Abstract  Key terms related to Chinese language, including Putonghua, Hanyu, Zhongwen, Pinyin and Hanzi, which often cause confusion to language learners open this chapter. A review of teaching Chinese as a foreign language (TCFL) within China follows, where the teaching pedagogy models teaching English as a second/foreign language. A review of TCFL in the Western context identifies teachers’ pedagogical knowledge and the knowledge of their learners as sometimes problematic. Coupled with this is a prevailing attitude of schools’ and students’ that Chinese language programmes should provide only a “fun” taste of the language. Through an analysis of the current literature, this chapter proposes the argument that Duiwai Hanyu Jiaoxue is reaching a Cul de Sac and needs innovation, both theoretically and methodologically.

Keywords  Teaching Chinese as a foreign language (TCFL)  ·  Duiwai Hanyu Jiaoxue  ·  Chinese language  ·  Pinyin  ·  Zhongwen
Introduction

In Chap. 1, I situated the Chinese language into its context as a “priority” language around the world. This included an analysis of the political, cultural, economic and security relationship between China and three key Western countries (UK, Australia and the USA). China is believed politically to use its Confucius Institutes (CIs) as a soft-powered gun with Duiwai Hanyu Jiaoxue (Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language—TCFL) as the bullets to culturally colonise or consistently penetrate each corner of the world. Countries such as UK and Australia in the main take an economic response to this, imagining that it can sweeten people’s lives and thus encourage their people to fully embrace learning Chinese or at least “taste” it. Interestingly, the US response is more focused on issues of national security and suspect the mission of the CIs to be more likely to be “糖衣炮弹” (tangyi paodan: a bomb in a lolly wrapper), and therefore needs to be carefully monitored and controlled. From within this space, this chapter provides a focus on the language and the language teaching itself, through clarifying and initiating a discussion on some contested and confusing terms related to Chinese language. Also through analysing problems raised in the Duiwai Hanyu Jiaoxue literature, I propose an argument: Hanyu Jiaoxue itself is reaching a Cul de Sac and needs a turn.

Chinese Language

The many and varied terms currently in use when referring to Chinese language are complicated and confusing, even to native Chinese people. The term Chinese language itself does not represent one particular form of language that can be spoken or written; rather, it is an abstract concept described as “a variety of languages or dialects” (Hua and Dodd 2000, p. 8). There is a range of terms to refer to different dialects such as Cantonese, Tibetan, Inner-Mongolian and Uyghur. However, related to the term of Chinese language itself, there is a range of names used in different contexts including Putonghua (Mandarin), Zhongwen, Hanyu,
Huayu, Hanzi, Ci and Pinyin. Here, I would like to firstly focus on clarifying these key terms.

**Putonghua (Mandarin)**

*Putonghua* (普通话) is the term used when referring to the spoken form of the language. In English, it is called Mandarin, a popular name used to identify the Chinese language in a Western context. However, exactly how *Putonghua* is related to *Chinese language* (or Modern Chinese Language—the full terminology/descriptor) may not be clear to many researchers or language educators. The two terms are mistakenly believed to be interchangeable. *Putonghua* is described by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority as “the common or shared language” in China (ACARA 2013, p. 3). It is “Modern Standard Chinese, or MSC” in Hua and Dodd’s study (2000, p. 8). In Yao et al. (2006) book, the terms *Chinese Language and Literature, Putonghua and Chinese language* are distinguished from each other. In this instance, *Putonghua* refers to “common speech”, “standard spoken form of Chinese language” (Yao et al. 2006, p. 1), whereas *Chinese language* refers to the spoken as well as written form.

The most authoritative criteria specified about the term can be traced back to the 1950s when the People’s Republic of China was established. A group of linguists and language experts provided the specification for *Chinese language* (or Modern Chinese language) through debates and discussions at a conference hosted by the China Social Science Academy in 1955. The outcome of these debates centred on its phonetic system which adopts the language practised in the Beijing area, its spoken form is based on Northern dialects, and its grammatical rules follows the style as in the modern vernacular writing (in contrast to ancient Chinese) (Yao et al. 2006, p. 4). From these explanations, it is clear that *Chinese language* and *Putonghua* cannot replace each other. Literally, “language” or *yu* in Chinese refers to, or includes, both written and spoken modes whereas *hua* means the spoken form of a language. *Putonghua* can be defined as a standard Chinese dialect, which is in addition to “seven other dialect groups” (*Northern, Wu, Yue/Cantonese, Min, Kejia, Xiang and...*
Gan dialects) (Yan 2006 cited in Liang 2014, p. 76). Yue or Cantonese (Western name) is the second most popularly known dialect to Putonghua outside of China.

