

Chinese as Second Language Learners' Beliefs about Vocabulary Acquisition

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Abstract: This study examined L2 Chinese learners' beliefs about vocabulary acquisition. 59 participants provided their views in a 5-point-scale *Beliefs about Chinese Vocabulary Acquisition Inventory*. Semi-structured interviews with 6 participants were also conducted. Results showed that most learners believed that it is essential to know the pronunciation of words and that repetitive practice would be helpful. They also agreed that word pronunciation fails to provide useful information to assist in retaining and retrieving meaning, implying the indirect phoneme-meaning relationship in Chinese words. In terms of the characters in words, learners attached importance to character learning and preferred writing drills to structure analysis. Regarding word meaning and vocabulary size, most participants tended to adopt learning strategies of communicative nature. Pedagogical recommendations were that instructors should be aware of learners' different beliefs, design various communicative activities, and introduce effective learning strategies.

Key words: learner beliefs about vocabulary acquisition, Chinese Character Zone and Non Chinese Character Zone, L2 proficiency

1. Introduction

All L2 learners hold certain views about how to learn a language. These views are referred to as *beliefs* of language learners. Issues of language learner beliefs have increasingly attracted attention from SLA scholars. However, studies of learner beliefs usually focus on general views about language learning. Research of learner beliefs about vocabulary acquisition still remains sparse. In this article, I will review the studies of learner belief, and report findings of a study that investigated Chinese L2 learners' beliefs about vocabulary acquisition.

2. Beliefs about Second Language Vocabulary Learning

2.1 Beliefs about Second Language Learning

Horwitz (1987) is the first scholar to explore learner belief. She created *Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory* which contains five categories: language aptitude, difficulty of language learning, nature of language learning, learning and communication strategy, and motivation. The inventory becomes the most commonly used scale for learner belief research.

Many researchers found that socio-cultural context plays an important role in the shape of learner belief. For example, Tumposky (1991) compared L2 learning beliefs of formal Soviet Union and US students and concluded

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that learners from multi-language contexts differed in some aspects of belief (e.g., motivation) from those from contexts where a single language dominated. Yang (1993) and Truitt (1995) examined English learning beliefs of Taiwanese and Korean students and found differences between these two groups of learners. Having compared Austrian and Japanese EFL learners, Mercer & Ryan (2010) reported that they held different beliefs specifically about the role of effort. Japanese EFL learners tended to more recognize the value of hard work in the success of L2 acquisition. Chang (2008) investigated beliefs of Chinese L2 learners from Chinese Character Zone (including countries which used or are still using Chinese characters in languages) and Non Chinese Character Zone. Results showed that learners from Non Chinese Character Zone were more optimistic and more likely to emphasize the role of L2 environment and communication strategies. Learners from Chinese Character Zone, meanwhile, were less likely to accept drill as an effective strategy and more likely to recognize the importance of culture in L2 learning.

2.2 Beliefs about Second Language Vocabulary Learning

Following Horwitz (1987), most studies provided general description of learner beliefs without exploring further into beliefs about subsystems of the language such as vocabulary, grammar, and pragmatics. There have been few studies of vocabulary learning belief so far.

Some scholars examined the relationship between vocabulary learning belief and strategies. Results of these studies were inconclusive. On the one hand, some findings suggested that learners would adopt certain strategies based on their beliefs (Wen & Wang, 1996; Mori, 2002; Jiang, 2005). On the other hand, however, other studies revealed that learners' beliefs and strategies were often inconsistent, that learners might actually use a strategy that they believed ineffective (Hang & Li, 2002).

Some researchers focused their attention on certain specific vocabulary learning beliefs. For example, Wang (1998) explored vocabulary memorization beliefs of Chinese-speaking learners of L2 English and found that learners held negative attitude towards natural acquisition and supported rote memorization. Li (2004) investigated L1 Chinese L2 English college students' beliefs about rote strategies of vocabulary learning. Results revealed that learners regarded rote strategies as effective rather than mechanic and passive in common sense. Reflecting on her study of vocabulary learning beliefs of Chinese L2 learners from Japan, South Korea and Europe and America, Yan (2004) demonstrated that L1 Japanese learners were most likely to accept strategies of relying on contexts to acquire word meaning; L1 Korean learners tended to apply new words to communication; L1 European and American learners were the most strongest against rote memorization.

