

*Interview*

## **Theories and Practices of Language Education: An Interview with Prof. Zhuanglin Hu**

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### **Abstract**

In this interview, Professor Hu showed his insights in the linguistic basis of language education. Among the various schools of linguistic theories, he lays special emphasis on the influence of communicative grammar, systemic functional linguistics, pragmatics and cognitive linguistics on language education, in particular on foreign language teaching and learning in China. According to him, language education should fall within the scope of applied linguistics, and there should be a combination of the narrow-sense applied linguistics and the machine-oriented applied linguistics for better development of language education research and practice. Educational linguistics is considered as able to integrate language studies that focuses on the way to teach first, second or foreign language and education studies that emphasizes how to use a language in teaching different courses. Professor Hu highlighted the important role of functional linguistics in foreign language education in China, and drew our attention to the positive role of social semiotics in language teaching at all levels of education. He advocated to apply to language education the principle of Halliday's "applied linguistics", according to which we should learn to find out for what purpose, under what condition and with what result a theory is better than other theories in practices in general and in language teaching in particular, while the task of an experienced teacher is to choose an appropriate approach to cope with a particular problem and the teacher himself/herself is expected to be a resource in language teaching. Professor Hu summarized the major stages of foreign language education since the founding of new China, and highlighted the shift of the objective in foreign language education in China from literature to language. He reminded us of the major challenges to foreign language education in China in the new century: including those due to the need of cross-discipline and cross-specialty personnel, the new development of technology, and the increasing importance of multiple intelligence and Internet education in foreign language learning. He also advocated the adoption of new teaching approaches in teaching Chinese as foreign language.

### **Keywords**

Language education in China, Systemic Functional Linguistics, theory and practice, lessons and challenges

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## Introduction

Zhuanglin Hu is senior professor, former director of Australian Studies Centre, former head of the English Department of School of Foreign Languages, Peking University. He is guest professor of 41 universities, member or chief advisor of editorial boards of over 10 renowned academic journals. As a leading authority with brilliant achievements in linguistics and semiotics, Professor Hu holds leading positions in many academic institutions, including honorary chairman of China Language and Semiotics Association, honorary chairman of China Association of Functional linguistics, honorary chairman of China Stylistics Association, and honorary chairman of China Association of Discourse Analysis. Professor Hu is also a leading figure in the academia of foreign language research and education in China: he is member of Advisory Committee of Basic Education Curriculum, Ministry of Education of China; former member of the Academic Committee of Foreign Language Education Research Centre at the Ministry of Education; former vice-Chairman of China English Education Association. His great contributions to foreign language research and education can be witnessed by his winning of 2015 Life Achievement Award of Xu Guozhang Foreign Language Studies Prize, 2013 Brilliant English Education Contribution Award of China Foreign Language Supervisory Committee of Higher Institutions, and 2010 Australia China Alumni Lifetime Achievement Award. He has published more than 20 books and over 240 journal articles in linguistics, semiotics, foreign language research and education.

## Part 1 Theories in Language Education

**Lai: In your understanding, what role has theoretic linguistics played in language education?**

**Which schools of theoretic linguistics have exerted influence on language education?**

Hu: In 1977, when China started her policy “Reform and Opening up to the Outside World”, the Chinese Ministry of Education, in cooperation with the British Council, invited two British scholars to hold training courses with young and middle-aged teachers as participants in Beijing, Nanjing, Shanghai and Canton successively. The two scholars are the late Professor Geoffrey Leech and Mrs. Christie Nuttle.

On the first day of the training course in Beijing, I expressed my wish that Professor Leech would tell us something about the new development of English grammar. Professor Leech smiled and explained to me patiently that if I wanted to know the development of English grammar, I needed some knowledge about linguistics, otherwise it would be difficult for me to follow his interpretation. Another participant, Fang Li hoped that Professor Leech would give some lectures about Chomsky’s transformational grammar. Leech explained clearly that he did go to the U.S. in late 1960s in order to learn Chomsky’s grammar, but he was disappointed at the fact that transformational grammar did not deal with language education, so he decided to come back to the British linguistic tradition as represented by Malinowski and Firth. This left me the impression that Chomsky’s TG grammar is only a matter of formal linguistics and has nothing to do with language education.

In the course of Leech’s lectures, I noticed he talked a lot about communicative grammar, and his partner, Mrs. Nuttle taught us how to teach English with the help of communicative approach. This left me another impression that communicative grammar is closely related to language education.