**Guoyu—The Nation’s Language**

*Guoyu* (国语) as a term carries a political connotation. Before 1955 when *Putonghua* was introduced, *Guoyu* referred to the (then) Nation’s language (Wang 2014). Currently, the term is mainly used in Taiwan and it is not recognised or validated by the People’s Republic of China (PRC). *Guoyu* literally means “the nation’s language”. The *Guo* or “nation” in *Guoyu*, refers to “the Republic of China” which was established in 1912 in Mainland China and which Taiwan still represents today. Therefore, this term carries with it a political allegiance to a bygone era. It is also popularly used by those older generations of expatriate Chinese or their descendants who did not experience the establishment of PRC and are not emotionally connected to it. *Guoyu* as the term for the “national language” was first employed in the early eighteenth century (at the end of the Qing Dynasty). Through two centuries of evolution up until the early 1930s, its standards in pronunciation, tones, grammar and writing systems were formed (Su 2013). One distinction between *Chinese language* (or *Modern Chinese language*) and *Guoyu* is their writing systems. The former uses simplified Chinese characters/Hanzi, and orthographically it follows left–right and top–bottom order, whereas the latter has retained the conventional style of writing, that which is written and read from top to bottom and right to left.

**Huayu/The Hua People’s Language**

*Huayu* (华语) is a term related to kinship. It has a broad connotation and is used mainly beyond Mainland China. It is an emotional name with no connection to the political country where the language was developed. It refers to the language of the *Hua* people, ethnic Chinese who either have Chinese or non-Chinese nationality, and either live in or outside
of Mainland China. *Hua* refers to the descendants of the first people, the *Huaxia* tribe who lived in the central valley of the *Huanghe* River during the legendary epoch 5,000 years ago (Cioffi-Revilla and Lai 1995). This term implies a connection between *Huayu* users and their ancestors to that particular piece of land—place. Here, *Hua* does not particularly refer to *Han* people (see below *Hanyu*). However, the *Han* people were the main group who originally lived in the environs of that river. *Guoyu* and *Huayu* both take the pronunciation of the Beijing dialect as their standard, and their grammar is basically consistent with the *Putonghua* currently implemented in China. However, the writing of characters is traditional rather than the modern simplified Chinese, the “official form” in Mainland China at present.

**Hanyu/The Language of Han Ethnic People**

The term *Hanyu* (汉语) denotes an emphasis on “ethnicity” and waning “nationality”. It literally means “the language of the *Han* people”, the major ethnic group within the Chinese population (91.51%) (National Bureau of Statistics of China 2011). *Hanyu* includes spoken and written forms of the language. Somehow, The Australian curriculum document (ACARA 2013, p. 3) defines *Hanyu* as “the spoken language of the Han people”. It is a term emphasising the “ethnicity” of the language’s origin. It needs to be noted that around 8% of the population in China are from other ethnic backgrounds. They are Chinese citizens whose first language is not *Hanyu*. Therefore, the use of *Hanyu* to refer to the language of the Chinese people is overgeneralised. This term, *Hanyu*, is used to distinguish the ethnic origin of this particular language from languages spoken by other ethnic groups within China such as *Mengyu* (the language of *Meng*/inner-Mongolian people), and *Zangyu* (the language of *Zang*/Tibetan people), or from *Yingyu*/English language (the language of Anglophone people). From this perspective, *Hanyu* does not stress national, but rather an ethnic boundary. *Hanyu* is the term often used in the context of teaching Chinese as a foreign language (TCFL). This language when taught to monolingual Chinese speakers is called *Yuwen* which means “the language and literacy”. Alternatively, with primary
and secondary students (more commonly), and with tertiary students, it is called zhongwen (discussed in the following section).

**Zhongwen—The Central Kingdom’s Language and Literature**

*Zhongwen* (中文) is a more academic or institutional concept. When Chinese as a subject is studied, it is labelled *Zhongwen*, a short term for Chinese language and literature study (Peng et al. 2014). *Zhongwen* is often a subject offered at tertiary level paralleled with other subjects such as science, engineering and business.