As mentioned above, there still remains a lack of attention to learners' beliefs about vocabulary learning, especially for those who learn Chinese as L2. Previous literature has shown that L1 background has affected learner beliefs. Thus it is logical to speculate that learners of Chinese Character Zone could be different in some aspects of vocabulary learning beliefs from those of Non Chinese Character Zone given the unique Chinese orthography. Moreover, it is undeniable that L2 proficiency plays a role in learner belief. Learners of different L2 levels might hold different views regarding language learning, and more specifically, vocabulary learning. This study attempts to explore the following questions: (a) What are the beliefs about vocabulary learning among Chinese as second language learners? (b) What are the differences in beliefs between learners from Chinese Character Zone and those from Non Chinese Character Zone? (c) What are the differences in beliefs between low and high proficiency learners?

3. Method

3.1 Participants

59 Chinese as second language learners from Beijing Language and Culture University and Tsinghua University participated in this study. Among them there were 29 learners from Chinese Character Zone (13 males and 16 females, average age: 26) and 30 learners from Non Chinese Character Zone (15 males and 15 females, average age: 25). Chinese Character Zone in the present study covers the area where Chinese characters were once or are still used, including Japan, South Korea, and some Southeast Asian countries.

Learners' L2 proficiency was defined based on the learning time. Learners who had learned Chinese less than 960 lesson hours were identified as low level learners and those who have more than 960 lesson hours of Chinese learning were classified as high level learners (See Table 1).

Table 1 Participant Basic Information

L1 Background	L2 Proficiency	Gender	Age	Nationality
Chinese Character Zone	Low: 13	Male: 6 Female: 7	26	Japan, South Korea, Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand
	High: 16	Male: 7 Female: 9		
Non Chinese Character Zone	Low: 16	Male: 8 Female: 8	25	Britain, US, Australia, France, Italy, Russia, Spain, Brazil, Kenya, Mongolia, Serbia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan
	High: 14	Male: 7 Female: 7		

3.2 Instruments

A background questionnaire and a self-made *Belief about Vocabulary Learning Inventory* were adopted in this study. The background questionnaire contains participant information of nationality, L1 background, age, gender, Chinese learning time, and weekly Chinese lessons. There are four main sections in the *Belief about Vocabulary Learning Inventory* (See Appendix): pronunciation (6 items), character (5 items), meaning (12 items), and vocabulary size (5 items). Pronunciation section mainly discusses the phonetic elements of word learning. Character section covers statements regarding the recognition and production of Chinese characters that constitute the word (Jiang & Zhao, 2002). Meaning section focuses on the acquisition of the lexical meaning (Oxford, 1990). Vocabulary size section emphasizes the width of vocabulary knowledge (Wen & Wang, 1996). Each section is further divided into two categories: attitude and learning strategy. The attitude part aims to elicit participants' opinions about the status of each four section in vocabulary learning while the learning strategy part is designed to obtain participants' views about the effectiveness of different strategies. The examples were listed in Table 2.

Table 2 Examples of Items in Belief about Vocabulary Learning Inventory

	Attitude	Learning Strategy
Pronunciation	To learn vocabulary, it is important to know the pronunciation of the word	If you always listen to Chinese radio or watch Chinese movies, you will pronounce words correctly
Character	To learn vocabulary, you don't need to learn to write the characters	Repeatedly copying words is a good way to learn vocabulary
Meaning	The learning of meaning is a very important part in vocabulary learning	Guessing the meaning from the context is a good way to learn vocabulary
Vocabulary Size	It is important to enlarge vocabulary	Talking with Chinese friends is a good way to enlarge vocabulary

A five-point Likert scale was employed to gather participants' responses to each statement. 1 refers to strong

agreement and 5 refers to strong disagreement. Participants were asked to read each statement and choose a number that tells how true the statement is in terms of what they actually think about Chinese vocabulary learning.

Semi-structured interviews were also conducted for 6 participants (from 59 participants). The information of the participants for interviews could be seen in Table 3.