Shortly after the course, the participants got 4 articles published in *Language Teaching and Research*. The 4 articles are: “On the 3 systems of modern English grammar”(Fang et al, 1977), “Language theories and teaching methods”(Fang & Wu, 1977), “Mrs. Nuttle’s textbook compilation principles and communicative approach” (Hu et al., 1977), and “Prof. Leech’s talk on the evolution of English” (Wu & Fang, 1977). It has to be pointed out that Chinese scholars, influenced by the terms used abroad, did not make a clear distinction between “grammar” and “linguistics” at that time. Therefore, “the 3

systems” mentioned about actually referred to Bloomfield and Fries’ structural linguistics, Chomsky’s transformational-generative linguistics, and Halliday’s functional linguistics. Frankly speaking, the Chinese scholars heard the names of Bloomfield and Chomsky more often than the name of Halliday at that time, but they practiced Leech’s communicative grammar more often than other linguistic theories. This can be proved by the fact that those English syllabuses or teaching programs prepared by Chinese university’s foreign language scholars or departments, and issued officially by the Ministry of Education in the 1980s were guided by the communicative approach (Hu, 1982).

In January 1979, I was one of the 9 teachers appointed by China’s Ministry of Education to receive advanced education in Sydney University. Habitually, I should choose to study in the Department of English. Yet, before my departure, Zhao Shikai, a linguist working in the Linguistic Institute of China Academy of Social Sciences came to visit me, telling me that the Chinese linguists knew very little about the London School. Since Halliday, Chairman of the Sydney University’s Department of Linguistics, was a student of Firth, he hoped that I would learn something about the London School which might help with Chinese linguists. This led me to make the decision to choose to study in the Department of Linguistics instead of the English Department. However, when Halliday met me in his office, he made it clear that those courses offered in his department were all related to the London School. As for Chomsky’s transformational grammar, it was not taught in his department as he did not know transformational grammar very much. Anyway, I managed to present a paper entitled “Some linguistic differences in the written English of Chinese and Australian students” during my stay in Sydney University. The paper was written jointly with Professor Dorothy Brown of Sydney Institute of Education. In this paper, I analyzed the experiential component, the interpersonal component, the textual component, and the logical component of the written texts collected from Australian students and Chinese English learners. In the last paragraph of our conclusions, we made the following suggestions: When language teachers emphasize native speaker insights in the teaching of English in China, they should not overlook the different socio-cultural context there. Malinowski’s observation that “language is essentially rooted in the reality of the culture, the tribal life and customs of a tribe, and it cannot be explained without constant reference to these broader contexts of those verbal utterances.” obviously extends to the way English is used. Consequently, we called for a close cooperation between native-speaking teachers and Chinese teachers of English to work out an approach which allows students in China to express their own experiences and knowledge in acceptable English and enable them to appreciate the English culture (Hu & Brown, 1982).

After I returned to China in May 1981, I started to introduce Halliday’s systemic-functional grammar to the Chinese linguists and foreign language teachers (Hu, 1983, 1984). Since then, the term “the communicative approach” is sometimes mixed with the notion of functional grammar, as functional grammar covers not only the relation between the speaker and the hearer, but also what function is to be performed by means of words, word groups, clauses, sentences, paragraphs, and the whole text (Hu, 2005).

For another thing, pragmatics has also exerted great influences in China. When I was in Sydney University, the above-mentioned Mr. Zhao Shikai wrote to me, hoping that I could write a paper about pragmatics, which was still new to Chinese scholars. Honestly, it was the first time for me to hear about the term “pragmatics”. I immediately got in touch with my supervisor, Professor Halliday, hoping he could tell me something about pragmatics. Halliday explained to me that it was close to the contextual theory of his systemic-functional linguistics and suggested that I could find the journal *Pragmatics* in the main library myself. This led me to the writing of my introductory paper about pragmatics to Chinese scholars as early as in 1980 (Hu, 1980). As a result, pragmatics has very often been related to functional grammar or communicative grammar. Interestingly, after I finished my paper, I reported to Halliday that I found his name in the editorial board of the journal *Pragmatics*, Halliday answered “Yes, they insisted on listing my name there.” Anyway, there is close relation between functional grammar and pragmatics.