Within the word itself, *Wen* refers to language, literature and culture without any emphasis on spoken or written versions. *Zhong* literally means “central” as in “the Central Kingdom”, which has been the name Chinese people call their country. In Australia, some weekend community schools where students learn Chinese language often name themselves *Zhongwen School* (e.g. Jiale Zhongwen in Sydney).

**Pinyin—“Romanised” Chinese Language?**

*Pinyin* (拼音) is an auxiliary phonetic system, assisting learners in the pronunciation of the *Chinese language* (or *Putonghua* to be accurate) with Western scholars referring to it as Romanised Chinese (Bassetti and Masterson 2012; Danielewicz-Betz and Graddol 2014). *Pinyin* adopts the letters of the English alphabet and includes marked tones above the vowel letters to indicate the pronunciation of its *Hanzi* equivalent (see the following section). *Pinyin* was introduced by the Chinese government in 1958. The legal document, *The Law of the People’s Republic of China on the Standard Spoken and Written Chinese Language* (Chinese Government 2016), explicitly states the function of *Pinyin* is the notating of the pronunciation of *Hanzi*, but it cannot replace *Hanzi*—the foundation of the Chinese language. *Pinyin* has some key functions:
to notate pronunciation of Hanzi, especially for beginning learners (both native and non-native speakers) to support their reading of Hanzi,
• to assist teaching or learning Putonghua (in contrast with other Chinese dialects, a guide for learners to correct their pronunciation),
• to achieve consistency in cross-language translation of proper names and scientific terminology between Hanyu and other languages,
• to provide convenience for index filing documents, books and other written resources (the Hanzi system lacks sequence and order for compiling purposes) (Peng et al. 2014).

This means, only occasionally Pinyin is used to replace Hanzi; when or where in a system Hanzi cannot be used or it is not convenient to be used (Peng et al. 2014). Pinyin is mainly restricted to Mainland China. It has not been adopted by other countries or regions with Chinese as the official language such as Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore. This further attests to its secondary or supporting position in the Chinese language system. This also explains why pinyin focus in Duiwai Hanyu Jiaoxue is questionable.

Hanzi and Ci—An Equivalent to English “Word”?

As discussed, Pinyin is a system which assists people with pronunciation when learning to speak Chinese Putonghua whereas Hanzi (汉字) is the written unit of the language. In addition, a Hanzi usually is a meaningful written language unit (Peng et al. 2014; Lü 2013, p. 150). It is based on the spatial concept of a “square”. Chinese people describe Hanzi as “Fangkuai” (方块) or “square Hanzi”. Each Hanzi must be contained within a real or an imagined square. This is a distinguishable difference from written English “words”. Hanzi is comparable to the term “word” in English given that it is a meaningful unit. Hanzi is not only the symbolic signs of Chinese language with semantic meaning
and/or grammatical meaning, it also carries with it core components of Chinese philosophy (Yao 2000, p. 174).

From this perspective, Hanzi is different from the English representation of “word”. Hanzi is directly translated to “Chinese character/s” in the Euro-American context which further implies its common definition as “Chinese language writing symbols”. The cultural and philosophical connotation Hanzi carries is not conveyed in this translation. This translation has caused a misunderstanding of Hanzi in the Western context (Yao 2000). Hanzi is preferred term in place of the Western translation “Chinese character/s” in this book to capture its full meaning.

Hanzi can be extended to a more extensive unit, referred to as Ci (词). Chinese Ci can be formed through a combination of two or more Hanzi or some Hanzi can be a Ci by themselves. Compared to Hanzi which normally contain one phonetic syllable (one vowel with a choice of zero, one or two consonants), most Ci are composed of more than one Hanzi and therefore multi-syllabic. Phonetically Ci is comparable to an English “word”. Interestingly but perhaps confusingly, one English word when translated into Chinese can be a combination of two or more Hanzi or a Ci (China—中国). There are also English words that when translated into Chinese contain one Hanzi only (e.g. “sky—天” and “ground—地”). Thus, English “word” is equal to Hanzi on some occasions and Ci on the others, whereas Ci in translation is equal to the English “word” or “phrase”.

