European Symposium on Benchmarking Chinese Language

The European Benchmarking Chinese Language (EBCL) Project

This symposium is co-organised by

SOAS, University of London, UK
Université Rennes 2, France
Freie Universität Berlin, Germany
Sapienza, Università di Roma, Italy

Vrije Universiteit Brussel
Saturday, 20th October 2012
The EBCL Project

- Project Overview

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Paris, FRANCE
The Team

- Project Director
- Advisory Board
- Project partners
- Associated schools

- Freie University Berlin, GE
- University of Rennes II, FR
- “Sapienza” University of Rome, IT
- School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, UK
- Geschwister Scholl Gesamtschule, GE
- Collège-Lycée Emile Zola de Rennes, FR
- Convitto Nazionale "Vittorio Emanuele II“di Roma, IT
- Kingsford Community School, UK
Principles

1. Based on CEFR, user oriented (learners, teachers, assessors, institutions, etc.) and reference only

2. Rooted in the European context, but with due attention to the international society (esp. advanced levels)

3. Taken into consideration the linguistic features of the Chinese language as well as intercultural knowledge and skills

4. Taken into consideration the reality and development of Chinese language learning and teaching in Europe
Objectives – 1

1. Proposing a framework of competence descriptors for Chinese in European context

2. Raising awareness of social and linguistic differences between Chinese and European languages

3. Creating a network in Europe and beyond for universities, teachers, and other institutions concerned

4. Enhancing European Universities’ internationalization
Objectives – 2

5. Encouraging students’ mobility

6. Breaking away from the old tradition of a knowledge and structure based approach to teach Chinese in Europe and focus on a communicative approach.

7. Providing a tool for the production of a new generation of curricula/syllabi, textbooks etc. for the European context.
## Timelines

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<td><strong>Project launch</strong> (London)</td>
<td>Survey, case studies and project web construction</td>
<td>Rome Seminar: report on survey and next steps planning; open presentation</td>
<td>Proposed framework components at A1/A2 levels; language activities</td>
<td>Paris Seminar: open consultation and development</td>
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<td>Interim report transition</td>
<td>Berlin Seminar: consultation on key issues, open presentation</td>
<td>London seminar: closed seminar on last key issues</td>
<td>Last revisions and preparation for Brussels Symposium</td>
<td>Brussels symposium: promotion and further development</td>
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Challenge 1: Levels

EBCL has the following language proficiency levels/sublevels

EBCL Language Proficiency Levels with reference to CEFR Levels

- Level A
  - A1
    - A1.1 (for literal competences)
  - A2
  - A2+

- Level B
  - B1
  - B1+
  - B2
  - B2–

- Level C
  - C1
    - Professional User
  - C1+
  - C2
#### Challenge 2: Descriptors/Can-do statements

- CEFR has Action-oriented Can-do statements for the different abilities

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<th>Level</th>
<th>Listening</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Speaking</th>
<th>Writing</th>
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<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>Has no difficulty in understanding any kind of spoken language, delivered at fast native speed</td>
<td>Can understand a wide range of long and complex texts</td>
<td>Has a good command of idiomatic expressions</td>
<td>Can write clear, smoothly flowing, complex texts in a logical structure</td>
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<td>C1</td>
<td>Can understand enough to follow complex topics, though he/she may need to confirm details</td>
<td>Can understand in detail lengthy, complex texts, provided he/she can reread difficult sections</td>
<td>Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously</td>
<td>Can express him/herself with clarity and precision</td>
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<td>B2</td>
<td>Idiomatic usage influences the ability to understand</td>
<td>Has a broad active reading vocabulary, but may experience some difficulty with low-frequency idioms</td>
<td>Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction</td>
<td>Can express news and views effectively in writing</td>
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<td>B1</td>
<td>Can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure</td>
<td>Can read straightforward factual texts on subjects related to his/her field and interest</td>
<td>Can exploit a wide range of simple language to deal with most situations</td>
<td>Can write personal letters and notes asking for or conveying simple information of immediate relevance</td>
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<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>Can understand enough provided speech is clearly and slowly articulated</td>
<td>Can understand short, simple texts containing the highest frequency vocabulary</td>
<td>Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information</td>
<td>Can write short, simple formulaic notes relating to matters in areas of immediate need</td>
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<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>Can follow speech which is very slow and carefully articulated, with long pauses for him/her to assimilate meaning</td>
<td>Can understand very short, simple texts a single phrase at a time, picking up familiar names, words and basic phrases</td>
<td>Can interact in a simple way but communication is totally dependent on repetition at a slower rate of speech</td>
<td>Can ask for or pass on personal details in written form</td>
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Reception (Spoken/Written)