With the arrival of the new century, cognitive linguistics has started to exert its influence in foreign

language teaching and learning. From the record of CNKI network, one can find that 120 articles about cognitive linguistics were already published in China. Apart from language teaching and learning, these articles cover a wide area, such as metaphology, artificial intelligence, network language, etc.

**Lai: Applied linguistics as a discipline has narrow and broad definitions. Do you think language education/teaching fall within the scope of applied linguistics either in its narrow or broad sense? What can language teachers learn from the studies of applied linguistics?**

Hu: I would like to take this opportunity to introduce to you the late Professor Gui Shichun (1930-2017) of Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, who played the leading role of teaching and researching applied linguistics in China. As early as in 1973, he had the chance to visit Britain for 3 weeks and brought back a lot of publications about applied linguistics and psycholinguistics as well as teaching plans and programs practiced in British universities. Based on these materials, he started the first major of applied linguistics in China. He was also the first organizer of a national applied linguistics conference held in 1980 (Gui, 2017). In 1985, he went to Britain the second time through the financial support of the British Council, and had the chance to visit Lancaster University, Edinburgh University, and Reading University. His achievements can also be proved by the publication of the following books, which are all related to applied linguistics and psychological linguistics (Hu, 2010a), such as *Psychological Linguistics* (Gui, 1985), *Standardized Testing: Theories, Principles and Methods* (Gui, 1988a), *Applied Linguistics* (Gui, 1988b), *Applied Linguistics and English Teaching* (Gui, 1988c), *Essentials of Experimental Psychologic Linguistics* (Gui, 1991), *Mentality of Chinese Students in English Learning* (Gui, 1992), *Psychological Linguistics, New Edition* (Gui, 2000).

With regard to the narrow sense and broad sense of applied linguistics, the narrow sense refers to the teaching of one's first language, second language and foreign language, that is, language education in all. In this case, the narrow definition is closer to its role in language education.

In addition to this, there is another way of dividing the applied linguistics into two definitions, that is, general sense and machine-oriented sense. The general sense of applied linguistics covers: (1) language education; (2) standardization of language; (3) compilation of dictionaries; (4) translation. It also covers speech therapy, the study of staged language, the setting up of international auxiliary station, the development of short-hand system, etc.

As for the machine-oriented applied linguistics, it refers to the use of advanced electronic computer in processing the natural language. It covers: (1) experimental phonetics; (2) machine translation; (3) information retrieval; (4) Chinese character processing. It may also cover interpretation of natural language, language statistics, and the processing of minority languages.

Based on this understanding, personally I hold the view that there should be a combination of the narrow sense applied linguistics and the machine-oriented applied linguistics, if we restrict ourselves to the category of language education.

Some people are interested in studying the distinction between applied linguistics and theoretical linguistics, but I hold the view the majority of researchers are interested in the effective application of a particular theory. It goes without saying that language education or teaching should fall within the scope of applied linguistics.

**Lai: Do you think educational linguistics as a new field will help integrate language studies and education studies to further improve language education theory and practice?**

Hu: As for the topic of educational linguistics, I think you should know more than I do as you have

written a book about educational linguistics (Lai, 2015). Your book mainly touched upon its theoretical background from the perspective of social semiotics, and discourse formation and meaning interaction as well.

What I want to say here is very general, that is, educational linguistics will help integrate language studies and education studies. As the name suggests, it involves two disciplines: pedagogy and linguistics. Because of this, it is a course popular in either education department or language department in normal universities. Naturally, the education department emphasizes how to use a language, either through the students' mother tongue or a second/foreign language, in teaching different courses; whereas the language department explores the way to teach the students' mother tongue, a second language, a foreign language, or bilingual education.

## Part 2 Systemic Functional Linguistics and Language Education

**Lai: What role has functional linguistics, in particular systemic functional linguistics, played in language education?**

Hu: Functional linguistics has played a very important role in foreign language education in China. This can be illustrated by the joint opening of the 22<sup>nd</sup> International Systemic-Functional Congress and the 4<sup>th</sup> China Systemic-Functional Congress held in Peking University in July 1995. Apart from 110 foreign scholars, there were 116 Chinese participants representing 50 universities in China. Thus, this is regarded as a milestone of the development of systemic-functional linguistics in China.