### The Pronunciation System of Chinese Language

Chinese language is monosyllabic. In its Putonghua pronunciation system, one Hanzi is comprised of one single or compound vowel combined with consonants. This is different from the English pronunciation system in which the majority of words are multi-syllabic (e.g. in-ter-na-tion-al-i-sa-tion). There are a total of 85,000 Hanzi in Chinese vocabulary, and these are comprised of 416 monosyllables and 1300 syllables when tones are considered in Putonghua (Tian et al. 2010, p. 1602).
This means, on average, each syllable sounds out 203 Hanzi when tones are not considered, or 65 Hanzi when tones are teased out. For example, the four Hanzi “澳大利亚” (ào dà lì yà) represent the Chinese translation of “Australia”. Interestingly, there are 69 other Hanzi pronounced “ào”, 55 “dà”, 200 “lì”, and 90 “yà” (Huo 2012). Due to this feature, the pronunciation burden for Hanyu learners is somewhat lessened. At the same time, this puts pinyin-dependent learners into a problematic situation when there are so many homophones, it is hard for them to identify “which is which”.

**Hanzi Formation System—Dutizi and Hetizi**

From the perspective of its internal structure, Hanzi can be divided into two groups: Dutizi or non-decomposable Hanzi, and Hetizi or decomposable Hanzi. Shu and Anderson (1999) cited in Xiao (2011, p. 115) classify Dutizi as “simple characters”, consisting of a single un-analysable component, and Hetizi as “compound characters”, comprised of two or more analysable components which often distinguish semantic and phonetic functions.

Dutizi (独体字) are usually made of one radical (root or base) that cannot be further subdivided semantically and grammatically. Such Hanzi are similar to single free morpheme words in English and are mostly pictographs (Xiangxingzi: 象形字) or indicatives (Zhishizi: 指示字) (Wu 1969); these are derived from full pictures of the signified matter, or abstract icons of objects. This explains why these Hanzi are usually undividable (National Language Working Committee 2009). Dutizi encompass a small proportion of the total Chinese vocabulary (overall there are 280 Dutizi in the Chinese language); however, they are the core of Chinese language and they have strong capacity to form complex/compound Hanzi or Hetizi (National Language Working Committee 2009).

Hetizi or “decomposable Hanzi” (合体字: Hetizi; 合体: compound or complex; 字: character) are similar to English compound or complex words (Wu 1969). Take “木” as an example. It is a Dutizi and it contributes to the formation of 400 Hetizi (National Language Working Committee 2009).
Committee 2009). Hetizi are formed (e.g. 林, 森, 相) in a similar way to English compound words (e.g. bathroom and bathtub) or by adding stroke/s to a simple Hanzi (e.g. 本, 禾, 末) which are comparable with English complex words which have been created by adding a prefix or suffix (e.g. stupidity, loneliness).

Phonetic and Semantic Clues in Hanzi Learning

Chinese language has a highly productive Hanzi formation system. Eighty-five per cent of Hanzi have phonetic and/or semantic indicators in their formation (Shen 2005). Learners can use these indicators to enlarge and expand their Hanzi vocabulary. However, some researchers argue that Chinese is one of the most difficult languages in the world and Hanzi recognition is particularly difficult for non-background learners due to the complexity of the configuration while the written form of a Hanzi provides little clue to its sound (Curdt-Christiansen 2014; Ye 2013; Tian et al. 2010).

The difficulty of Chinese learnability has been officially assessed by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages Proficiency Guidelines as taking, “…native English speakers three times the number of instructional hours to reach the same level of proficiency in Chinese as in French or Spanish” (Xiao 2011, p. 114). Xiao (2011, p. 114) also refers to a survey of college, pre-college and heritage Chinese language learners wherein it was reported that “character learning was identified as the most difficult task…”. Such statements about the “learnability” of Hanzi are questionable. Take the Hanzi “青” as an example. It is a partial for forty-nine compounds or complex Hanzi, with “青” as the phonetic indicator and other partial/s as semantic clues. Once having remembered the pronunciation of “青” (qing: sounds like “ching”), the learner will be able to identify the pronunciation of those Hanzi containing “青” (e.g. 清, 氰, 靛 and 蜻) more easily. However, there are phonetic variations with different tones (e.g. 请, 情 and 晴) and various consonants (睛, 精, 菁 and 蜈). Such variations should not bother the
learner unduly as this phenomenon is also common in the English phonetic system (e.g. the “"o" in “scholar" and “rose", and “woman"). In addition to phonetic indicators, the learner can draw on semantic clues to decipher the meaning of many Hetizi (compound/complex Hanzi). Continuing with the example given above, the semantic partial in “清” indicates water, in “鲭” it indicates a kind of fish, in “蜻” it means a kind of insect or worm, in “请” it relates to speaking or asking, in “情” the meaning is emotion, and in “睛” it refers to weather. Such semantic clues may not accurately indicate the exact meaning of the Hanzi, but at least the generic meaning can be traced.

