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Author: Katarzyna Bańska

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Katarzyna Bańka

Challenges of the Chinese language teaching in the university context

Abstract: The following article derives from the author's doctoral dissertation concerning teaching Chinese as a foreign language (ChFL). It aims at investigating and assessing the challenges Chinese teachers encounter in the process of ChFL teaching to the beginner students. First, the theoretical background of ChFL teaching is provided, with emphasis on the specificity of Chinese. Then, the issues and challenges of ChFL teaching are examined, especially in terms of the syllabus and coursebook choice and teaching methods. In the final part of the article, the teaching and learning implications are presented.

Keywords: Chinese as a foreign language, specificity of Chinese, tones in Chinese, strokes

1. Introduction

Although Chinese has been taught to Western learners for a long time (Lu and Zhao 2011), research into the Chinese teaching process is relatively new, and this area has not been thoroughly examined yet (Lo Bianco 2007, 2011; Wang et al. 2013). Fortunately, scholars, researchers, and teachers inside and outside China have been sharing their research results and observations to create one field of research – ‘Chinese language research’ (ChFL research) – examining the Chinese language teaching and acquisition process. It can be hoped that their findings will be applied in today's teaching of the Chinese language (Everson and Shen 2010; Cao and Yu 2013).

The Chinese language started becoming popular in Poland around 2006, although, Chinese language learning had been first introduced

in the Sinology Department of Warsaw University as early as in 1933. After 2006, the English-Chinese translation programme at the Faculty of Philology of the University of Silesia became the most popular Chinese learning programme in Poland, with a very high enrollment rate (online references). Since then, numerous institutions all around Poland have created similar programmes or introduced Chinese language courses to their curriculum.

2. Theoretical background

2.1 Teaching Chinese – introduction

In a book entitled *Teaching and Learning Chinese as a Foreign Language: A Pedagogical Grammar*, Xing (2006) explains new ideas on various issues concerning teaching Chinese as a foreign language. She investigates the difference between Chinese pedagogical grammar and Chinese grammar and the methodology of both teaching and learning Chinese. What is more, she introduces the specificity of Chinese in terms of its pronunciation, words, characters, sentence structures, and pragmatics, and the need to teach Chinese culture within the class curriculum.

To Xing, pedagogical grammar refers to the ways in which the class should be organised, the choice of material that should be covered within the lesson, and the ways in which teachers should teach Chinese as a foreign language (FL) in order to succeed. Chinese grammar, by contrast, focuses on a set of strict rules on the use of particular structures, phrases, and words, and on definitions. Theoretical models developed for Chinese language pedagogy and acquisition are investigated, providing theoretical grounds for selecting teaching materials and methodology usable in teaching Chinese, because teaching Chinese as a foreign language differs from teaching, for instance, Indo-European languages. The classroom activities and the procedures for teaching Chinese differ due to the need to acquire the five content areas that make Chinese unique and characteristic, namely: pronunciation, characters and words, sentences, discourse, and culture (Xing 2006).

Although it is said that Chinese grammar is quite simple, there are certain rules and regulations that may cause learning problems, especially in the following domains:

- sentence structure,
- plural differentiation,
- gender differentiation,
- translation difficulties,
- pronouns and preposition usage,
- lack of prefixes and suffixes,
- lack of conjugation,
- lack of declination, and others.

The theory of Chinese grammar has been widely discussed by numerous linguists, mainly focusing on parts of speech: nouns, pronouns, measure words, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, and all types of sentence structures, for example elliptical sentences (Pulleyblank 1995; Yip Po-Chind and Rimmington 2006; Zemanek 2013).

According to Xing (2006), when it comes to pronunciation, it is not enough to teach the alphabet, it is also necessary to teach about the specificity of the sound construction and the pronunciation rules, namely, the tones, their visual and graphical representation, and their grammar, and how they change depending on the rule they are used with. In Chinese phonology, the main focus in its instruction is on the issues of pronunciation – tones, rules of tonal change, intonation, and sounds (initial and final) – and on the general idea of a syllable, including one syllable words, multi-syllable words, compound words, homonyms, homophonic and polyphonic sounds, and the like (Wang 1996; Burska 2008). Writing Chinese characters is the most important issue, with a vast area of research focusing on the single character writing system, stroke order, radicals, and characters' historical background, and on the means used in character learning (McNaughton and Ying 1999; Hoening 2009).