After the conference, a collection of essays entitled *Advances in Functional Linguistics in China* was co-edited by Hu Zhuanglin and Fang Yan and published by Tsinghua University Press in 1997 (Hu & Fang, 1997). The proceeding consists of 4 parts:

1. general theory, including 6 papers, such as "A functional trend in the study of Chinese" (Fang & Shen, 1997), "Jespersen's Approach to Grammar" (Ren, 1997), "Functionality on Halliday's Functional Grammar" (Xiong, 1997).
2. functional grammar, including 17 papers, covering topics such as multilevel model of textual cohesion and coherence, Chinese word order, patterns of lexis and information distribution, the interaction between mode and the textual meta-function, conversational implicature, grammatical metaphor, quantifiers in Chinese, and thematic structures in Modern Chinese.
3. discourse analysis, including 18 papers, covering topics related to stylistics, literary narration, categorization of gender and characters, temporal interpretation, advertising language and analysis, discourse cohesion and rhetorical device, etc.
4. Foreign language teaching and translation, including 21 papers, covering topics such as context and the teaching of EFL, ESL students' compositions, TEFL strategies, generic structure, discourse features of the English writing in the Chinese students, bilingual text production, the use of mother tongue in L2 classrooms, register theory, cross-cultural communication, third-person reference forms, teaching English in a setting of Chinese culture, etc.

**Lai: Social semiotics has now become a heated field of academic studies in the world.**

**What can we learn from social semiotics for language education?**

Hu: Before going on to the topic of social semiotics, I have first to mention the name of Bakhtin, whose theory of dialogism appeared earlier than Halliday's systemic-functional linguistics. Bakhtin was also well known for his view of heterogeneity in dialogues (Martin, 1992). Bakhtin's dialogism has the same

function of “exchange” in Halliday’s system, that is, people involved in dialogue exchange their views as commodities (Hu, 1994).

Since you are more interested in the function of social semiotics in language education, I will center on this. From the more than 900 papers found in the Chinese National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI), one can find social semiotics does play a positive role in language teaching in primary, secondary and tertiary education, the improvement in literacy, the teaching of novel reading, the writing of legal English, the way of making public talk, the description of photos and pictures, etc.

However, as we are dealing with semiotics rather than linguistics, I will draw your attention to the development of multimodality from the perspective of social semiotics in China. Li Zhanzi was the first scholar writing about multimodal discourse with the help of social semiotics in 2003 (Li, 2003). This was written after she came back from her scholarly visit to Sydney University under the guidance of Professor James Martin. I myself wrote several papers concerning social semiotics since then (Hu, 2015). Here, I could only mention some titles of my papers listed in my proceedings, e.g. “Hypertext and its discourse features” (Hu, 2004a), “Hypertextual novels—a new literary genre based on electronic techniques” (Hu, 2004b), “Orality, literacy, supertext—on the change of the interrelationship between language and perception” (Hu, 2004c), “Blog—a new form of internet exchange” (Hu, 2006), “Powerpoint—tool, text, genre, style” (Hu, 2007d), “From multi-semiotics to multi-literacy” (Hu, 2007a), “Multimodality in social-semiotic research” (Hu, 2007c), “Image iconicity in the Chinese language” (Hu, 2010B), “The outcome and development of multimodal sketches” (Hu, 2010c), “On the chief mode of multimodal sketches” (Hu, 2011).

After these papers, I have the following papers published in the last decade:

——“Human being, language, existence—5 questions on Heidegger’s linguistic views” (Hu, 2012).

——“Let semiotics and linguistics get married. --Critical introduction to *Modern Linguistic Semiotics*” (Hu, 2014).

——“On the applicability of semiotic research” (Hu, 2016).

——“The fragmentation era of multimodality” (Hu, 2018b).

——“Fragmentation from the semiotic perspective” (Hu, 2018a).

Those papers about ecological semiotics and cognitive semiotics are not mentioned here.

### **Lai: What is applicable linguistics? In what sense can language education studies be regarded as a branch of applicable linguistics?**

Hu: In August 2005, Hongkong City University announced the founding of “The Halliday Centre for Intelligent Applications of Language Studies” (HCLS) with Jonathan Webster as Head of the Centre. A conference was held on March 26 the next year. Professor Halliday delivered the opening speech entitled “Working with meaning: towards an applicable linguistics.” In this talk, Halliday pointed out that the task for all linguists is to work jointly in pushing forward the study of semantics, which has lagged behind the study of phonetics, phonology, lexicology, syntax, and discourse analysis. This was the first time for Halliday to introduce the term of “Applicable Linguistics” to the public.