Hanzi learning might be difficult at the beginning stage of learning (Allen 2008; Ye 2013), but once the learners have grasped the knowledge of the phonetic indicator and semantic clues in Hanzi formation, their learning will be accelerated. This implies that the integration of pronunciation and the written form in Hanzi learning is beneficial for beginning learners. However, such phonetic clues in Hanzi learning are not explored in this research.

Duiwai Hanyu Jiaoxue and the Problems in China

Professor Zhao Jinming from Beijing Language and Culture University defines Duiwai Hanyu Jiaoxue (对外汉语教学) as teaching Hanyu to foreigners, including Chinese ethnic group[s] whose first language is not Hanyu (Zhao 2007). The accepted meaning of this term outside of China is TCFL or “teaching Chinese as a foreign language”. When deconstructing the full term, Duiwai refers “to foreigners” or “to foreign countries”; Hanyu is the language of the Han people; and Jiaoxue means teaching and learning. There is, however, a subtle difference between the two terms as TCFL does not emphasise “learning” and does not clarify who are the foreigners, whereas Duiwai Hanyu Jiaoxue refers to learners whose first language is not Hanyu but may have Hanyu as their family language.
Duiwai Hanyu Jiaoxue or Hanyu Jiaoxue is a comparatively new field in China, having originated as a subject in China in the 1980s. In March 1978, the China Academy of Social Science hosted a language subject forum in Beijing and Duiwai Hanyu Jiaoxue was, for the first time, proposed as a subject that needed to be taught and researched. The forum suggested a Duiwai Hanyu research organisation be established and teaching and research specialists be trained. In the following decade, Duiwai Hanyu Jiaoxue commenced its evolution, with key journals, dedicated publishers and research organisations established. These included: Language Teaching and Research (语言教学与研究) in 1979, Shijie Hanyu Jiaoxue (世界汉语教学) in 1987, Beijing Language and Culture University publishing house (北京语言学院出版社) in 1985 and Huayu Teaching Publisher (华语教学出版社) in 1986. Hanyu research organisations were founded during this period, including the Research Institute of Language Teaching (under Beijing Language and Culture University) (北京语言学院语言教学研究所) in 1984 and the Duiwai Hanyu Teaching and Research Association of China Education Society in 1983 (中国教育学会对外汉语教学研究会). These marked the official establishment of Duiwai Hanyu as a subject (Zhao 2009).

Zhao (2009) reports the current status of Duiwai Hanyu Jiaoxue within China from research and teaching perspectives. Currently, there have been neither scientific, systematic and standard national Hanyu proficiency criteria nor teaching syllabuses developed. However, Hanyu teaching is making a transition from what to teach and learn (the content), towards a focus on how to teach and learn (pedagogy). Nevertheless, Hanyu pedagogy development has been based on teachers’ experiences and opinions rather than being research driven and evidence based.

Research into Duiwai Hanyu Jiaoxue is at the stage of transition from 经验型 (jingyanzxing: experiential) to 科学型 (kexuexing: scientific). Zhao (2009) contends a plethora of studies are experience-based teaching reports—often with limited engagement with scholarly work in the field and as such are not research-driven, evidence-based research studies. Therefore, it is argued that the research scope into Hanyu Jiaoxue is narrow and unbalanced. Research studies have not been purposely designed and lack nationally and internationally significant projects.
Similarly, research into teaching pedagogy has been reported at a more general level rather than specific and in-depth studies. Some key areas such as vocabulary teaching pedagogy continue to remain within this wide research gap (Zhao 2009).

_Hanyu Jiaoxue_ has been adopting pedagogies from programmes of teaching Chinese to native speakers, and teaching English as a second or foreign language. Theoretically, the development of _Hanyu Jiaoxue_ has been absorbing Western linguistic theories such as transgenerative grammar, psychological linguistic to socio-linguistics (Zhao 2009).

An argument could then be raised that as there are similarities between teaching _Hanyu_ and any other language (as a second or foreign language), it should follow that pedagogies and theories for _Duiwai Hanyu Jiaoxue_ could be developed based on Western achievements in the field of foreign/second language teaching. In reality, this can be debated based on the learner’s L1 and L2 (see Chap. 3) as for Chinese and English they are “distant languages” whereas other languages may be “intimate” such as German and English. The argument that the teaching and learning of any language as additional or foreign drawing on universal pedagogies might only be useful at the theoretical level. Research into the learnability or transferability of _Duiwai Hanyu Jiaoxue_ has occurred only throughout the last 20 years starting with a comparative analysis of the two languages (English and Chinese), and predicated on assessments indicating learners’ difficulties.

**Beyond the Commercial Scope of _Hanyu Jiaoxue_**

Outside of China, _Hanyu Jiaoxue_ is further complicated by many political contexts, some of which have been discussed in Chap. 1. This includes the security, investment and trade intention of languages policy generated in the USA, the UK and Australia. Such policies meet explicit commercial objectives for _Hanyu_ learning in terms of economics and trade, with an expectation of minimum investment and the maximum profit. This is clearly argued in the report by Tinsley and Board (2013, p. 4):
When it comes to investing time, money and effort in the learning of languages, practical factors inevitably come into play. Politicians, taxpayers, parents and learners all want to be able to invest in those languages where their efforts and resources are going to prove most effective for their particular needs.

Within this context, there are three key issues of practicality that have emerged when considering the scope of Hanyu Jiaoxue beyond commercialisation. These are: (1) What to teach, Pinyin or Hanzi? (2) Who are qualified to teach and where are they from? and (3) how to teach Hanyu as a foreign language in response to learners’ need?

**Pinyin Dominant Teaching in Hanyu Jiaoxue**

In the Australian curriculum document (ACARA 2015), it is stated that the focus for Chinese language teaching in Stage 1 (F-2) is based on Pinyin, and Hanzi is required to be introduced from Stage 2. In practice, there is a heavy dependence on Pinyin no matter at what stage. Hanzi is placed into a secondary position or an additional option in Hanyu teaching and learning (Orton 2008; Huo 2012).

When examining the UK, CILT document, Hanzi is not a focus. Hanyu education is taking on a dual focus when taught to younger beginners: Chinese culture and Pinyin learning. “The pupils have workshops about Chinese dance, music, tai chi, and cookery” and “the lessons are taught using Pinyin and concentrate on speaking and listening” (CILT 2007, p. 14).

The reason for teaching Pinyin is that Hanzi is difficult to learn especially for non-background learners (Huo 2012; Allen 2008). One reason for the overuse of Pinyin is that students could use their prior knowledge—the letters of the alphabet to help with Pinyin writing, enabling learners to see and feel the similarities between English letters and Chinese Pinyin. This can therefore lead learners to mistakenly believe the two languages are similar in writing (Huo 2012). “Pinyin only” teaching and learning can therefore be very problematic as indicated in Leung (2003) study which found this method assists students
in the short term with oral communication but keeps students illiterate in terms of the written form, Hanzi.

**Who Are Qualified to Teach? Where Are Hanyu Teachers from?**

*Duiwai Hanyu* teachers in Australia are predominantly ethnic Chinese (90%) who have attained permanent residency after an immigration waiver was introduced in 1989 (Wang et al. 2013, p. 119; Orton 2011, p. 153). While the employment of native Chinese speakers expanded the number of available teachers in schools, Orton (2008, 2011) contends that the varied range of their teaching skills has been a major challenge to effective Chinese learning outcomes by students in Australian schools. Being able to speak a language does not necessarily mean that effective teaching and learning will take place; an understanding of the literacy aspects of a language and teaching pedagogies are not innate by these native Chinese language speakers. Further, most ethnic Chinese have been educated in a teacher-dominated learning environment, in direct contrast to the student-centred approaches indicative of Australian school education, particularly in the early years. In US classrooms, the teaching force is comprised of guest teachers (visiting native Chinese speakers), heritage speakers (US citizens whose first/home language is Chinese, but who speak fluent English, and native English speakers (who have learned Chinese as a second language). Each group have different skills and training needs (Asia Society 2010).

**Teacher Qualifications and Competencies**

The lack of suitably qualified Chinese language teachers is an ongoing challenge and as yet has not been fully addressed in Australia and China through current teacher education programmes. Wang et al. (2013) purport that most foreign language teachers, trained in Australia, would complete a 4-year Bachelor’s course which would combine content specialisation units (e.g. the language itself), with generic teacher
education units. At some Australian universities, one pathway is for language studies students to complete an undergraduate degree in Arts and then complete a Master of Teaching (18 months). In general, these pathways are open to “all foreign language pre-service teachers” and for the most part include standard teacher education units/subjects (e.g. linguistics, western pedagogy and teaching practice) rather than focussing on the specific content of foreign languages (Wang et al. 2013, p. 120, 125). These authors further provide evidence (p. 124) that Chinese as a Foreign Language (CFL) as taught in Beijing (Beijing Language University) is heavily focussed on theories, that is, linguistics, Chinese linguistics and second language acquisition. The Beijing students undertake a third less professional experience practicums (6 rounds of optional practice) compared to the Sydney-based teacher education programme (18 compulsory placements). Language teachers trained in China, and who travel abroad to the West to teach Hanyu tend to draw on their own experiences of education—teacher-centred pedagogies.

This may mean that their pedagogical choices may be dated, ineffective, or inconsistent with current “best practice” and priorities in 21st century language education. (Wang et al. 2013, p. 127)

These shortcomings in the teaching cohort for Hanyu teachers in Australian schools have been identified as contributing factors to the low retention rates in senior secondary schools, the lack of continued study of Hanyu at University, as well as relatively low exit standards in the language proficiency at the Higher School Certificate level (Year 12) (Orton 2011). One response to this challenge has been for stakeholders to generate lists outlining teacher capabilities or standards for teaching (e.g. Hanban, 2007 cited in Orton 2011, p. 155). Orton (2011) identified a serious limitation in many of these generic capability statements as there is often little mention of planning evidence-based teaching strategies, implementing student-centred approaches and managing challenging student behaviour. This is also raised by Professor Zhao (2009) as a key issue for teachers within China.
Pre-service and In-Service Teacher Education

Teacher education programmes for students specifically wanting to be teachers of Chinese to English speakers have also been critiqued as not providing students with subject-specific knowledge, in this case Hanyu, and extensive intercultural competency knowledge that goes beyond the Arts and Tourism and which would acknowledge the contributory events, worldviews and extensively long political and social history that has led China into the contemporary society it is today. The appointment of ethnic Chinese as language teachers in Australia, to some extent, addresses the above point relating to intercultural competence.

In addition to the shortcomings in the current Chinese language pre-service teacher education programmes, there is a lack of evidence in the literature reporting on successful in-service teacher professional learning programmes and strategies for ongoing mentoring. What is reported is the need for such programmes including statements on the specific needs areas. For example, Steel et al. (2009) in a study with foreign language teachers in California reported that professional development was a critical need that teachers identified themselves. The Asia Society (2010) then proposed specific foci for ongoing mentoring and professional learning. These included:

- Effective pedagogical methods to improve student learning
- Linguistic and cultural proficiency
- Use of new technologies for instruction and assessment
- Classroom management
- Information on best practice (p. 28)

It could be argued these same priorities should be part of pre-service language teacher education programmes. The Asia Society (2010, p. 18) provides six key aspects of training foci for a successful Chinese language teacher. These include: having background knowledge in the linguistic features of Chinese language; understanding and having the ability to implement pedagogies for modern foreign language teaching; behaviour management skills; commitment to certification and professional
learning; capacity to work with the school and its community; and being proficient in all modes of the English language.

**Pedagogies for *Hanyu* Teaching**

Currently, there is also little evidence available from research into effective pedagogies for teaching *Hanyu* to native English speakers in the early years of schooling through to senior secondary (Orton 2011). Especially when compared to the plethora of linguistic research involving European languages, the Chinese language has not been as rigorously explored in the same depth.

The situation is now that there is an increasing demand for teachers of *Hanyu* in local Australian schools; however, teacher education programmes are slow in addressing the specific needs of this cohort, with programmes more likely to provide generic pedagogical and knowledge skills.

Chinese language pedagogy is comparatively underdeveloped, and as yet it is hard to find theoretically sound, innovative approaches and techniques which target the very particular and demanding learning challenges Chinese language and culture present for English-speaking students (Orton 2011, p. 163).