Table 3 Participants for Semi-Structured Interviews

	Low Proficiency	High Proficiency
Chinese Character Zone	1 (South Korea)	3 (Japan, South Korea)
Non Chinese Character Zone	1 (Kenya)	1 (Spain)

The protocol of the interviews follows two main lines: about the *Inventory* and about some critical incidents. Participants were first asked to explain their options of certain statements in the *Inventory* or give some more detailed information of certain beliefs. Then they were required to describe the greatest success and the biggest challenge in their Chinese vocabulary learning. The examples of interview questions were listed in Table 4.

Table 4 Examples of Items in Semi-Structured Interviews

About Inventory	Why	Why did you choose <i>strongly agree</i> for this item?
	How	Are there any other strategies that you used? How did you enlarge your vocabulary?
Critical Incidents	Success	What is your most successful experience in learning Chinese vocabulary?
	Challenge	What is the biggest challenge for your Chinese vocabulary learning?

4. Results

4.1 Overall Beliefs about Vocabulary Learning

The percentage of agreement (including 1 Strong Agreement and 2 Moderate Agreement) was calculated for each statement.

Table 5 Percentage of Agreement for Each Statement in Pronunciation Section

Attitude	Knowing the pronunciation is important	84.7%
	Accurate pronunciation is important	81.4%
	Pronunciation helps meaning and writing	40.7%
Learning Strategy	Listen to tape	57.6%
	Listen to radio and movies	54.2%
	Read aloud	78%

According to Table 5, a majority of participants recognized the importance of pronunciation in vocabulary learning. However, less than half of these learners realized that the acquisition of pronunciation was facilitative to the learning of lexical meaning as well as the memorization of the characters. The lack of the recognition of the direct script-phoneme and phoneme-meaning relationship in Chinese was further confirmed by the interviews. Several interviewees mentioned that there was no connection between pronunciation and semantic or morphological part of a word.

I saw a word and couldn't know the pronunciation. Knowing pronunciation not equal knowing the meaning. [Japan, high proficiency]

Pronunciation, meaning, and scripts are separate. [Kenya, low proficiency]

As for the strategies of learning pronunciation, most participants believed that reading aloud was very helpful.

More than half of the participants also agreed that listening to the tape, radio, and movies would have positive effect on their pronunciation learning. That learners attached importance to both speaking and listening in pronunciation practice was also displayed in the interviews.

It is important to listen to the pronunciation of Chinese people. [South Korea, low proficiency]

Talk with Chinese friends, and see some short videos because the videos are in Chinese and with subtitles. [Kenya, low proficiency]

It worth noticing that one high proficiency interviewee, surprisingly enough, claimed that he didn't practice pronunciation. For him, knowing the rules of how to pronounce a word was sufficient for accurate pronunciation. His pronunciation of Chinese was indeed very accurate, which worth further exploration on his beliefs and actual learning activities.

Actually I didn't practice pronunciation. I would learn the rule of pronunciation. [Spain, high proficiency]

Table 6 Percentage of Agreement for Each Statement in Character Section

Attitude	Knowing the character is important	55.5%
	Only knowing the pinyin is enough	35.6%
Learning Strategy	Repeatedly copy	67.8%
	Analyze structures of characters	47.5%

As seen from Table 6, a large number of learners admitted that knowing and learning the characters in Chinese words was very important. For example, a low proficiency L1 Korean learner mentioned the benefits of knowing how to read and write Chinese characters. However, there were also learners who believed that reading and writing a word was less important than speaking.

If I can read and write characters, I can read the notices and ads. I can do my homework. [South Korea, low proficiency]

The most important is the speaking, to know how to say a word. [Spain, high proficiency]

Table 6 also indicated that most participants preferred to repeatedly copying characters and only a few learners considered the structure analysis as an effective strategy. Such tendency was also detected in the interviews. Almost all interviewees were convinced that the writing drill enhanced memorization and acquisition. Only one high proficiency learner expressed her agreement to the effectiveness of structure analysis.

Just copy, then I know how to write it. [South Korea, low proficiency]

I can remember it only after I've copied it repeatedly. [Kenya, low proficiency]

I'll see the structure of the character, and practice it without looking at it. [South Korea, high proficiency]

Table 7 Percentage of Agreement for Each Statement in Meaning Section

Attitude	Learning vocabulary is learning the meaning	77.1%
	Knowing collocation is important	67.8%
	Learning L2 words is knowing L1 equivalents	40.7%
	Knowing culture is important	45.7%
Learning Strategy	Take notes	64.4%
	Read magazines and newspapers	72.9%
	Memorize	27.3%
	Guess from context	50.8%
	Look up dictionary	50.8%
	Make sentences	83.1%
	Write compositions	79.7%

As shown in Table 7, the vast majority of participants recognized the importance of semantic acquisition and a great many of them also believed that learning L2 vocabulary was much more than just memorizing their L1 equivalents. As one high proficiency learner claimed in the interview, there was no one-to-one mapping between L1 and L2 words. On the other hand, the function of L1 equivalents as the cognitive hook was still accepted by some learners.