Personally, I hold the view that the reason for Halliday to use the term “applicable” instead of “applied”, is that there is some difference in meaning between the two words. Halliday wanted us to keep the following views in mind: we should not only learn to apply a theory in practice, but also to find out for what purpose, under what condition, and with what result, a particular linguistic theory is better than other theories. In this sense, applicable linguistics is not a substitute expression for systemic-functional linguistics. The principle of applicable linguistics applies to all linguistic theories, say, structural linguistics, generative linguistics, cognitive linguistics, etc. Of course, within systemic-functional

linguistics, this principle also applies to the co-existence of the Sydney School headed by Martin and the Cardiff School headed by Fawcett (Hu, 2007b). On the whole, there is no point arguing for what linguistic theory should be ranked as the best today. What should draw our attention is what linguistic theory can get better result in solving a particular problem under a particular context. To put it another way, one can never find a linguistic theory which can solve all the problems about language.

Now, let's come to the last part of your question "In what sense can language education studies be regarded as a branch of applicable linguistics?" I don't like the expression "a branch". I would rather say the principle of "applicable linguistics" can also apply to language education. As we know, there are various approaches to language teaching and learning, especially foreign language education, for instance, the structural approach, the functional approach, the communicative approach, the cognitive approach, to say nothing of China's learning by rote. There is no point arguing for which approach is the best. In language education, we should pay our attention to the objective, the time taken for a particular course, the teaching and learning equipment, and the intelligence of each student. Therefore, it is the task for an experienced teacher to choose a particular approach to cope with a particular problem. This is the reason why we expect the teacher to be a "resource" in language teaching.

### **Part 3 Foreign Language Education in China**

#### **Lai: What are the major stages of development of foreign language education in China since the founding of new China?**

Hu: In 1952, on the eve of the end of the Korean war and the preparation of the first 5-year plan, China's Ministry of Education learned from the former Soviet Union's experience in higher education and started a National Adjustment of Universities and Institutes. On the whole, emphases were laid on the teaching of science and engineering. As a result, foreign language education can be found only in 9 comprehensive universities according to the original plan. Instead of the traditional literature approach, the teaching of four skills, that is, "listening, speaking, reading and writing" was emphasized in foreign language education. This can be shown from the use of the term "foreign language and literature faculty" instead of the traditional "foreign literature faculty", the term "language" going before the term "literature". In addition, Russian became the major foreign language taught in China. What is more, the task of a university is "to teach", not "to do research".

Because of the "Cultural Revolution" beginning from the mid-1960s, universities and institutes stopped enrolling students for about 4-5 years. As a temporary solution, universities and institutes were allowed to start enrolling "worker-peasant-soldier students" since 1970. Most first-year students had to learn from "a, b, c" once enrolled into universities as English and Russian were no longer taught in their secondary education. Therefore, their command of foreign languages was much lower than those students in the 1960s. However, one has to admit that this policy was better than none because the government and enterprises were in need of new hands to replace those staff of old age and those who had to drop off because of political reasons. I have also been proud of the fact that one of my worker-peasant-soldier students, Liu Zhenming, is now under-secretary-general of the United Nations (Hu, 2019a; Hu, 2019b).

Thanks to "Reform and Opening up to the Outside World" policy, foreign language education has undergone an amazing development since 1977. This can be witnessed from the following aspects. (1) All the university applicants have to pass the national enrollment examination. (2) Some Chinese universities are allowed to enroll postgraduates and doctoral candidates. (3) Chinese professors and lecturers are allowed to receive advanced education abroad or pay scholarly visit to foreign universities. (4) Foreign professors and lecturers are allowed to teach in China. (5) Apart from Korean students and Vietnamese students, students from other countries are allowed to study in Chinese universities. (6) English regained its role as the first foreign language in China.

**Lai: What lessons can we learn from the past experience of language education in China?**

Hu: As you use the term “language education”, I would like to restrict myself first to the following points: (1) All children have the right to receive primary education in China freely. (2) Simplified Chinese Character is the official written language in China. (3) Putonghua (Standard Mandarin) is the official spoken language in China.

When we talk about foreign language education, I would first mention the shift of the objective in foreign language education, that is, from literature to language, as one can tell from the change of the name for relevant departments, for instance, “department of English Literature” is renamed as the “English department”, “department of Russian Literature” is renamed as the “Russian department”, etc.

