Error: 我的建议落到聋的耳朵。

Corrected: 我的建议被当成了耳旁风。

5) I am all ears.

Error: 我是所有的耳朵。

Corrected: 我在洗耳恭听呢。

6) I am now up to my ears in debt!

Error: 我现在在债务上到了我的耳朵。

Corrected: 我现在已经陷入债务中了, or 我现在欠了一屁股的债。

7) I think we should have to play it by ear.

Error: 我想我们应该通过耳朵来演奏。

Corrected: 我想我们应该见机行事。

8) Let him be. He is on his ear now.

Error: 不要理他, 他现在正在他的耳朵上。

Corrected: 先不要理他, 他现在正在七窍生烟发怒呢。

The same is regarding the metaphor meaning of fish. Many European learners of Chinese from time to time commit errors through fossilization and overgeneralization when they say “鱼” (fish) in Chinese though in English context the word “fish” is applied, but in Chinese no 鱼 will occur in the following cases, for in the following cases in Chinese and in other languages there are different metaphor when “fish” is used as metaphor in English language and culture:

1. have other fish to fry 还有别的事情要干(meaning have something else to do)
2. big fish in a little pond 羊群中的骆驼/矮子里拔将军/矮子当中的巨人 (meaning a big camel in sheep)
3. Never offer to teach fish to swim. 不要班门弄斧 (meaning do not show your skill in front of expert carpenter)
4. There's as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it. 留得青山在,不怕没柴烧/机会多得很。(meaning we will have firewood if we have the mountain)
5. Venture a small fish to catch a great one. 吃小亏占大便宜/小的不去大的不来。(meaning losing a little aiming at more)
6. He who would catch fish must not mind getting wet. 要吃龙肉就得亲自下海。(meaning you must go deep into the sea if you want to catch dragon)
7. The best fish smell when they are three days old. 久住招人嫌/久病床前无孝子。(meaning the visitor will become boring when they living long in a friend's home)
8. The best fish swim near the bottom. 不入虎穴焉得虎子/ 有价值的东西轻易不会得到。

(meaning only when you enter the cave of tiger will it possible for you to get baby tiger)

9.If you swear you will catch no fish. 咒骂是不解决问题的。(meaning no use in solving problems through swearing)

And metaphor errors very often occur by European learners of Chinese as second language when in their source language context “bread” is used as metaphor:

1. daily bread 生计
2. out of bread 失业
3. bread and water 粗茶淡饭
4. break bread进餐/ (in religion) 进圣餐
5. eat somebody's bread and salt 做客
6. break bread with 受到...的款待
7. cast one's bread upon the water 行善
- 8.bread and cheese 生计 / 普通食品 / 粗食
- 9.bread-and-butter period of life 豆蔻年华
- 10.bread buttered on both sides 安适的境遇
- 11.eat the bread of affliction 遭受折磨
- 12.eat the bread of idleness 游手好闲/过不劳而获的生活
- 13.half a loaf is better than no bread 有总比没有强
- 14.know which side one's bread is buttered (on) 知道自己的利益所在
- 15.take the bread out of somebody's mouth 抢别人的饭碗/夺别人的生计
- 16.quarrel with one's bread and butter 做砸自己饭碗的蠢事/与自己过不去

II. Implication

Second language learner cannot learn the target language without committing errors. In the process of learning a foreign language errors seem to be unavoidable, but they need not be seen as signs of failure. On the contrary, these errors committed by the beginners give some evidence for the learner's inter-language systems.

Linguists and language teachers believe that error analysis (EA) is not entirely satisfactory. However, the study of learners' errors is significant in pedagogic field. As teachers, they are inevitably confronted with many errors made by their students. Only by trying to find out the errors and seek the causes of their errors can the countermeasures be worked out to correct them and help students get to the target language - Chinese. The focus of the study is about errors by European Chinese learners, aiming at finding out the errors, analyzing the errors and showing some implications on Chinese teaching as a foreign or second language.

As discussed at the first pages of this thesis, researches of second language acquisition (SLA) have tended to focus on learners errors since they allow for prediction of the difficulties involved in acquiring a second language. In this way, teachers can be made aware of the difficult areas to be encountered by their students and devote special care and emphasis to them.

Error Analysis is a kind of linguistic analysis that focuses on the errors learners make. It is

composed of a comparison between the errors made in the target language and that target language itself. Error analysis emphasizes the significance of learners' errors in second language. It is important to note here that interferences from the learner's mother tongue are not only reason for committing errors in his target language.

Analysis of second language learner's errors can help identify learner's linguistic difficulties and needs at a particular stage of language learning. Generally, error analysis has several implications for the handling of learner's errors in the classroom as follows:

1. Devising remedial measures
2. Preparing a sequence of target language items in class rooms and text books with the difficult items coming after the easier, ones
3. Making suggestions about the nature or strategies of second language learning employed by both first and second language learners.

Analysis of errors committed by European Chinese learners as second language is of great significance because of the huge gap between Chinese language and European languages.

As discussed above, at a more micro-linguistic level of contrast between English and Chinese, one of the fundamental differences between the two, from the perspective of functional, discourse-level grammar, is related to information flow and how it is organized and grammaticalized at the sentence and discourse (multi-sentence) level.

Whereas English is subject-prominent (typically requiring the suppliance of a grammatical subject each sentence, closely connected to the predicate), Chinese is topic-prominent and commonly uses topic chains with deleted subjects(zero pronouns).

English speakers have a tendency to overproduce subjects that are unnecessary or even ungrammatical. Yet heritage and non-heritage learners of Chinese are often unaware of this aspect of Chinese. Therefore, teachers must have a good metalinguistic understanding of pedagogical/functional grammar to help make their students aware of such phenomena in Chinese.

And from the discussion in this thesis, in the course of analysis of errors committed by European Chinese learners as second language, the study and application of inter-language and intermediary context should be paid much more significance.

As for intermediary context, as has been talked much about above,intermediary context is the new notion about context in seconding language learning first put forward in this thesis, which is not iner-context, which is the ST context and TT context shared by the two sides of source language speaker and target language learner, often viewed as across-cultural context. However, intermediary context, not the same as the context of the mother tongue and the context of the target language, is the particular context between the ST context and TT context, formed only by second language learners themselves in their minds according to their own understanding of the ST context, as a medium during the process of transfer between the ST context and TT context.

III. Conclusion

As can be seen in many parts of the world, there arise an increasingly heated Chinese learning as second or foreign language for various purposes and targets. But with more and more Chinese learners as second language, errors caused by fossilization and over analogy attract more attention from language teachers and linguists.

As has been discussed in this thesis, errors caused by fossilization and over analogy has become focus of the research about Chinese learning as second language due to the giant gap between Chinese and other western language such as English, French, German, Polish, etc.

And as has been discussed in this chapter, most errors caused by fossilization and over analogy occurring in the course of Chinese learning as second language take place in its particular ways, that is, the ways relevant to context, grammar or phonetics, lexical words and metaphor, by means of intermediary context.

Thus, the study of “transfer” becomes the keystone for the analysis of errors occurring in Chinese learning and teaching.

Studies have proven that defining transfer is absolutely a most tough task. The term “transfer” comes from the theory that the first or native language or mother tongue, namely source language (SL) habits influence the acquisition of the second or foreign language, namely target language (TL) habits. For a second language learner, who has a basic mastery of the vocabulary and grammatical structures of his mother tongue, he or she is likely to be influenced by the vocabulary and rules in his mother tongue during the process of acquiring the vocabulary and grammar in the target language.

Language transfer refers to second or foreign language learners applying knowledge from their native language to a second language, which can be divided into positive transfer and negative transfer.

If the relevant unit or structure of both languages is the same, linguistic interference can result in correct language production which is called positive transfer, and if the items and structures transferred are not the same in both languages, it is negative transfer.

According to the theory of contrastive analysis, the greater the differences between the two languages, the more negative transfer can be expected. Generally speaking, the more similar the two languages are, the more the learner is aware of the relation between them, the more positive transfer will occur.

Transfer is an important factor in language learning at all levels. Typically learners begin by transferring sounds, or phonetic transfer, and transferring meaning, or semantic transfer, as well as various rules including word order and pragmatics. As learners’ progress and gain more experience with the target language, the role of transfer typically diminishes.

In the classroom of the second language learning, if the teacher places too much emphasis on a structure or rules, which phenomenon is always resulted from the inappropriate methods adopted by teachers or improper material in the textbook, the transfer can also be caused by students easily, especially the negative transfer. For example, if a teacher has a nonstandard pronunciation in some certain phonemes, the second language learners, to a large extent, will not be able to pronounce

properly. Further more, the nonstandard pronunciation may lead to some barriers and obstacles to learners' listening practice or their communication with native speakers.

There is such an usual phenomenon that a second language learner, whose language competence has not reached a skillful level, but tries to use some language strategies such as simplification, omissions, substitutions and restructuring etc. when dealing with some exercise or language problems during the learning process. The use of learning strategies contributes to the macro-control of the learning process and has a direct impact on the development of inter-language.

For most of the second language learners, the main goal of learning a foreign or second language is to be able to communicate. The purpose of communication strategies is just to solve an emerged communication problem by applying some kinds of techniques. When language learners concentrate on form or accuracy, they encounter problems, and when they recognize the mismatch between their linguistic resources and communicative intentions, they try to solve these problems using communication strategies. Communication strategy should include the understanding and conveying of information. Choosing what kind of communication strategies reflects the developmental level of learners' language competence.

With the development of the target language, learners will try to use target language-based strategy instead of mother tongue-based strategy when they are communicating with others. When learners speak languages in the real context, they gradually construct, review and adjust the psychological model of the target language and finally become approximate to the target language.

In the course of second language acquisition, second language learners often use a number of grammar rules as a general rule. This behaviour will simplify the structure of the target language, thereby creating some of the structure variants with the features and rules that can be found in the target language instead of their mother tongue.

There are ways to reduct negative transfer. Language transfer can greatly influence the interlanguage and negative transfer may lead to fossilization in learners' language system. So, it's important to change this situation in order to reduce fossilization and improve the learning of learners of Chinese as second language. As is known to all, it's impossible to avoid or eliminate the transfer of SL into TL learning. However, it's feasible to reduce it. Language transfer often occurs when learners cannot express what they intend with their acquired SL knowledge. Thus, building up a firm basis of TL is necessary for reducing the transfer.

From the view point of cognitive theory, knowledge can be categorized into declarative knowledge and procedural knowledge. The former refers to the facts, and the latter refers to the skill for language.

The transition of declarative to procedural knowledge takes place in three stages. In the autonomous stage, the skill becomes increasingly rapid and automatic. Data in the declarative system is stored in a form that makes them available for all necessary operations. From this point, the more data or information there is in declarative knowledge system, the more easily for the data

to be mobilized. The acquisition of procedural knowledge, therefore, is essentially based on declarative knowledge and a solid basis of declarative knowledge is a good preparation for procedural knowledge acquisition.

If learners possess sufficient and accurate TL knowledge, it will be easy for him or her to operate linguistic items at different levels and produce correct forms and if not, they will depend more on their developed SL system and make considerable deviances from the TL. That is to say, the advantage of the declarative knowledge accumulation is that it adds a large amount of linguistic information to the internal knowledge system, which may help learners to progress toward the automation of TL and reduce language transfer.

Another way to reduce language transfer is to increase the opportunity for output, because it promotes accuracy and fluency in the cognitive domain.

The role of output, however, in the development of the TL proficiency, has been ignored or denied. In some cases of second language teaching, much focus is put on reading and listening courses. Instead, speaking and writing training get less stressed in the teaching. Its consequent is that most learners obtain high marks in examination but low competence in speaking. The suggestion is that after-class practice be performed in order to increase the opportunity of output.

Attention should also be paid to exposure to target language and target language culture.

It has been widely agreed that culture factor play an important role in language teaching and learning. A language not only expresses facts, ideas, or events which represent similar world knowledge by its people, but also reflects the people's attitudes, beliefs, world outlooks etc.

Language as the keystone of culture is tightly intertwined with culture. Learning a language is inseparably from its culture. When learning a foreign or second language, we should not only learn the mere imitation of the pronunciation, grammar, words and idioms, but also learn to see the world as native speakers do, that is to say, learn the ways in which the foreign language reflects the ideas, customs, and behavior of that society, learn to understand their "language of the mind", or acculturation. Since the lack of acculturation may lead to fossilization, it is really important for the second language learners to access to the target language culture. It is necessary to learn enough about the language's culture so as to communicate in the target language properly to achieve not only the linguistic competence but also the pragmatic or communicative competence as well.

Adoption of proper learning strategies plays more important role for the problem of fossilization.

Learning strategies are learners' conscious, goal-oriented and problem-solving based efforts to achieve learning efficiency.

Cognitive strategies are strategies involved in analyzing, synthesis, and internalizing what has been learned. Early focus of language learning strategies was mostly placed on cognitive skills. Cognitive learning strategies refer to the learning strategies that directly affect the learner's language learning.

Cognitive strategies are also more directly related to a specific task or a learning objective and may not be applicable to different types of tasks. The focus of cognitive strategies is on determining the effect of different cognitive strategy training on different kinds of tasks and learners.

Social or affective strategies refer to strategies involving the interaction with other people or the management of affect. Social strategies promote the practice opportunities and affective strategies help learners take care of the emotions; both of the strategies affect the learning effect.