Production (Spoken/Written)

Interaction (Spoken/Written)
Achievement:

- A1.1/A1/A1+/A2/A2+ level descriptors
  - Reception
  - Production
  - Interaction
  - Graphemic control
  - Reception
  - Production
  - Interaction
  - Communication Strategies

Spoken:

Written:
Challenges – lexical/character items

- How to solve the conflict between the communicative activities in writing-reading and a two units language (Word and character), a high degree of opacity of the Chinese writing system?
- What about the current can-do statements in others languages ... and “cannot do” in similar communicative situations using Chinese (writing and reading) : in Chinese, “short” is not necessary “easy”...
- Steps of characters (high frequency and high combinatory) should be a prerequisite for performing writing and reading activities
Other challenges and issues

- What’s the role of Pinyin and where to include it?

- Does writing with electronic devices mean being able to write in Chinese?

- Are a list of lexical items and a list of characters needed? Are a list of words and threshold steps of characters on the same level?
Session 1

- **Methodology for descriptors, themes and functions**
  (Federica Casalin, IT / Liang Wang UK)
- **Reception and Production Spoken**
  (Federica Casalin, IT)
- **Reception Written**
  (Andreas Guder, GE)
- **Production and Interaction Written**
  (Changying Shu, FR)
- **Interaction Spoken and Communication Strategies**
  (Liang Wang, UK)
- **Discussion, Qs & As**
Session 2

- **Graphemic Control**
  Andreas Guder, GE

- **Lexical and character control**
  Bernard Allanic and Changying Shu, FR

- Discussion, Qs & As
Session 3

- Challenges
- Further actions
- Discussion, Qs & As
Session 3: Challenges and Further Actions, + Qs & As

- Is CEFR applicable to the Chinese language?
Session 3: Challenges and Further Actions, + Qs & As

- Teaching, Learning & Assessment
  - Pinyin vs. character, use of electronic devices
  - **Grammar**
    (Lik Suen, UK)
  - Lexical control
    Vocabulary, words, lexical items, characters, etc
  - Assessment
Session 3: Challenges and Further Actions, + Qs & As

- Teaching, Learning & Assessment
  - Intercultural dimension
    (Liang Wang, UK)
  - Young vs. adult learners
  - Impact of technology
Further Actions

- The current EBCL project is the end of **Phase 1**.
- Refine the current descriptors and examples (based on the feedback/suggestions from participants)
- A more refined version for schools?
- Grammatical accuracy / control
- Exploring the Intercultural dimension
Further Actions

- In Phase 2:
  - Full scale of framework (B1-C1)
  - B1-B2 lexical items (cf. English Profile)
  - Textbooks?
  - Developing Chinese language portfolio
    - Online resources, e.g. for self assessment
  - Implementation and empirical validation
  - Building corpora of Chinese language use for European learners
Further Actions

• To organise a series of seminars and/or conferences to further raise the awareness of the EBCL and help update the existing EBCL documents.

Suggested seminars:
• EBCL and teaching
  (e.g. new approaches in Chinese language teaching)
• EBCL and assessment
• EBCL and lexical selection
• Europe-wide CTL – be part of it!
Summary of the Symposium
Closing remarks and networking

The EBCL project is not an end
– it is only just a beginning …