Secondly, the traditional literature approach in foreign language education has shifted into the teaching of the 4 skills, namely, listening, speaking, reading and writing in 1950s and 1960s. Since the “Reform and Opening up to the Outside World”, some language-oriented majors have the chance to do courses such as lexicology, phonetics, phonology, syntax, semantics, history of the English language, stylistics, discourse analysis, language testing, pragmatics, textual linguistics, comparative linguistics, etc. At this point, I would admit that some literature-oriented professors in some universities do not like this change. They prefer to follow the western tradition of emphasizing the teaching of English and American literature. I don’t agree with their views, because English is a foreign language in China. Several years ago, I had a chance to talk to an American professor who taught in University of California at Santa Barbara. He said they do have a Department of English Language and Literature in their university, because English is their mother tongue, whereas Chinese is taught in the Centre of Chinese, because it is a foreign language. The reason for them to teach Chinese is to serve the need of politics, foreign trade, tourism, etc. Therefore, he agreed that the objectives of teaching Chinese and English should not be the same in China, because they serve different purposes.

Thirdly, in early 1990s, China’s Ministry of Education took actions to the teaching of foreign culture instead of the teaching of foreign literature. As a result, the English names of the former “Beijing Foreign Language Institute” and “Shanghai Foreign Language Institute” were changed into “Beijing Foreign Studies University” and “Shanghai International Studies University” respectively. In Peking University, the former “Department of Oriental Language and Literature” changed its name into “Department of Foreign Language and Culture”.

Fourthly, beginning from this century, translation has been approved as one of the majors in foreign language education by the Ministry of Education. In the past 50 years, quite a few leading foreign language professors refused to take translation highly as a must in foreign language education.

Fifthly, Chinese scholars have learned a lot about language teaching and learning theories from abroad, such as the structural approach, the functional approach, the cognitive approach, etc. This is the reason why the government invited many language-oriented scholars to be members of Foreign Language Teaching Steering Committee, Foreign Language Teaching Research Association, Foreign Language Testing Group, etc., to the disappointment of literature-oriented scholars.

**Lai: What challenges are foreign language education in China faced with? How can we meet these challenges?**

Hu: I think you might have noticed already that the latest strategic policy of “New liberal arts, big foreign language” in teaching foreign language in China. This is a reflection of the need of cross-discipline and cross-specialty qualified personnel. Foreign language scholars have been busy recently with holding various academic conferences discussing the ways to realize this objective.

In foreign language education we are also faced with the new development in technology, especially



the electronic equipment and technology. 30 years ago, a foreign language teacher used to stand before a blackboard, teaching the language with a notebook in one hand and a piece of chalk in another. Today, you could find the appearance of computers, projectors, amplifiers, and other equipment in the classroom. I could still remember that at that time, one of my colleagues argued with me that she learned her English without these tools but still learned quite well. Today, I still hold the view that she might have changed her view, at least she might have failed to get favourable response from her own grandchildren.

Foreign language teachers would like to think that their students are good at language intelligence, but today they start to notice the importance of multiple intelligence. Every university FL teacher must know quite well that their students are good at language intelligence, but they should also think about the fact that although their students were enrolled into the university with about the same marks, chose to do the same courses, and were taught by the same teacher, the course teacher would find quickly that some students are good at speaking, some at listening, some at reading, and some at writing. This shows that multiple intelligence, such as logic, mathematics, music, space, body, nature, and communication will all help with the learning of a foreign language (Hu, 2019c). An experienced teacher should learn to find out what a particular intelligence is needed by a learner.

Allow me to further talk about the importance and popularity of Internet education. This can be proved by the continuance of primary, secondary, and university education today even after the serious attack of Covid-19 this year. I myself learned from young lecturers to attend several network conferences through the help of Tencent App or Zoom lately.

### **Lai: Is there any mutual influence between foreign language education and the education of Chinese languages?**

Hu: So far as I know those teachers of teaching Chinese as a foreign language know little about the development of various teaching approaches outside China, because they tend to stick to rote learning, such as memorizing the Tang poems without comprehension at the very beginning. Since many universities in China today have set up the School of Teaching Chinese as foreign language to foreign students and some of Chinese young and middle-aged lecturers have the chance to study abroad in the faculty of education, they might have practiced some new approaches they have learned abroad.

When it comes to the education of Chinese languages, those who teach translation and interpretation of a foreign language will show interest in standard Chinese, I guess.

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