There seldom are total equivalents between 2 languages. It is really wrong to find the L1 equivalents. [South Korea, high proficiency]

I'll try to find how to say it in Spanish. Sometimes the translations are not the same, but it still helps me to remember. [Spain, high proficiency]

In terms of the role of culture in vocabulary learning, only a few learners believed that cultural information should be paid attention to and those who valued the role of culture were mainly from Chinese Character Zone. The limited benefits of knowing the culture only emerged when learners acquired idioms or fixed expressions.

If I don't know Chinese culture, I cannot understand some words. [Japan, high proficiency]

It is only required to know the culture when learning some idioms. [Kenya, low proficiency]

It is notable that strategies concerning reading and writing were often considered as facilitative for semantic learning. Using newly learned words to create sentences and write compositions was the most widely accepted strategy among the participants. The productive activity was believed beneficial for both the consolidation of the new vocabulary and the discovery of possible errors according to the interview. While for some low proficiency learners, vocabulary production at sentence and paragraph level seemed beyond their current ability.

It helps me to find my mistakes. Makes me think more. [South Korea, high proficiency]

It is burdensome. [South Korea, low proficiency]

Taking notes in L2 is another type of productive vocabulary exercise. Although quite a few participants mentioned the advantages of taking notes in L2, interviewees held different opinions regarding the selection of language for note taking. Some learners supported using L2 to take notes, to avoid the translation process and to build a direct representation in L2. The unique nature of its orthography, however, presents a grave challenge for learners, especially those from Non Chinese Character Zone, to write down the notes in Chinese.

If I use L1 to take notes, there is a translation process. It takes long time and the habit is not good for L2 learning. [Japan, high proficiency]

Using Chinese to take notes is too hard. [Kenya, low proficiency]

Reading L2 magazines and newspapers was also believed to enhance the semantic acquisition. The benefits argued by the participants included the incidental acquisition of new words, deeper processing of word meaning in context, and learning of formal written words. It has been pointed out, however, that acquisition through extensive reading is often time-consuming and sometimes might cause inaccurate comprehension.

I can learn many new, commonly used words. [Japan, high proficiency]

I can remember the meaning better because there is a rich context. [Japan, low proficiency]

It helps a lot in written words. [South Korea, high proficiency]

It is slow, sometimes the understanding is not accurate. [Kenya, low proficiency]

There were about half of the participants agreed on the effectiveness of guessing meaning from the context and the other half preferred looking up dictionary for meaning. The former enjoyed the advantages such as fast reading speed and the latter was the guarantee for accurate understanding.

I've learned it (guessing from the context) from my teacher. It is good for fast reading. [Japan, high proficiency]

It (looking up dictionary) is good for accurate understanding of the meaning. [Spain, high proficiency]

Table 8 Percentage of Agreement for Each Statement in Vocabulary Size Section

Attitude	Expanding vocabulary size is important	88.1%
	Good memory is important to enlarge vocabulary size	55.9%
Learning Strategy	Read	74.6%
	Memorize dictionary	33.9%
	Talk with native speakers	86.4%
	Create word network	76.3%

It could be found in Table 8 that, most participants agreed on the value of expanding their vocabulary size. And good memory was only one of the factors that influence the rate and result of vocabulary expansion.

A majority of learners believed that communicating with L1 speakers, connecting words with each other, and reading would improve the width of vocabulary. Memorizing dictionary, considered as hard, boring, and motive-killing, was far less popular.