**Hanyu as a Marginalised Subject**

In addition to having a qualified Chinese language teaching cohort, the constraints on supporting students to achieve high proficiency in Chinese language learning is further exacerbated by timetabling issues and what can be seen as the marginalisation of foreign language learning in Australian schools. Both issues were identified in the UK and stated in the CILT report as:

> The main constraints to developing Mandarin teaching are perceived to be the availability of trained teachers and lack of time on the curriculum. (CILT, UK study cited in Orton 2011, p. 152)
The ratified Australian Curriculum (ACARA 2015) does include Languages as a Learning Area along with English, Mathematics, Science, Humanities and Social Sciences, The Arts, Technologies, Health and Physical Education and Work Studies as an optional Learning Area. Although Asia and Australia’s Engagement with Asia is one of the three Cross-curriculum priorities, the Chinese language competes with fifteen others for learners.

In NSW Australia, the learning of any foreign language is not a mandatory requirement for primary school students, that is, Early Stage 1–Stage 3 students (BOSTES 2016, p. 12). Although progress across the stages is individually based, generally the age range from Early Stage 1–3 would be 5–12 years. When foreign language learning becomes a mandatory subject (Stages 4 and 5), it is cited in the 2016 draft Languages Framework that the time allocation for this study/subject is “…100 h of one language in one continuous 12-month period” (BOSTES 2016, p. 12). At Stages 5 and 6 in secondary school, the study of a foreign language is an Elective Course.

The inclusion of the study of a foreign language in public primary schools in NSW is therefore a school-based decision. Most do include foreign language study with the time allocation being negotiated within each school. Schools may vary the time allocation for foreign language study across the Stages with upper primary school students, as a benchmark, engaging in foreign language lessons of 45 min, per week.

In the case of NSW schools, the mandatory study of a foreign language occurs only at Stages 4 and 5 (Years 7–10). Leaving the compulsory study of foreign languages until the early teens departs from the notion that children are best equipped to more successfully learn foreign languages in their early years. In a US-based report (Asia Society 2010, p. 12), it is stated:

Studies have shown that the human brain is most open to linguistic development in the years before adolescence and that children who learn a language in the elementary school years are more likely to achieve native-like pronunciation. When students get an early start, they can achieve levels of fluency that are simply not possible in the typical U.S. high school language program.
With specific reference to Chinese language teaching and learning in Australian schools, Orton (2011) contends that compared to the “serious subjects”, English and Mathematics, *Hanyu Jiaoxue* is relegated an unimportant existence where the intention is to have students “taste” Chinese language and culture. The timetabling issue further indicates a minimum investment in Chinese (and other foreign) language learning in Australian schools, whereas the “new” Australian Curriculum and its associated Rationale for Languages as a Key Learning Area espouse the importance of foreign language learning.

**Conclusion**

This chapter clarifies the key terms related to Chinese language and provides an overview of the problems in *Duiwai Hanyi Jiaoxue* reported in the current literature. It discloses some key issues and concerns in *Hanyu Jiaoxue* both within China and countries with supported policies on *Hanyu Jiaoxue*.

There are many identifiable gaps in *Duiwai Hanyi Jiaoxue* including teacher education programmes which lack contextualisation and language specific knowledge. In China the majority of *Hanyu* teacher training programmes are situated in the local education system which perpetuates a lack of imagination for current and future “foreign” students’ needs. Outside of China, the recruitment of students into teacher education programmes focuses on those who can speak the language, often with minimum academic record showing their expertise in subject knowledge. It can also be argued that schools and students currently promote *Hanyu* teaching and learning as providing a taste of the language and as a “fun”, not a serious subject. Thus, *Hanyu Jiaoxue* is basically relegated to an ambiguous situation, where the likelihood of school students continuing to maintain their *Hanyu* studies is tentative and based on how long their interest lasts. *Duiwai Hanyi Jiaoxue* is therefore reaching a dead end. It needs innovation, both theoretically and methodologically. The next chapter focuses on a review and discussion of the current “one-size-fits-all” Western second language acquisition theories.
Note

1. ‘China’ is a Westernised name with an uncertain origin having been used for thousands of years and recorded in English from the mid-16th century. ‘Chin-a’ may have arisen from the pronunciation of ‘Qin’, the first united kingdom in the west, possibly the first region reached by overland travellers from the west (Hu 2000; Kirby 2004).

References

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