

**The Effectiveness and Appropriateness of the
Use of Contemporary Chinese Popular
Literature in Teaching Chinese as a Foreign
Language:
An Empirical Study in an Australian University Setting**

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Abstract

The thesis answers the question of whether *contemporary Chinese popular literature* provides linguistic, cultural and affective benefits for learners of Chinese (Mandarin) in an advanced language course of Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language (TCFL) at university level. The theoretical approach of constructivism emphasizes the significance of authentic and relevant context, appropriate challenge and learners' positive affect during the process of learning, which provides the theoretical rationale for the use of *contemporary Chinese popular literature* in TCFL.

Adopting an instructional model based on two constructivist approaches, reader response theory and schemata theory, an empirical study is conducted in an advanced Chinese language course at the University of Adelaide. Eighteen students participate in this one-semester study. Data includes tests, questionnaires, interviews, class transcripts, observations and assignments. Both quantitative and qualitative methods are adopted to arrive at interpretations. The results of the empirical study confirm that the integration of *contemporary Chinese popular literature* in TCFL is a proper, practical and productive concept. Most students enjoy the experience with *contemporary Chinese popular literature* in this experimental course due to its instructional characteristics: authenticity and relevancy, appropriate linguistic challenge, multiple forms of presentation and representation, etc. Students' growths in language and cultural skills and positive affective attitudes are demonstrated in tests and questionnaires. Due to students' different language proficiency levels and cultural backgrounds, some pedagogical issues are raised from qualitative discussion, providing suggestions for similar research and practice. As a pioneer of relevant research, I conclude that the integration of *contemporary Chinese popular literature* in advanced TCFL course has a promising future.

Declaration

I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint-award of this degree.

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List of Abbreviations

CAFSA	China Association for International Education (<i>Zhongguo gaodeng jiaoyu xuehui waiguo liuxuesheng jiaoyu guanli fen hui</i> /中国高等教育学会外国留学生教育管理分会)
CAS	Center for Asian Studies (<i>Yazhou yanjiu zhongxin</i> /亚洲研究中心)
CI	Confucius Institute (<i>Kongzi xueyuan</i> /孔子学院)
CLE	Constructivist learning environment
FLT	Foreign Language Teaching
HANBAN	The Office of Chinese Language Council International (<i>Guojia Hanyu guoji tuiguang lingdao xiaozu bangongshi</i> /国家汉语国际推广领导小组办公室)
HSK	The Chinese Proficiency Test (<i>Hanyu shuiping kaoshi</i> /汉语水平考试)
PRC	People's Republic of China (<i>Zhonghua renmin gongheguo</i> /中华人民共和国)
TCFL	Teaching Chinese (Mandarin) as a Foreign Language (<i>Hanyu zuowei waiyu jiaoxue</i> /汉语作为外语教学)
TCK	The third culture kids
TCSL	Teaching Chinese as a Second Language(<i>Hanyu zuowei di'er yuyan jiaoxue</i> /汉语作为第二语言教学)
WCC	World Chinese Conference (<i>Shijie Hanyu dahui</i> /世界汉语大会)
ZPD	Zone of proximal development