My Chinese friend will say the word for me if I cannot. I can learn new words that he always uses. [South Korea, high proficiency]

When I talk with my Chinese friends, I can remember what I've learned in class. [Kenya, low proficiency]

It helps me remember more words and also consolidated the learned words when I built a word system. [Spain, high proficiency]

I can learn a lot of new words. [Japan, high proficiency]

It is so boring to memorize a dictionary. It is hard to keep doing it. [Japan, low proficiency]

4.2 Differences in Beliefs between Learners from Chinese Character Zone and Non Chinese Character Zone

Table 9 Percentage of Agreement for the Four Statements of Significant Difference

	Chinese Character Zone	Non Chinese Character Zone
Listen to radio and movies	54.2%	24.8%
Read aloud	68%	20.2%
Only knowing the pinyin is enough	17%	64.4%
Only recognizing characters is enough	27.1%	59.3%

A two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted for each item, with L1 background (Chinese Character Zone vs. Non Chinese Character Zone) and L2 proficiency (low vs. high) as between-subject factors. Results showed that there was a significant main effect of L1 background in four items. Learners from Chinese Character Zone were more likely to recognize the effectiveness of listening to radio and movies in learning pronunciation than their Non Chinese Character Zone counterparts, $F(1,55) = 10.048$, $p = 0.006$. Chinese Character Zone learners more preferred reading aloud as a good way to practice pronunciation than those from Non Chinese Character Zone, $F(1,55) = 12.627$, $p = 0.003$. It is more likely for Non Chinese Character Zone learners to believe that only knowing pinyin is enough than Chinese Character Zone learners, $F(1,55) = 8.428$, $p = 0.022$. Finally, Non Chinese Character Zone participants more agreed that only recognizing characters is sufficient than Chinese Character Zone learners, $F(1,55) = 7.330$, $p = 0.041$.

The differences between Chinese Character Zone and Non Chinese Character Zone learners were further

analyzed in interviews through the investigation of learners' critical incidents. The most evident difference between learners from the two areas was concerning the character learning. Character learning was the most successful experience for Chinese Character Zone learners while the biggest challenge for Non Chinese Character Zone learners.

We are better in Chinese characters than European and American students. Sometimes there are similar characters in Korean. [South Korea, high proficiency]

For me, Chinese characters are easy. [Japan, high proficiency]

Writing is really difficult because of Chinese characters. [Kenya, low proficiency]

Other challenges faced by Chinese Character Zone learners included the learning and using of words with more than one meaning and collocations. And Non Chinese Character Zone learners often performed well in understanding and producing new words as well as making word lists.

Sometimes it is difficult to learn the collocations. [Japan, high proficiency]

This word has a meaning here and another meaning there. It is the most difficult. [South Korea, high proficiency]

I have a good ability to generalize things. I can make various word lists, which helps me remember more. [Spain, high proficiency]

I can listen and speak new words. [Kenya, low proficiency]

4.3 Differences in Beliefs between Low and High Proficiency Learners

Table 10 Percentage of Agreement for the Statement of Significant Difference

	Low Proficiency	High Proficiency
Repeated encounters in context	11.9%	62.8%

The two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) with L1 background (Chinese Character Zone vs. Non Chinese Character Zone) and L2 proficiency (low vs. high) as between-subject factors, yielded a significant main effect of L2 proficiency in one item. It is more likely for advanced learners to believe in the incidental acquisition of vocabulary through repeated encounters in context than low level learners, $F(1,55) = 4.066$, $p = 0.034$.

There was no significant interaction between L1 background and L2 proficiency in any item.

5. Discussion

5.1 Overall Beliefs about Vocabulary Learning

Results of this study showed that most learners believed that learning and practicing pronunciation is important for vocabulary acquisition and reading aloud is a good strategy. There is, however, a lack of awareness of the script-phoneme and phoneme-meaning relationship in Chinese words due to its unique orthography. There have been two main views about the role of phonology on the retrieval of meaning in Chinese word processing. One is that the activation of phoneme is the prerequisite for the access of grapheme with phoneme as the vehicle connecting the script and meaning (Zhang & Shu, 1989; Tan & Peng, 1991; Perfetti & Zhang, 1991, 1995). Another opinion is that there is a direct access from script to meaning without the activation of phoneme (Leck et al., 1995; Chen et al., 1995; Zhou, 1997). The findings of this study suggested that, at least in L2 learners' opinion, phonology doesn't play a role in accessing the meaning although they might actually use the phonetic information during the word processing.