2.2 Approaches to teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language

Over recent decades, there have been numerous approaches to language teaching practice, among them grammar-translation, audio-lingual, communicative, and functional-notional (Bloomfield 1942; Leech and Svartvik 1975; Krashen 1982). There is no single linguistic source which is authoritative in providing a single definition of what the communicative approach model should look like. Littlewood (1981:1) states that “one of the most characteristic features of communicative language teaching (CLT) is that it pays systematic attention to functional as well as structural aspects of language”; others state that CLT means “using instructions where learners work in pairs or groups employing available

language resources in problem-solving tasks” or that it focuses mainly on combining grammatical and functional teaching (Richards, Rogers 2001:155).

Xing emphasises the importance of the above mentioned communicative approach due to the necessity to interact with one another in order to communicate (Xing 2014). However, recent studies show that there is no single approach or method that would suit best all the teaching contexts, so we ought to explore all language teaching approaches or methods in the teaching process; therefore, the eclectic approach was formed by Brown (1994: 70). This method has also been used by the Confucius Institute’s teachers, who have been responsible for developing Chinese teaching and learning programmes and syllabuses. They have also created the International Program for Chinese Language Learning, based on the eclectic approach, thanks to which teachers have more flexibility, none of the aspects of language skills are ignored, and there is a dynamic atmosphere in the classroom. The eclectic approach combines all kinds of approaches and language teaching methodologies, depending on the aim of the particular lesson and the learners’ skills and abilities (Xu 2010).

In Chinese language teaching, most of the available teaching methods are used, depending on the students’ level, age, and type of class they are participating in. With young beginner students, the teachers usually focus on the direct method. They use their body language to communicate with the students in case they have problems with understanding the new words and phrases during the lessons, or they use all kinds of audiovisual help, for instance, flashcards, computer programmes, videos, or music. This is sometimes combined with the bilingual method, especially when the gestures, body language, and other teaching methods fail. Then, the teacher provides the students with the equivalents of the words or sentences which are being taught in class. For young adults, teaching methods change. In this kind of Chinese Language Teaching (ChLT), the eclectic method focuses on the development of students’ linguistic competence by having them practice speaking, reading, writing, and listening, work in pairs or in groups, create dialogues, have brainstorming sessions and discussions, actively participate in class, and compare Chinese (L3) to Polish (L1) or English (L2) in grammar, language structure, vocabulary differentiation, or cultural differences (see, e.g., University of Silesia syllabus for the English-Chinese translation programme).

2.3 International programme of Chinese Language Teaching

Due to the increasing volume of sinological educational centers across the world and the need for standardising the ChFL teaching system, in 2010, the HANBAN Institute and the Confucius Institute Headquarters, in collaboration with Beijing Language Teaching and Research Press, created the *International Program of Chinese Language Teaching* (Yu Chun Chi 2010). It provides the norms and regulations concerning Chinese learners' language competence assessment, which are necessary for the didactic institutions and teachers to create their own class curriculum. The international ChFL teaching programme authors claim that the communicative approach is also the most important for creating the right classroom environment and curriculum, using the rich experience of ChFL teaching from mainland China and abroad. The programme is a practical guide in terms of international ChFL teaching, suitable to various language levels, language competence, knowledge, aims, and knowledge about culture.

The programme also provides additional information concerning recommended topics for language learning and teaching: there is a table listing possible culture information taught during class, examples of exercises and sentence structures for each language level, grammar tasks, pronunciation development strategies and regulations, a list of the eight hundred most common Chinese characters, and a list of one thousand and five hundred most common Chinese words (Yu Chun Chi 2010:1). It was created so that it would fit the individual standards of each student and teacher. It may also serve as a source of ideas during lesson planning. It was created because of the change of ChL learning from a hermetic subject into one that is widespread, common, and practical. Its main aim is to allow students of various age groups to enlarge their knowledge of Chinese and to motivate them to attain better understanding of the language. It emphasises language competencies, such as knowledge (phonology, characters and words, grammar, functions, topics, and discourse), skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing), strategies (motivation, communicative approach, and interdisciplinary approach), and cultural awareness (culture knowledge, understanding, multicultural awareness, and global awareness) (Yu Chun Chi, 2010: 2–3). Each of the programmes has been divided into language competence levels. Each section provides goals for learnt characters count, grammar content, structure usage, and other elements. The following chapter is devoted to the assessment of the various methods of ChFL learning and teaching.