In terms of character learning, a large number of learners recognized the importance of Chinese characters. Repeatedly copying characters is considered as assistant in learning and memorizing. Although research has demonstrated that the writing drill was less efficient (Liu & Jiang, 2003), participants in this study still held that it was a preferable method to practice Chinese characters, which could be explained by its disproportionately frequent use in the classroom.

As for the semantic aspect, many participants emphasized its essential status in vocabulary learning. Many participants also mentioned the limited role of L1 equivalents. It has been widely accepted that L1 word knowledge plays a significant part in L2 vocabulary acquisition. L2 learners, especially those at early stage of learning, tend to attach new L2 words to already existing L1 conceptual representation (Jiang, 2004). According to the three-stage model of L2 vocabulary acquisition proposed by Jiang (2000), learners at the first lexical association stage and the second L1 lemma mediation stage internalize L2 words through L1 equivalents. Learners at the third full development stage can extract information of L2 words from exposure without the medium of L1 translation. Participants in this study have realized that the representation of L2 words should be ultimately established through L2, although L1 facilitated the integration at the early stage.

Regarding the expansion of vocabulary size, the majority of learners preferred focus-on-meaning communicativeness-oriented activities such as reading magazines and newspaper, talking with L1 speakers, and watching videos and movies. Distinct from focus-on-form approach, focus-on-meaning activities allow learners to implicitly acquire L2 through meaningful exposure (Schwartz, 1993; Schwartz & Gubala-Ryzak, 1992). In addition, learners would experience deeper processing with the assistance of rich context and thus integrate the words better and faster into their interlanguage.

5.2 Differences in Beliefs between Learners from Chinese Character Zone and Non Chinese Character Zone

Results of this study revealed that learners from Chinese Character Zone were more likely to recognize the benefits of listening to radio and movie on the development of accurate pronunciation than their Non Chinese Character Zone counterparts. A possible reason is that learners from Chinese Character Zone can better use subtitles of radio and movies. With the prior character experience, Chinese Character Zone learners can make a fuller use of the subtitles to quickly understand the content and therefore have more cognitive resource distributed to the pronunciation. On the contrary, it is hard for Non Chinese Character Zone learners to experience the effect of listening to radio and movies since they spend most of their attention on the content understanding due to the challenge of recognizing subtitles.

It is also more possible for Chinese Character Zone learners to consider reading aloud as a good practice of pronunciation. The preference to this activity might be explained by the traditional emphasis on practice in Asian culture. In addition, reading aloud has been a traditional classroom activity in Asian countries. The higher familiarity might lead to higher degree of agreement on its effect.

On the other hand, participants from Non Chinese Character Zone more tended to agree that only knowing the pinyin is sufficient for vocabulary learning. The more emphasis on the role of pinyin might be explained by their less familiarity to Chinese characters and the similarity between pinyin and their own orthography. As a phonetic symbol, pinyin shares the alphabets and linear arrangement with alphabetic writing system adopted by the L1s of Non Chinese Character Zone learners. Therefore, it is much easier to accept pinyin for those learners. Furthermore, the fact that pinyin could be used, to some degree, for expression enables Non Chinese Character

Zone learners to believe that it is enough to just know the pinyin.

Furthermore, Non Chinese Character Zone participants were more likely to believe that only recognizing characters without producing them is acceptable. It might be explained by the different degrees of difficulty in recognition and production. Recognition requires learners to search the corresponding phoneme and semantic information based on the script. In many cases, a broad outline of characters could be sufficient for accurate recognition. Production, by contrast, involves a process of retrieving the detailed information of the script from the mental lexicon and turning the cognitive representation into a concrete one through some motor activities. Production is more difficult than recognition because of its higher demand on the reproducing of the detailed information (Jiang, 2003). Thus, for those without previous Chinese character experience, production seems beyond their ability and recognition is a more realizable task.

5.3 Differences in Beliefs between Low and High Proficiency Learners

As indicated in this study, it is more possible for high proficiency learners to realize the benefits of repeated encounters of words in context. Reflecting on his research on the incidental vocabulary acquisition of Japanese-speaking learners of Chinese, Qian (2004) reported a positive correlation between incidental vocabulary acquisition and L2 proficiency. The higher L2 proficiency has a learner, the more likely he or she is to know the meaning of a novel word after repeatedly encountering it in different contexts. The higher efficiency in incidental acquisition among advanced learners could explain their much stronger belief in the effect of this activity.