3. Issues and challenges

The main focus of the study fragment presented here is the investigation of the challenges the teacher undergoes during one academic year of ChFL instruction and of the extent to which the specificity of Chinese influenced her teaching system, although there are standardised Chinese language teaching programmes available devoted to teaching international students. Also, the students' ChFL acquisition and the challenges in terms of their learning strategies use are being investigated on the basis of the collected data and materials.

3.1 Methods and tools

The corpus data on Chinese language teaching (ChLT) was collected by means of numerous tools and instruments, namely, questionnaires on the perception of ChFL, class observations, open discussion in class (oral group interviews), and language tests to assess the participants' progress in various areas of Chinese competence. The research lasted for one academic year; thus, due to the significant length of the study, the issues were more thoroughly investigated on a substantially bigger corpus of data.

3.2 Chinese comprehension class assessment criteria

The Chinese class investigated for the purposes of this article was the first year Chinese comprehension class (of the English-Chinese translation major programme). It was one of five components constituting the practical Chinese language course at the University of Silesia. At the time of the research, there was one integrated assessment for all the Chinese subjects included in the programme. The grade for each of the five components (listening, speaking, reading, writing, and comprehension) was the weighted average of the grades for classroom attendance (20% of the final grade), short tests and dictations (30% of the final grade), and the final test (50% of the final grade). It is important to note that each of the five components is required in order to obtain a positive grade for class work completion. A student who had only medically justified absences, or none, received a very good grade for attendance. For each absence, half a grade was subtracted from the total grade for attendance. Attendance was checked during each class.

According to “Chinese Language Modules: Component parts, Regulations and Assessment” criteria, since 2012, certain rules and regulations have been implemented for Chinese language learning and teaching. They are as follows:

1. Each student is supposed to be active during the class.
2. Due to the nature of the subject, the practice of being “allowed 2 or 3 absences” does NOT apply.
3. Students’ knowledge will be systematically checked by the teacher.
4. The students will be given homework or other forms of school-work.
5. Homework should be handed in to the teacher before the class. Failure to do so will result in the student receiving grade 2 (fail).
6. If the student fails to show up in class when there is a test, including the final test, s/he will have to write it during the next class or during the teacher’s office hours.
7. Students who fail a test, including the final test, have the right to take (one) retake test during the next class or during the teacher’s office hours.
8. All students are expected to participate in the preparations for Chinese Day at the University of Silesia.
9. Any problems or doubts should be referred to the Coordinator of the Chinese Language-related activities. (see Appendix 1)

These criteria were created by University of Silesia Chinese lecturers, based on their years of experience in teaching Chinese. In my opinion, these rules and regulations make the assessment criteria and class arrangements for Chinese subjects equal and fair irrespective of the class type. There are no uncertainties and misunderstandings, even for newly arrived teachers. The guidelines are handed to each teacher at the beginning of the semester, and teachers are requested to notify their students about their content.

3.3 Chinese coursebooks

The coursebook *Hanyu Jiaocheng* (Yang 2006a, b) is the principal one used during the comprehension class. During all other Chinese classes, supplementary coursebooks were used which provided similar information and were subordinate to the main coursebook. The language used in comprehension class was Chinese and Polish. The reason why the

teacher used Polish instead of English was that she taught a lot of grammar. It was best to explain the grammar in the students' native language so that they could understand the difference between Polish and Chinese language systems, sentence structures, and vocabulary usage better. As could be seen above, grammar, sentence patterns, and other structures differ between Chinese and Indo-European languages. Thus, it was necessary to compare Chinese to the students' L1 (Polish) first, and then to their L2 (English). The teacher also used English in certain exercises and translation drills (Chinese-English, or English-Chinese), such as simultaneous translation of the written texts, consecutive translation/oral translation, written translation, and oral interpreting. Due to the specificity of Chinese words – one word usually has multiple meanings (often as many as five) – the teacher provided numerous descriptions of vocabulary and grammar examples in both Polish and English in order to show the contexts in which the words can be used. On various occasions, English translations seemed to be more accurate than Polish equivalents, and sometimes the other way around. Thus, the teacher often used all three languages.

Both the *Hanyu Jiaocheng* coursebooks, vol. 1 and vol. 2 (Table 1), consist of 15 lessons. Each unit structure is as follows: it starts with a text written in both *hanzi* and *pinyin*. It is important to emphasise that pinyin occurs below each line of characters in the dialogue. Having pinyin imbedded in the text, the students first focused on reading the dialogues from pinyin instead of characters, so the teacher always requested them to cover pinyin in order to practice reading texts from the Chinese characters. After the dialogue, the list of vocabulary is presented, followed by numerous notes, for example, about phonetics or formations of Chinese syllables (Yang 2006a: 3), or some fixed phrases or statements Chinese people use in everyday conversation, which were also used in the dialogues provided at the beginning of a particular lesson. For instance, *Excuse me* – 请问, the honorific form of the word *you* – 您 (Yang 2006a: 78–79). Then the phonetic and/or grammar points of a particular lesson are described and followed by a set of examples explaining their usage. The last part of each lesson is devoted to practicing the acquired knowledge. Depending on the lesson's theme and language level, the exercises concern either phonetics or grammar on various levels of difficulty.

During the open discussion in class, it turned out that the comprehension teacher's demands were higher than any other Chinese teachers' requirements; thus, the students felt obliged to study more for the comprehension course. What is more, such a fixed pattern of classes helps to organise the class in an orderly way and enables the teacher

to make use of all the class time she has. Though the class is called comprehension class, as stated above, the students not only develop their reading comprehension but also a significant amount of class time is devoted to grammar and various exercises. In this way, students may put to use the vocabulary and phrases they have acquired from the coursebook.

Table 1. Language material covered in one year of Chinese instruction. English-Chinese translation programme at the University of Silesia

Language material	Words	Distinct types of exercises	Distinct points
Hanyu Jiaocheng Vol. 1.	324	33	42 Phonetics: 24 Grammar: 18
Hanyu Jiaocheng vol 2.	461	15	33 Phonetics: 1 Grammar: 32
Handouts	400	–	–
TOTAL	1185	48	75

Table 1 shows that vocabulary acquired from both coursebooks amounts to **785 words**. As stated above, the teacher also provided students with extra material. The additional vocabulary included in the handouts amounted to approximately **400 additional words**, constituting almost **1200 characters** that the students were taught during the one-year comprehension class. It allows them to communicate on numerous topics, using different grammar structures provided by the coursebooks.

3.4 Teaching methods and feedback assessment

The teaching approach and method during classes was eclectic in form, in the following proportion:

- Student-oriented teaching (active learning, students solve problems, answer questions, formulate questions of their own, discuss, explain, brainstorm during class) 40%;
- Teacher-centered and content focused teaching 10%;
- Interactive/participative teaching and direct method (student-centered method) 20%; and
- Grammar-translation teaching (teacher-centered method) 30%.

The teacher spent most of the time encouraging the students to actively participate in class, for instance, by asking them questions, requesting them to read out loud certain exercises and drills, and ex-

pecting them to express their state of mind. Although the number of students in the group was large (in my opinion, too large for language groups), they were performing in class for most of the time instead of listening to the teacher talking about the concepts the lesson focused on. In this way, the teacher could check their understanding of each lesson's material and adjust the instruction to follow.

The teacher's strategy was to give her students positive feedback. Feedback helps both teachers and their students to meet their goals in both learning and teaching (Weiner 1990). Many researchers claim that feedback in teaching and learning is crucial and, as such, highly beneficial for the learners (Leki 1991; Bitchener 2008; Evan et al. 2011). Feedback provided by the teacher was direct and clear. The teacher encouraged the students to participate in Hanban/Confucius Institute exams and scholarship programmes. She also emphasised the students' positive results and encouraged them to set their own short-term goals in order to promote their inner sense of accomplishment. She provided the students with clear instructions, often in the form of handouts and various vocabulary, grammar, and syntax exercises. The students could rely on the teacher's help and constructive criticism. She often shared her personal experiences of learning Chinese as a Foreign Language, thus helping the students to find solutions to the problems they encountered. In addition, she gave them suggestions on how to improve their speaking and writing skills, by recommending books, dictionaries, and online resources.

Unfortunately, the teacher was the only facilitator of Chinese language and culture due to the lack of possibilities to expose the students to Chinese language outside the classroom. She tried to expand the learning process by encouraging students to participate in scholarship programmes and Confucius Institute summer courses. She also encouraged the students to watch Chinese TV series, listen to Chinese music, use Chinese online platforms such as: "qq" (an equivalent of the Polish Gadu-gadu messaging system) or "weixin" (an equivalent of the Western Facebook). Additionally, she encouraged the students to create flashcards of Chinese words describing their room and household equipment and place them by the things they represented. To raise the students' cultural awareness, she promoted an active participation in the University of Silesia Chinese Days and suggested reading Chinese news, for instance, <http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/>.

3.5 Research analysis

Teaching Chinese is highly deductive. Due to the complexity of the writing system, divided into two separate elements, *hanzi* and *pinyin*, both with different roots and historical backgrounds, the students (especially Juniors) cannot be independent in their learning. In the case of inductive teaching of, for example, English, students can get to know the language independently via popular culture. In Chinese, however, the teacher is always the main facilitator.

The collected data showed that the first and most commonly used deductive teaching method by the Chinese teacher was learner-oriented teaching. In this study, it was observed that it resulted in students' successful problem solving in *hanzi* writing, their correct usage of *hanzi* in a sentence (the difficulty being multiple meanings of different signs), the accuracy of pronunciation, as well as *pinyin* writing accuracy. The students proved able to answer questions and even discuss their difficulties during brainstorming sessions in Chinese.

The second most effective teaching method turned out to be grammar-translation teaching, contrary to modern interactional and communicative approaches. The teacher used various forms of translations and languages in exercises and drills, for instance, asking for a translation from Polish into Chinese, Chinese into English, English into Chinese and Chinese into Polish. Due to the multiple meanings of Chinese words, it was crucial to teach the students how to use online resources to choose appropriate translations of a particular word in order to find the correct meaning, sense, and emotional impact of the sentence or utterance. In Chinese, certain phrases were better understood by the students when explained in either English or Polish. Another issue regarding the grammar-translation method was the fact that the teacher often used students' L1 to teach them grammar, especially the fixed sentence pattern, modal verbs, classifiers, and other ambiguous aspects of Chinese, such as gender distinction. The latter turned out to be very confusing for the students, as there is a very limited and sometimes no gender distinction in Chinese.

The Chinese teacher, being the beacon and the only facilitator of the Chinese language, was constantly challenged in terms of ChFL teaching. Although there are certain international teaching instructions, they are not suitable for Polish students, thus the teacher had to assess her own teaching strategies, adjusting them to the students' needs. Upon collecting the above mentioned data, the author concluded that the teacher's eclectic approach was highly efficient. The allocation of most of the class time to learner-centered teaching and grammar-translation

strategies turned out to be most effective at facilitating the students' learning process. The students favored the mixed learning strategies. The teaching approach changed with the increasing level of difficulty of the material, and this suited the students well.

After collecting data from the final exam, it turned out that after one year of instruction the average student could use approximately 550 words both in their written and spoken form, perform basic conversational drills, and communicate with Chinese native speakers on basic topics. Out of 50 grammar points deriving from both textbooks, the grammar section of the exam showed that the students were familiar with the majority of the rules and grammar regulations. What is more, the collected material deriving from the classroom discussion and individual interviews showed that the specificity of Chinese grammar – its spoken and written systems – also posed numerous challenges to the students not only in terms of learning a new language, but also in terms of adjusting their learning strategies. The challenges the students encountered derived mostly from the specificity of Chinese language learning structure. As previously mentioned, the students had to learn not only the character itself, but also its stroke order, the *pinyin* representation, the tone, and the word's translation. And although Chinese pronunciation was fairly simple to Polish speakers, due to all the other elements the students had to acquire, they quite often felt overwhelmed with learning Chinese. Thus, the teacher adjusted her classroom methodology to the students' different personalities and learning approaches. She thus built up each student's awareness of his or her learning process, facilitating self-evaluation of the student's work. Due to an appropriate learning environment and positive feedback, the students were able to assess their learning strategies and verify their effectiveness in ChFL acquisition.

4. Conclusions

To sum up, the specificity of the Chinese language, not only in terms of multiple meanings of words, specific writing systems of hanzi and pinyin, strict pronunciation, and tonal value of pinyin, but also in terms of sentence patterns and grammar, influenced the teaching process both with regard to teaching adjustment and varied language of instruction (L1, L2, L3), and with regard to feedback, the individual approach, vocabulary and grammar teaching, and the choice of exercises and drills provided to encourage and motivate students. The teacher succeeded in

organising the physical environment, establishing rules and routines, developing caring relationships, implementing engaging instruction, and preventing and responding to student discipline issues. She encouraged discussion and responded to students' doubts, engaged in meaningful conversations, and constantly exposed students to a variety of language forms. She provided the students with numerous tools, which proved helpful in their learning process.

Except the Sinology Department at the University of Warsaw, teaching Chinese in Poland is a rather new concept. Until now, there is no standardised model of Chinese language teaching dedicated for Polish learners; thus, every institution providing Chinese language classes (Confucius Institutes, the University of Silesia, the University of Warsaw, and others) creates its own syllabuses and teaching models, usually derived from English teaching methods. As the author believes to have proven in this article, teaching Chinese differs significantly from teaching English or any other Indo-European language. In order to succeed in teaching ChFL, there should be one standardised Chinese teaching programme dedicated for all Polish learners on various levels.

Due to the complexity of the Chinese language learning process, classes should be diversified either by the division into five class units: speaking, listening, reading, writing, and comprehension class, or performed as an integrated class including each of these elements. Based on the author's experience as a teacher, she observed that there are numerous institutions teaching Chinese that exclude listening and comprehension classes from their curriculum. This is, in the author's opinion, unacceptable. Students need to practice all of their skills, thus each and every Chinese language class should include the five above-mentioned components.

As Chinese language teaching is a concept fairly new to Poland, another difficulty occurs in terms of finding qualified Chinese teachers. Hanban provides native speakers working at most of the Polish universities and Confucius Institutes. Unfortunately, they are often unqualified. What is more, there are not enough Chinese teachers of Polish origin to teach beginner students. As an example, the first Chinese teacher of Polish origin began working at the University of Silesia only in 2012. In order to improve the teacher's qualifications, there should be more exchange opportunities and methodological courses which will enable teachers to acquire a solid methodological background.

To my knowledge, there has been no similar research conducted on Chinese language acquisition where the main subjects were Polish student beginners. I believe that this research will open up a new chapter in the field of Chinese language learning and teaching (ChLL&T) in

Poland, focusing on the first year Polish student beginners, yielding a large area to be researched in future.

Reflective questions

- Q1: How to motivate students who attend a Chinese course to learn it systematically?
- Q2: How important is the previous language learning experience the students of Chinese might have had? How can transfer of learning be incorporated into successful learning of Chinese?
- Q3: What are the specific features of Chinese that require special attention from the ChFL teacher? Enumerate several and comment on their pedagogical implications.

Practical tasks

- T1: Plan the first lesson of Chinese for the absolute beginners. Think of its aims and objectives and ways of creating a positive attitude to learning this difficult language.
- T2: Design a lesson of Chinese focusing on practising tones and strokes in Chinese.

Appendix 1

CHINESE LANGUAGE MODULES:

1.	<i>Chinese language</i>	Years 1	5 component subjects (modules): 综合 Rozumienie tekstu (Comprehension) 听力 Słuchanie (Listening) 口语 Konwersacja (Conversation) 写作 Pisanie (Writing) 阅读 Czytanie (Reading)
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RULES and REGULATIONS:

1. Each student is supposed to be active during class.
2. Due to the nature of the subject, the practice of being “allowed 2 or 3 absences” does NOT apply.

3. Students' knowledge will be systematically checked by the teacher.
4. The students will be given homework or other forms of schoolwork.
5. Homework should be handed in to the teacher before the class. Failure to do so will result in the student obtaining grade 2 (fail).
6. If the student fails to show up in class when there is a test, including the final test, s/he will have to write it during the next class or during the teacher's office hours.
7. Students who fail a test, including the final test, have the right to take (one) retake test during the next class or during the teacher's office hours.
8. All students are expected to participate in the preparations for the Chinese Day at the University of Silesia
9. Any problems or doubts should be referred to the Coordinator of the Chinese Language-related activities.

Assessment criteria:

The final grade for each component subject of both **Lektorat języka chińskiego** (Chinese language) and **Praktyczna nauka języka chińskiego** (Practical Chinese) is based on the students' performance in the following three areas of assessment:

Assessment areas	Percentage of the total grade	Explanation
Attendance	20%	For each absence, half a grade is subtracted from the total grade (5 or bdb) for attendance. The student's score does not change if the student shows a sick leave form (医生请假) or any other form of doctor's leave (with a signature and a stamp) or has a very important justification for the absence (e.g., a funeral of a family member). (NB: The custom of being "allowed 2 or 3 absences" does not apply to Chinese language/Practical Chinese due to the nature of the subject.)
Short tests	30%	Short tests organised during the class, for example, 听写 (dictations)
Final test	50%	End of semester test on the whole material presented in class

Grading scale:

90 – 100%	bdb	(very good)	5
84 – 89%	db+	(plus good)	4,5
78 – 83%	db	(good)	4
72 – 77%	dost+	(pass plus)	3,5
65 – 71%	dost	(pass)	3
0 – 64%	ndst	(fail)	2

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