6. Conclusion

Findings of this study suggested that most Chinese as L2 learners believed that it is essential to know the pronunciation of words and that repetitive practice would be useful. They also agreed that the phonetic elements fail to provide useful information to assist in retaining and retrieving meaning, implying the indirect phoneme-meaning relationship in Chinese words. In terms of the characters in words, learners recognized the value of character learning and preferred writing drills to structure analysis. Regarding word meaning and vocabulary size, most participants tended to adopt communicative and meaningful learning strategies.

Some pedagogical implications were made. In the learning of pronunciation, instructors should encourage activities such as listening to radios and movies and raise the awareness of the phoneme-meaning relationship in Chinese. For characters learning, instructors need to help learners from Non Chinese Character Zone to overcome the fear and promote the application of structure analysis. During the instruction of lexical meaning, L1 equivalents can be used with caution and the role of culture should be emphasized. Furthermore, instructors should provide students with more opportunity to use vocabulary in real world to expand their vocabulary size.

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Appendix

The Belief about Vocabulary Learning Inventory

This part is for understanding students' backgrounds, all the information you offer is only for our research studies.

Gender	Nationality
Age	Native Language
Years of learning Chinese	How many classes in a week

Directions

The Belief about Vocabulary Learning Inventory is designed to assess students' opinions on a variety of issue and controversies related to vocabulary learning. On the following pages you will find statements related to your opinions on vocabulary learning. Please read each statement and mark the response (1, 2, 3, 4 or 5) that tells how true the statement is in terms of what you actually think about vocabulary learning.

- 1-----strongly agree
 2-----agree
 3-----neither agree nor disagree
 4-----disagree
 5-----strongly disagree

	Strongly agree				strongly disagree
1. To learn vocabulary, it is important to know the pronunciation of word.	1	2	3	4	5
2. To learn vocabulary, it is important to pronounce word correctly.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Frequently listening to the Chinese tape doesn't help you to know the pronunciation of word and pronounce word correctly.	1	2	3	4	5
4. If you always listen to the Chinese radio or watch the Chinese movies, you will pronounce word correctly.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Repeatedly reading words aloud is a good way to learn vocabulary.	1	2	3	4	5
6. The pronunciation can help you remember the meaning and way of writing.	1	2	3	4	5
7. To learn vocabulary, it is not important to know how to write the Chinese characters.	1	2	3	4	5
8. To learn vocabulary, you can only learn to write Chinese phonetic alphabet.	1	2	3	4	5
9. To learn vocabulary, you don't need to learn to write the characters. It is enough to just recognize the word.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Repeatedly copying words is a good way to learn vocabulary.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Analyzing the structure and elements of Chinese character and then writing from memory is a good way to learn vocabulary.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Making notes in Chinese in class is a good way to learn vocabulary.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Often reading Chinese magazines and newspaper is a good way to learn vocabulary.	1	2	3	4	5
14. To learn vocabulary is to learn the meaning of words.	1	2	3	4	5
15. The learning of meaning is a very important part in vocabulary learning.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Reciting lists of words or dictionary is not a good way to learn vocabulary.	1	2	3	4	5
17. Guessing the meaning from the context is a good way to learn vocabulary.	1	2	3	4	5
18. If you encounter the same word in different contexts, you will know the meaning of the word.	1	2	3	4	5
19. If you find a word that you don't know, you should immediately look up in a dictionary.	1	2	3	4	5
20. You should pay attention to the phrases and fixed structures when learning vocabulary.	1	2	3	4	5
21. You don't need to know Chinese culture when learning vocabulary.	1	2	3	4	5
22. Making sentences is a good way to learn vocabulary.	1	2	3	4	5
23. To learn the meaning of a word is to understand its equivalent in your native language.	1	2	3	4	5

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| 24. Using words that you have learned to write compositions is helpful for vocabulary learning. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 25. It is important to enlarge vocabulary. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 26. Reading is not a good way to enlarge vocabulary. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 27. Reciting a dictionary is a good way to enlarge vocabulary. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 28. If you have a good memory, you can enlarge vocabulary. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 29. Talking with Chinese friends is a good way to enlarge vocabulary. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 30. Summing up a group of synonyms is a good way to enlarge vocabulary. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |