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附錄

此附錄為本論文之英文簡略版

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rationale

The Chinese language course at Chulalongkorn University in Thailand already has a 34-year long history. In 1973, the course was opened as a foreign language elective course. Eight years later, in 1981, the Chinese language course for foreign language elective course was offered as a Chinese Language Major. Since then, the Chinese language as a major in the Faculty of Arts at Chulalongkorn University has developed greatly, cultivating a lot of talented students with a proficient knowledge of Chinese linguistics and literature. As the Chinese Language Major has undergone great changes, we intend to synthesize its curriculum and issue guidelines to use as a standard.

The Chinese Language Major gives a lot of importance to linguistics. Most of the courses cover all aspects of the language. We often say that “language is flexible”, which is why people often create new uses of language, and sometimes one language is influenced by another. When the majority of the language users accept the mistakes and variations within the language, such uses gradually become the ‘correct forms’. Therefore, language is never stable; it changes all the time. That is why we have to keep revising our curriculum.

The Chinese Language Major is always developing the curriculum in order to keep it standard. Learning a language primarily focuses on the abilities in communication, which are listening, speaking, reading and writing. The Chinese Language Major has already been providing courses in these four abilities and the researchers intend to analyze all the abilities students have after finishing each course in the whole curriculum. Following the analysis, the researchers will design and compile “Chinese Proficiency Guidelines: A Case Study of Chulalongkorn University Students”. Our research team consists of Apisara Pornrattananukul, responsible for analyzing listening ability, Pattra Pichetsilpa, responsible for speaking ability, and Sansanee Ek-atchariya, responsible for reading ability. In this paper, we only focus on the reading ability, so this thesis is entitled “Chinese Reading Proficiency Guidelines: A Case Study of Chulalongkorn University Students”. The speaking and listening abilities can be found in separate theses, namely “Everyday Chinese Speaking Proficiency Guidelines: A Case Study of Chulalongkorn University Students” and “Everyday Chinese Listening Proficiency Guidelines: A Case Study of Chulalongkorn University Students”.

In this thesis, the curriculum of the Chinese Language Major for the year 2006 is analyzed. To do this, ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) Chinese Proficiency Guidelines is used as the reference. ACTFL Chinese Proficiency Guidelines depend upon the standards of the United States government, and it uses practical abilities, including listening, speaking, reading, writing, and cultural understanding, to divide proficiency into three levels: Novice, Intermediate, and Advanced.

The question may be asked, "We already have the ACTFL Chinese Proficiency Guidelines, which are the universal guidelines, so why do we have to design 'Chinese Reading Proficiency Guidelines: A Case Study of Chulalongkorn University Students'?" This is because the objective of ACTFL Chinese Proficiency Guidelines is for daily interpersonal communication skills, whereas the curriculum of Chulalongkorn University's Chinese Language Major is not so. The objective of this curriculum is to train graduates who (1) have a good knowledge in the Chinese language and Chinese literature, so that they can study further and become Chinese language experts, Chinese language researchers or Chinese language lecturers in the university; (2) are able to apply their Chinese language knowledge to their future jobs effectively, and do further research as well; (3) are creative, ethical together with vision. Consequently, there are some parts of the ACTFL Chinese Proficiency Guidelines that are not quite appropriate for Chulalongkorn University students. Thus, we believe that this is worthy of study.

1.2 Objectives of the Thesis

1) To design proficiency guidelines in Chinese reading for Chulalongkorn University students majoring in Chinese.

2) In order to design a proficiency test of Chinese reading for Chulalongkorn University students majoring in Chinese and select the proper materials.

1.3 Hypothesis of the Thesis

Chulalongkorn University students' reading ability is higher than ACTFL Chinese Reading Proficiency Guidelines.

1.4 Scope of Study

1) To focus on Chulalongkorn University students majoring in Chinese, and design the Chinese reading proficiency guidelines, which are divided into Novice, Intermediate, and Advanced levels, for use in teaching Chinese reading at Chulalongkorn University.

2) To focus only on the reading ability, to design "Chinese Reading Proficiency Guidelines: A Case Study of Chulalongkorn University Students".

1.5 Thesis Methodology

1) To study and analyze the ACTFL Chinese Reading Proficiency Guidelines with "language functional trisection" and find out the criteria used as the standard.

2) By observing the objectives of the Chulalongkorn University Chinese curriculum, teaching materials, teaching contents, teaching methods, and the extent of the ACTFL "language functional trisection", the level of students' reading ability in each course is summed up, then the principles used for dividing levels in Chulalongkorn University students' Chinese reading proficiency guidelines are concluded.

3) To vertically and horizontally compare ACTFL Chinese Proficiency Guidelines and Chulalongkorn University Chinese language proficiency guidelines, and also find out the differences. The horizontal plane will discuss differences in

content between both. The vertical plane will consider the progression of Chinese reading ability from novice to advanced level.

1.6 The Significance and Effect

1) To design a standardized “Chinese Reading Proficiency Guidelines: A Case Study of Chulalongkorn University Students”

2) To suggest the design of Thailand’s Chulalongkorn University Chinese students reading proficiency test and the selection of appropriate reading materials.

1.7 The Framework

According to the papers, this thesis structure is divided into three parts:

The first part (CHAPTER 2): This chapter introduces the content and analysis of the ACTFL Chinese Proficiency Guidelines. First, each level in every aspect of the “language functional trisection”, including language function, language context (content) and language accuracy is studied. Then the progression from novice to advanced is discussed, and the obtained results will be used for analysis in the third part.

The second part (CHAPTER 3): The main content is Chulalongkorn University Chinese Language curriculum and its analysis. First, Chulalongkorn University’s Chinese Language Curriculum is introduced, and also each course’s requirement discussed. Then, based on the curriculum objectives, the levels of Chinese reading of Chulalongkorn University students are decided, which also are divided into Novice, Intermediate and Advanced. In addition, the progression of reading learning of Chulalongkorn University students is discussed.

The third part (CHAPTER 4): The content of this part is the comparability of ACTFL CPG and the Chulalongkorn Curriculum. The results of CHAPTER 2 and CHAPTER 3 are used for the analysis.

1.8 The Limitations

This study is limited to analyzing the Chinese Curriculum of Chulalongkorn University and setting “Chinese Reading Proficiency Guidelines: A Case Study of Chulalongkorn University Students”; however, there is no practical test. The guidelines are issued in order to let interested persons use this study in designing the standard of Chinese Reading Proficiency Test, as well as selecting the appropriate materials for Chinese reading.

CHAPTER II

CHINESE PROFICIENCY GUIDELINES OF THE AMERICAN COUNCIL ON THE TEACHING OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES

This chapter mainly discusses the reading skill of the Chinese Proficiency Guidelines (CPG) of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL).

2.1 The Origin of ACTFL Chinese Proficiency Guidelines

In the last few decades, foreign language teaching in the USA has focused and frequently discussed the topic of objectives and methods used in foreign language teaching. In particular, ACTFL has played a leading role in tackling the problem of how to improve foreign language learners' ability in using the language. After some discussion, it was found foreign language teaching in the USA that only advocating the "communicative competence" on the paper was not enough. Addressing the problem of what should be real "communicative competence" as well as how to classify the language level of the learners, a more objective and exact criteria had to be created. Finally, a general language ability criterion was created, which was commonly used for every foreign language. It was called "Generic Proficiency Guidelines".

The standard of this criterion was directly influenced by the foreign language schools and other institutions of the US government. For several decades, these schools had trained diplomatic personnel and other staff in the US government in foreign languages, and also tested their language skills. Therefore, they could provide direct material of how to decide the language proficiency of the learners. According to the testing standard of the government's language schools, ACTFL divided language ability into listening, speaking, reading, writing and cultural understanding. Each skill was classified into 3 levels: Novice, Intermediate and Advanced.

After the Generic Proficiency Guidelines were issued, the committee continued to promote another 6 language-specific sets of proficiency statements for Spanish, French, German, Russian, Chinese and Japanese. In 1984, the committee for drawing Chinese Proficiency Guidelines began convening to write the guidelines. After the first draft was completed, the committee sent it to peer Chinese teachers in many universities to solicit their opinions. In order to determine the level of proficiency in Chinese, the CPG committee paid attention to the "Language Functional Trisection", containing function statements, context statements, and accuracy statements, coupled with the particular condition of the Chinese language before making the different levels of proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, writing and cultural understanding skills. In 1986, therefore, the ACTFL Chinese Proficiency Guidelines were issued under the title of "Chinese Proficiency Guidelines of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages" or "ACTFL CPG". In this thesis, it will be referred to as "CPG".

As this research only focuses on the ability of reading skill, the ACTFL CPG-Reading is looked at as follows:

2.2 The Content of ACTFL Chinese Proficiency Guidelines

The 1986 proficiency guidelines represent a hierarchy of global characterizations of integrated performance in speaking, listening, reading and writing. Each description is a representative, not an exhaustive, sample of a particular range of ability, and each level subsumes all previous levels, moving from simple to complex in an "all-before-and-more" fashion. The language-specific guidelines exemplify in Chinese the characteristics of each level of the generic guidelines. The examples do not constitute an exhaustive list or a discrete set required at a particular level, but rather the suggested functional samples of non-native ability in Chinese.

This research only focuses on reading ability, therefore, ACTFL CPG Reading is presented as follows:

Descriptions- Reading

These guidelines assume all reading texts to be authentic and legible.

Novice The Novice level is characterized by an ability to
 -identify isolated words and phrases when strongly supported by context
 -identify learned material.

Novice-Low

No functional ability in reading Chinese. Can recognize some romanization symbols and a few simple characters, such as the characters for “one”, “two”, “three” and “big”.

Novice-Mid

No functional ability to read but can identify/recognize a small set of graphic elements, such as the “wood” radical and the “mouth” radical, and a small set of characters, such as those for “month/moon,” and “horse,” which have been previously memorized. Such elements and characters are in either typeset or carefully hand-printed form and may be written in traditional full form in simplified form. Can recognize isolated characters and compounds frequently encountered in public writing in high-context situations, such as the characters for “male” and “female” on restroom doors, or the compound for “exit” in an airport or train station. Has full control over at least one Romanization system.

Novice-High

Can identify a limited number of character components and characters common to high-frequency sets of listable categories encountered in areas of immediate need. Has comprehension of written language to interpret set expressions using basic vocabulary. Where specific characters and combinations have been memorized, can identify basic food categories on a menu (such as words for “noodles” or “vegetables”) as well as numbers 1-1000 in prices, time in schedules, days of the week, months of the year, street sections, house numbers in addresses, and simple public instructions, such as “push” and “pull”. Such reading matter is approached for essential information. Detail is overlooked. Errors are frequent.

Intermediate The intermediate level is characterized by an ability to understand main ideas and some facts from simple connected texts.

Intermediate-Low

Can read, for basic survival and social needs, simple connected, specially prepared material and can puzzle out pieces of some authentic material with considerable difficulty, as it reflects similarity to specially prepared material and/or to high-frequency oral vocabulary and structure. Understands main ideas in specially prepared material where structure and syntax parallel the native language and where sentences are extremely simple. Can puzzle out, with difficulty and frequent error, very simple hand-printed message, personal notes and very short letters which may contain certain greetings, forms of address, and queries about well-being where such materials are written by a native speaker used to dealing with foreigners. Understands only the simplest language with high-frequency oral vocabulary and structure. Sentence structure is limited to Subject-Predicate constructions based on Subject + *shi*,

Subject + *yǒu*, Subject + Stative Verb and simple SVO constructions, all in affirmative, negative, and simple question form. Misunderstanding arises when syntax diverges from that of the native language or when grammatical cues are overlooked.

Intermediate-Mid

Sufficient comprehension to understand specially-prepared discourse for informative purposes and to understand with use of a dictionary main ideas and some facts in authentic material paralleling oral language. Can understand and follow events of simple narration in specially-prepared material when sentence structure is simple and generally parallel to native language syntax. Can control certain small closed structural sets such as interrogatives (*shì, shénme*), specifiers (*nèi, zhèi*) and very common noun measures (*kuài, běn*). Understands simple Noun + Noun and Stative Verb + Noun modification with *de*, but relies more on lexical identification than structural knowledge in deriving meanings of sentences with coverbial phrases, verb complements, etc. using a bilingual dictionary, can decode critical elements of public announcements to determine who, when, and where regarding such subjects as public events. Can identify products and prices in popular illustrated advertising such as food, clothing, work supplies, and travel with extensive reliance on a dictionary. Can decode with considerable effort and frequent error, hand-printed notes or short letters for main facts on topics such as ages, occupations, and residence. Such tasks will be characterized by frequent errors and moderate success depending on subject matter, amount of unfamiliar vocabulary, simplicity of style, similarity of structure to oral language, and skill with dictionary.

Intermediate-High

Able to comprehend simple discourse of paragraph length in specially-prepared materials relying on low-level, high-frequency sentence patterns which moderately reflect native language structure and to decode authentic materials for key points with use of a bilingual dictionary. Can follow the narrative thread in more extended, specially-prepared discourse. Begins to comprehend high-frequency connectors forming complex sentences (*...de shíhou, suīrán...kěshì*). Is aware of aspect markers (such as *le*). But may ignore them in deriving meaning. Some confusion in understanding precise relationship of multiple modifiers to element being modified. With more complex structure, continues to rely on lexical identification rather than on grammatical cues, though less dependent on using native language word-order strategies. Through decoding and heavy reliance on dictionary, can sporadically identify bits and pieces of factual information in simple, authentic articles written in straightforward expository style on topics dealing with current events and daily activities familiar to the reader. Errors are frequent but lexical guessing begins to emerge as a strategy in dealing with authentic materials. With reliance on decoding strategies and with use of a dictionary, can generally identify key facts in descriptive material on daily life and routine events and carefully written personal communication. Confusion among graphically-similar characters is common. Begins to connect the meaning of sentences in discourse but cannot sustain understanding of longer discourse, especially on unfamiliar topics.

Advanced The Advanced level is characterized by

-an ability to read, with consistent understanding, prose several paragraphs in length, dealing primarily with factual information and intended for the general reader

-in areas of special interest or knowledge, and increasing ability to understand parts of texts which are propositionally and linguistically complex.

Advanced

Sufficient comprehension to read edited materials within narrow topic range, particularly in areas of specialization or high interest, characterized by structure which increasingly mirrors that of authentic material. Can decode, but may not be able to read, a broader range or simple authentic prose characterized by repetition of a particular vocabulary pool and a widening pool of patterns. Is alert to a basic repertory of high-frequency patterns which often do not parallel native language constructions. Can comprehend relative clause modification with sporadic errors. Has better understanding of the aspect markers, though still makes errors. Can decode authentic prose (including newspapers and magazines) for general ideas; with more error, can glean a range of specific facts from short authentic pieces on sports, movies, and current events. Increasing control of structural features gives rise to periodic success at syntactically-based guessing strategy.

Advanced-Plus

Can comprehend edited material of a more general nature where structure, though simple and constrained, truly mirrors the essential features of authentic expository prose. Increasing skill at extracting concrete, minor details. Can read some types of authentic expository prose without reliance on a dictionary where such prose tends to reflect the spoken language. Reading will be supplemented by decoding, depending on familiarity with the topic. Controls the full range of basic patterns common to the spoken medium but also present in the more popular styles of writing, such as relative clause modification, *bã*-disposal, *bèi*-passive, indefinite and exclusive usages of question words, as well as various aspect markers and resultative/directional compounds. Is aware of commonly used cohesive devices within and across paragraphs. Has some appreciation of formulaic rhetorical devices common to more stylized writing. Errors and misunderstandings will frequently arise in structure rather than lexicon when patterns and usages are drawn from the more strictly literary/classical stratum. Still has difficulty in drawing all but simplest inferences and often fails to detect subjective attitudes, values and judgments in what is read.

Superior

The superior level is characterized by an ability to read, for information or for pleasure, with almost complete comprehension and at normal speed, a wide variety of texts on a wide variety of topics.

Able to read (not just decode) a narrow range of authentic, expository material, including areas of professional interest, without the use of a dictionary. Able to read, with some dictionary use, authentic material over a wide range of subject matter and topics. Successful understanding occurs when the number of features and structural devices from the literary/classical stratum is limited. Idiomatic expressions, such as proverbs not common to the spoken language, will inhibit understanding. Reading matter includes standard newspaper items addressed to the general public, printed or typed routine correspondence, and reports and technical material in fields of interest. Able to decode with a dictionary and with substantial effort and moderate error, popular novels, essays, and most literature for the general public. Appreciation of

nuances or stylistics is limited, and gaps in detail may be frequent. Generally has emerging control of high-frequency grammatical constructions common to expository prose but has deficiencies in handling vocabulary across a wide range of subject areas. Has significant problems with prose more characteristic of the literary/classical style.

2.3 The Content Structure of the ACTFL Chinese Proficiency Guidelines

According to a closer examination of ACTFL CPG, the CPG reading skill is mainly divided into 3 levels: Novice, Intermediate and Advanced with each level also being subdivided into 3 classes. Each level clearly indicates that learners in different levels possess different abilities in Chinese reading. Novice learners have a very limited reading ability. Generally, they can read only that within the scope of basic daily life. Their reading ability is limited to specific isolated characters and combinations that have been memorized. Intermediate learners can cope with the scope of basic survival and social needs, can also read simple connected prepared materials or short passages, but still encounter some misunderstandings. For advanced learners, whether the content is concrete or abstract, the structure is simple or complex, they can cope very well. The researchers think that discussion of the ACTFL CPG should explore 3 perspectives: (1) the content of each level, (2) the hierarchical improvement of the reading proficiency, and (3) the classification principles of the ACTFL CPG.

2.3.1 Language Functional Trisection

Levels of proficiency on the ACTFL CPG scale can be distinguished by considering the three interrelated criteria underlying the proficiency descriptions : *The Language Functional Trisection*.

2.3.1.1 Definition of Language Functional Trisection

According to the results of the closer examination on ACTFL CPG, it is found that each level description of the guidelines respects the functional trisection, containing function statements, context statements, and accuracy statements. In the following part, each element of language functional trisection is explained, then the content of each level analyzed. The language functional trisection includes:

- 1) Function: refers to what the user does with the language.
- 2) Context and content: The term context refers to the various situations in which an individual uses the language, content refers to the types and ranges of topics addressed through conversation.
- 3) Accuracy: refers to a host of factors that, with a given situation, topic, and task, respond to the questions "how" and "how well".

2.3.1.2 Language Functional Trisection in Relation to Reading Ability of ACTFL Chinese Proficiency Guidelines

In each level of reading ability of ACTFL CPG, language functional trisection is inconsistent with the characteristics. The cooperation between the content of each element in language function and the level of reading ability in ACTFL CPG is therefore summarized and analyzed.

A. Language Function

In the novice level, learners can recognize a limited number of isolated characters and compounds frequently encountered in public writing in high-context situations, such as basic food categories on a menu, prices, time, simple public instructions etc. Such reading matter is approached for essential information. Normally, they can identify only the characters which have been previously memorized.

In the intermediate level, the learners' ability progress to decode the simple connected and specially-prepared materials for key points, understand the main ideas and some critical elements such as person, time and place. They are limited to understanding and following events of simple narration in the material only when the sentence structure is simple and generally parallel to native language syntax. Generally, they can connect the meaning of sentences in discourse, and use lexical guessing as a strategy in dealing with the materials.

The advanced and the superior level is different from Novice and Intermediate in that whether the materials are about daily life, social needs, routine events, abstract expression or professional interests, the advanced learners can read with almost complete comprehension. Therefore, no matter what kind of authentic Chinese materials, the advanced learners can read, for example, standard newspaper items addressed to the general public, popular novels, essays, and most literature for the general public.

Language Function		
Novice	Low	-No functional ability in reading Chinese
	Mid	-Can identify/recognize a small set of graphic elements, and a small set of characters
	High	-Can identify a limited number of character components and characters common to high-frequency sets of listable categories
Intermediate	Low	-Can decode specially prepared material where structure and syntax parallel the native language and where sentences are extremely simple -Can understand main ideas
	Mid	-Can understand and follow events of simple narration in specially-prepared material when sentence structure is simple and generally parallel to native language syntax -Can decode main ideas and some facts
	High	-Can decode main ideas in specially-prepared materials -Can comprehend simple discourse in broader topics -Can connect the meaning of sentences in discourse
Advanced		-Can read edited materials within areas of specialization or high interest -Can decode authentic prose for general ideas
Advanced-plus		-Can comprehend edited material reflecting features of authentic expository prose -Can extract concrete, minor details
Superior		-Can read a narrow range of authentic, expository material, including areas of professional interest -Successful understanding -Can understand assumption, humor

Table 2-1: Language Function in Relation to ACTFL Chinese Proficiency Guidelines

B. Language Context and Content

Novice learners can handle only the topics in the daily routine which they are very familiar with, such as menus, prices, days of the week, months of the year etc.

For the intermediate learners, though the scope is still limited to daily life which the learners are very familiar with, the topics are widely expanded to social needs. For instance, greetings, asking for one's name, age, occupation, address, health and personal communication.

The advanced and the superior learners not only can deal with the scope of daily routine and social needs, but also areas of professional interest and other wider ranges of subject matter and topics. For example, popular novels, most literature, newspapers and magazines.

Level	Language Context and Content
Novice	-familiar topics -basic survival needs
Intermediate	-familiar topics -daily life and social needs, work demands
Advanced	-familiar and unfamiliar topics -daily life and social needs -areas of professional interests

Table 2-2: Language Context and Content in Relation to ACTFL Chinese Proficiency Guidelines

C. Language Accuracy

At the novice level, as the ability of the learners is limited to isolated or combined characters, it is quite difficult to talk about the accuracy. The only problem that the novice learners always face is whether they can recognize wrong characters or cannot recognize characters.

For the intermediate level, though the learners can comprehend some simple grammatical words, such as interrogative pronouns, specifiers, very common noun measures, high-frequency connectors forming complex sentences, aspect markers etc, they usually have some confusion in understanding the precise relationship of multiple modifiers to the element being modified, also for some graphically-similar characters.

At the advanced and the superior level, the learners can comprehend the full range of basic patterns common to the spoken medium and also those presented in the more popular styles of writing, such as relative clause modification, 'ba' - disposal, 'bei' - passive, aspect markers, cohesive words etc, but a few errors can take place. However, the learners have significant problems with prose more characteristic of the literary or classical style. Yet because the learners' reading comprehension ability is quite high, they can read with almost complete comprehension at normal speed, and also can correctly identify the location of language components.

Language Accuracy		
Novice	Low	-Can recognize a few characters
	Mid	-Can control over a Romanization system
	High	-Can identified a limited number of characters -Reading for essential information, details are overlooked and errors are frequent

Language Accuracy		
Intermediate	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Can puzzle out pieces of some authentic material with considerable difficulty -Misunderstandings arise when syntax diverges from that of the native language -Can understand Subject-Predicate constructions
	Mid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Rely more on lexical identification than structural knowledge in deriving meanings of sentences -Can control certain small closed structural, such as common noun phrases
	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Some confusion in understanding precise relationship of multiple modifiers to element being modified -With more complex structure, continues to rely on lexical identification rather than on grammatical cues -Begins to comprehend high-frequency connectors forming complex sentences and aspect markers
Advanced		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Alert to a basic repertory of high-frequency patterns which often do not parallel native language constructions -Can comprehend relative clause modification with sporadic errors -Has better understanding of the aspect markers, though still makes errors
Advanced-Plus		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Is aware of commonly used cohesive devices within and across paragraphs. -Fails to detect subjective attitudes, values and judgments in what is read
Superior		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Idiomatic expressions, such as proverbs not common to the spoken language, will inhibit understanding -Able to decode with a dictionary and with substantial effort and moderate error, popular novels, essays, and most literature for the general public -Has emerging control of high-frequency grammatical constructions common to expository prose but has deficiencies in handling vocabulary across a wide range of subject areas -Has significant problems with prose more characteristic of the literary/classical style

Table 2-3: Language Accuracy in Relation to ACTFL Chinese Proficiency Guidelines

2.3.2 The Hierarchical Progression of the Reading Proficiency

The concept of proficiency, as represented in the ACTFL CPG, is often referred to in terms of a progression or continuum. It is described this way in order to stress two fundamental characteristics. First, proficiency is not defined as a series of discrete-point equidistant steps or as a system with broad leaps and underlying gaps. Rather, as a representation of communicative growth, the levels describe a hierarchical sequence of performance ranges. Second, each level of proficiency subsumes all previous levels in a kind of “all before and more” system so that succeeding levels are characterized both by overlap and refinement.

2.3.2.1 Language Function

The term function refers to what the user does with the language. Since the written message is the vehicle through which both participants—originator and responder—are joined, proficiency assessment criteria, as represented in the ACTFL guidelines, reflect a text-driven system. The following continua of task ranges are roughly represented through the reading proficiency progression:

basic recognition of the surface meaning	-----	real comprehension of the whole content
concrete description	-----	abstract evaluation

Here, 'recognition' refers to knowing the literal meaning and main idea of the word or sentence, whereas 'comprehension' refers to carrying out tasks that lie within the realm of author-intended purpose. The so-called 'decode' refers to the ability to understand, with the use of dictionary or guessing, the meaning of a word or sentence mostly for literal meaning.

Then, the later continua, concrete description and abstract evaluation thus reflect the ranges of the communicative intent of participants originating and responding to texts. They refer to the way or manner in which texts can be judged according to their evident purposes. This text range proceeds from the lower levels which orient all concern regarding who or what is where and what is happening or supposed to happen and those which convey information about real-world occurrences or existing objects and events, here represented as 'concrete'. At the upper end of the continuum are those texts which range from analysis and evaluation of shared background events to the highly individualized, culture-bound texts in which shared information and assumptions are at a minimum and personal input is paramount, here represented as 'abstract'. According to the above discussion, we can roughly conclude the reading proficiency progression as follows:

Level \ Function	Novice	Intermediate	Advanced
reading ability	recognize	decode	comprehend
text range	concrete	concrete	abstract

Table 2-4: The Hierarchical Improvement of Language Function in Reading Proficiency

2.3.2.2 Language Context and Content

The term 'context' refers to the various situations in which an individual uses the language. The context in terms of reading proficiency highlights several key considerations, including predictable situation, familiarity, and degree of integration. In short, the guidelines reflect the assumptions that the reader brings to the text, what is stored in terms of nonlinguistic experiences, or knowledge, will influence the message the reader produces from the text.

The term 'content' refers to the types and ranges of topics addressed through conversation. In reading skill, content refers to topic selection of a text. The following continua might be constructed to reflect the situational expectations with which readers approach a given text:

ability to deal with the situation
 ability to understand different genre
 relationship between real experience, cultural background and language skills
 relationship between familiarity of the content and language skills

The guidelines do not enumerate specific situations for each level, but they do indicate a hierarchical arrangement based on the amount and type of interaction generally required by a given range of situation types.

As one component of reading proficiency, the first three continua constitute the environmental expansion factors. Readers at the lower levels of the proficiency scale will require texts which, either alone or supplemented by some extratextual apparatus, allow some check on the interpretive options available and fit within the readers' broad cultural, experiential, and knowledge frameworks. As represented by this group of continua, one aspect of a reader's proficiency would thus involve the amount and type of relevant information the reader is able to feed into the text in order to decrease his distance from the author's frame of reference. Such relevant information includes a reader's real experience in China or Taiwan, and his/her background knowledge about Chinese culture. The guidelines do not enumerate any genre or Chinese background knowledge for the novice learners, but they do draw a line at the intermediate level.

As illustrated above, the topic of a text relates highly to the degree of familiarity or extent to which the reader can directly relate to the topic or whether it lies within the realm of general public consumption or in more esoteric and specialized domains. The guidelines represent the appropriateness of topics at each level through four continua, which pass from familiarity to topics more unfamiliarity. This can be represented as follows:

Context \ Level	Novice	Intermediate	Advanced
situation	daily life	life, occupational needs	professional interest
genre	-	oral narrative	literary style
experience and cultural background	-	have a little	have
familiarity of content	familiar	familiar	unfamiliar

Table 2-5: The Hierarchical Improvement of Language Context and Content in Reading Proficiency

2.3.2.3 Language Accuracy

Accuracy refers to a host of factors that, with a given situation, topic, and task, respond to the questions "how" and "how well", which can be presented as the following continua:

frequent misunderstanding	-----	occasional misunderstanding
repetition	-----	fluency
linguistic simplicity	-----	linguistic intricacy

Applied to the domain of written message reception, the first of these translates into fidelity of comprehension in meeting reader purpose or author intent. It is very

common for lower learners that misunderstandings arise because their knowledge in the target language is very limited. The more competent the learners are, the less misunderstandings occur.

The second criterion concerns speed—the amount of text-involvement time required for the reader to fulfill the designated purpose. Normally, the reading speed of people at the lower level is very slow, and inevitably requires rereading, whereas those at the upper level will have the ability to read fluently.

The third criterion is textuality. This is contained in the language used continuum, and refers to factors involving the manner in which the author develops a message, identifies and approaches the readership. At the earliest levels, the written word is couched in some nonambiguous environment context which lies outside the language of the text and allows for reader dependence on situational referents or physical cues. Texts at the lower end of the range may also contain frequent exemplification, redundancy, repetition of thought through rephrasing and summation. Furthermore, while beginning readers may rely heavily on visual and direct text organizers such as bold print, subheadings, and the like, the more proficient reader will access and utilize implicit organizers which are more propositional in nature. The linguistic complexity range refers to such aspects as syntactic variety, use of idiomatic or highly colloquial language, as well as to length and punctuation patterns. The above discussion can be concluded as the following progression:

Level	Novice	Intermediate	Advanced
Accuracy			
misunderstanding	frequent	frequent	occasional
fluency	repeated	repeated	fluent
language complexity	simple	simple	complex

Table 2-6: The Hierarchical Improvement of Language Accuracy in Reading Proficiency

This section has examined the various interactive components of proficiency in terms of underlying progressions in order to capture a sense of the dynamic nature of the performance criteria implicit in the ACTFL CPG. The purpose has been to elucidate not the immediate level-to-level criteria as contained in the guidelines but rather to convey a more global picture of the destination ranges which can be derived from the discrete descriptors.

2.3.3 The Classification Principles of the ACTFL CPG

According to Prof. Li Ying Zhe, when we divide/distinguish the level of language proficiency, we have to respect the real ability of a person in communicative competence. To decide the language ability of an individual, we have to look at:

- a) when one says or writes, how creative or active a manner one has
- b) when one listens or reads, what passive comprehension one presents

However, whether it is active or passive ability, generally, it is shown in three aspects:

1. Language production or language comprehension always takes place in a certain situation, which is affected by the social and cultural background.

2. Language production or language comprehension has to be conformed to the specific qualification of the language. Generally, it is shown while one is expressing communicative skills or understanding the specific function of the language.

3. Language production or language comprehension is usually shown in the language used. To differentiate the language ability of a person, we have to see that in a particular situation or a specific language function whether one can use appropriate vocabulary, and correct grammar to understand or express one's purpose.

When language is used in the social environment, it is always used in four aspects: daily life needs, social demands, professional requirements, and abstract concepts. On the one hand, we can decide the language level from the range of scope that one can use the language. On the other hand, these four aspects are also vertically related to each other. That is the language ability of a person begins from being able to deal with daily life needs, then social and occupational demands, until being able to understand abstract concepts or make a certain theoretical discussion. When we distinguish the level of language ability, we do not count how much vocabulary and grammar one knows, but we look at whether one can really use appropriate vocabulary and grammar to achieve one's purpose.

According to the above three conditions on the performance of the language skills, the different levels of language ability - novice, intermediate, and advanced - are formed. We believe that the novice learners can produce very limited language skills only in a narrow scope of daily life and social needs. He/she can talk about some topics which are very easy and familiar, such as personal, family, weather, health etc. He/she also can use only the vocabularies and structures which have been memorized.

Intermediate learners can deal with a wide range of daily life and social needs. Although he/she is still limited to talk about the familiar topics, he/she can use longer sentences with his/her own words and not what he/she has memorized.

Advanced learners can handle every situation, whether it is daily life or professional needs; whether it is physical or spiritual topics, his/her language production and language comprehension is unlimited. He/she can discuss concrete topics, such as travel, entertainment etc, as well as abstract topics, such as religion, politics, expressing some opinions etc. We believe that when the language level of a person is high, it is assumed that he/she possesses ideal language ability in all four skills. He/she can use language as a tool for handling social and professional needs.

Novice	-able to express very limited language ability in the aspects of narrow life and social needs -able to handle elementary needs dealing with the very familiar areas, as food, clothing etc. -able to handle very limited social situations with politeness
Intermediate	-able to handle with much broader scope in day-to-day needs and social situations -able to handle successfully a variety of uncomplicated context, as basic and communicative tasks and social situations
Advanced	-sufficient comprehension in all situations they faced -full control over one's professional interests as well as general discussion

Table 2-7: Classification Principle of ACTFL Chinese Proficiency Guidelines

2.4 Conclusion

According to the results of this chapter, the following major conclusions can be made:

1) The level of the ACTFL CPG is universal. The level definitions do not specify any particular materials or teaching methods that need to be controlled but guidelines, instead, are more generalized performance criteria that must be met at each level of proficiency.

2) The components of language proficiency that underlie the ACTFL CPG descriptions entirely correspond with the communicative competence.

CHAPTER III

CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY CHINESE CURRICULUM

In the last chapter, the ACTFL Chinese Proficiency Guidelines were discussed. During the discussion, 3 perspectives were explored: (1) the content of each level, (2) the hierarchical improvement of the reading proficiency, and (3) the classification principles of the ACTFL CPG. In this chapter, the Chinese reading capability of Chulalongkorn University's students majoring in Chinese is discussed. The whole Chinese curriculum of Chulalongkorn University is considered, including the curriculum objectives, the material used in each subject, total hours, course description and teaching method. Language functional trisection (language function, language context (content) and language accuracy) is also used to analyze what reading capability each student will have when they finish each subject and decide which level of reading proficiency students should belong to, whether it is novice, intermediate or advanced. Finally, the results of the curriculum analysis is interpreted to sum up the principles used for classifying Chulalongkorn University Chinese Reading Proficiency.

3.1 Chulalongkorn University Chinese Curriculum

The Chinese language Major of Chulalongkorn University was established 26 years ago, in 1981. The Chinese curriculum construction is created by the objectives of the course, but language is flexible, it is never stable and changes all the time. Due to this, although our curriculum construction is stable, the course content and teaching method is flexible. That means it has to be changed according to the times. Therefore, each year of students have a different content, whereas the scope of each subject is still the same. This chapter will mainly analyze the whole curriculum in the latest academic year of Chulalongkorn University, which is the year 2006. Chulalongkorn University students majoring in Chinese have to study Chinese for 4 years. The curriculum contents are as follows:

3.1.1 Curriculum Objectives

Chulalongkorn University's students majoring in Chinese have to study Chinese for four years. The objectives of the curriculum are to produce graduates who:

(1) have a good knowledge in the Chinese language and Chinese literature, so that they can study further and become Chinese language experts, Chinese language researchers or Chinese language lecturers in the university.

(2) are able to apply their Chinese language knowledge to their future jobs effectively, and do further research as well.

(3) are creative, ethical together with vision.

3.1.2 Curriculum Construction

In order to achieve these objectives, our students have to study a 4-year Chinese course. There are more than 20 courses in the Chinese language major, which can be divided into 2 types: those of Chinese language and those of Chinese culture. The courses can be classified as follows:

Year	Course	hrs/week	hrs/term
1 st	Chinese 1	5	85
	Chinese 2	5	85
2 nd	Chinese 3	4	60
	Chinese 4	4	60
	Chinese Computer Program	3	45
	Chinese Conversation1	4	60
	Chinese Conversation2	4	60
3 rd	Chinese Public Speaking	4	60
	Chinese Reading1	4	60
	Chinese Reading2	4	60
	Classical Chinese1	4	60
	Classical Chinese 2	4	60
	Chinese Grammar	4	60
	Evolution of the Chinese Characters	3	45
	Chinese Phonetics	4	60
	Translation: Chinese-Thai	4	60
Chinese for Business	4	60	
4 th	Chinese from Audio-Visual Media	4	60
	Reading of Chinese Newspaper1	4	60
	Chinese Writing1	4	60
	Chinese Writing2	4	60
	History of Chinese Literature1	4	60
	History of Chinese Literature2	4	60
	Seminar in Modern Chinese Fiction	4	60
	Translation: Thai-Chinese	4	60
Total			1,515

Table 3-1: Chulalongkorn University Chinese Curriculum

3.1.3 Course Description and Teaching Methods

1st Year

Chinese 1: Sound system of Standard Chinese; basic vocabulary used in everyday life; kinship, clothing, body parts, food, utensils and numbers, with emphasis on correct pronunciation; knowledge of 500 Chinese characters.

Chinese 2: Vocabulary on directions, travels, communication; basic Chinese grammatical structures and sentence patterns with emphasis on conversation practice; knowledge of 1,000 Chinese characters.

2nd Year

Chinese 3: Vocabulary in the fields of art, culture, philosophy and religion, with emphasis on reading for main ideas; knowledge of 1,500 Chinese characters.

Chinese 4: Basic technical vocabulary in the fields of science, social sciences and business, with emphasis on reading for main ideas; knowledge of 2,000 Chinese characters.

Chinese Computer Program: Skills in using Chinese computer programs; data processing of Chinese in various systems: searching information from various websites.

Chinese Conversation 1: Listening and speaking skills in Chinese; conversation practice with emphasis on the right choice of words in various situations.

Chinese Conversation 2: Listening and speaking skills in Chinese; recounting events and stories from actual experience, films and videotapes; presentation of ideas.

3rd Year

Chinese Public Speaking: Skills in Chinese public speaking; expression of ideas, use of verbal and nonverbal languages for persuasive purpose.

Chinese Reading 1: Chinese vocabulary and expressions used in selected essays, short stories and articles on Chinese history; reading comprehension.

Chinese Reading 2: Reading of selected long essays in Chinese, complicated prose works, and critical writings on Chinese history for summary.

Classical Chinese 1: Vocabulary and sentence structures of classical Chinese in selected articles on Chinese philosophy and wisdom.

Classical Chinese 2: Vocabulary and grammar of classical Chinese in comparison with those of modern Chinese.

Chinese Grammar: Characteristics and structures of Chinese with emphasis on parts of speech, sentence patterns, meaning and final particles; writing complex Chinese sentences.

Evolution of the Chinese Characters: evolution of the Chinese characters from those used in ancient inscriptions up to the modern character system; Chinese character structure in different periods.

Chinese Phonetics: Standard Chinese sound system: consonants, vowels, tones liaison, accent and intonation; pronunciation practice in language laboratory with emphasis on correcting pronunciation.

Translation: Chinese-Thai: Translation of different types of prose from Chinese into Thai; problems in translating Chinese into Thai.

Chinese for Business: Chinese vocabulary and expressions used in domestic and international trade, business and banking; culture, traditions and psychology in doing business of the Chinese; speaking and writing skills in business.

4th Year

Chinese from Audio-Visual Media: Chinese language from media: film, radio and television, with emphasis on identifying main ideas and discussion.

Reading of Chinese Newspaper1: Reading of local and international news in Chinese newspapers; vocabulary, expressions and style of news writing.

Chinese Writing1: Writing of everyday Chinese: personal letters, diaries and reports.

Chinese Writing 2: Chinese writing on conventional matters: invitation cards, greeting cards; writing of business letters, application forms, other forms and short articles.

History of Chinese Literature 1: History of Chinese literature from the beginning to pre-Tang Dynasty; reading and analysis of excerpts from masterpieces of each period.

History of Chinese Literature 2: History of Chinese literature from the Tang Dynasty up to the present time; reading, analysis and evaluation of excerpts from masterpieces of each period.

Seminar in Modern Chinese Fiction: Characteristics, plots and styles of selected modern Chinese short stories and novels.

Translation: Thai-Chinese: Translation of different types of prose from Thai into Chinese; problems in translating Thai into Chinese.

3.2 The Language Functional Trisection in Relation to Chulalongkorn University Chinese Curriculum

Language Functional Trisection includes language function, language context (content), and language accuracy. In the reading skill, language function refers to what the user does with the language while he/she is reading; language context and content refers to the various situations and topics in which an individual uses the language to achieve his purpose; language accuracy refers to how accurate a user uses the language. In the following part, the reading ability of Chulalongkorn University students after finishing each course is discussed.

3.2.1 First Year

Most of Chulalongkorn University's first year students are zero beginners, so the scope of each course taught in the first year is limited to the needs of daily life. Therefore, the students are able to handle routine behavior using basic communication.

(1) Chinese 1

The material used in this course is aimed at developing the basic communication of beginner students, after finishing this course. Therefore, the students' reading ability is limited to the scope of daily life and routine. They not only have full control over the Hanyu Pinyin system, but also can identify vocabulary and set expressions which have been memorized, such as "*xièxie*" "*zàijiàn*" "*nín guì xìng*" etc. They also can understand basic structures that parallel Thai language structures, such as the structure of SVO in affirmatives, negative and interrogative forms, quantifiers, but errors are frequent in those different from Thai structures. Though misunderstandings frequently arise, they begin to connect the meanings of words in sentences. They are limited to understanding only the conversations that have been learned, and details are always overlooked. Generally, the students still cannot remember the Chinese traditional characters; they always rely on pinyin to read. Their reading ability is also very slow. Character-mistake always takes place.

We consider this course to be at the novice level because it involves the scope of basic daily life areas. Moreover, students' reading ability is very limited. What they can read mostly is isolated vocabulary and understand its literal meaning. They begin

to connect the meanings of words in sentences, but still cannot control any grammatical structure. Errors are frequent.

(2) Chinese 2

This course is the continuation of Chinese 1. Although the vocabulary is extended, the scope is still limited within basic daily life and routine. After finishing this course, students will have full control over high-frequency set expressions. They can understand more complicated structures, such as passive voice, sentence connectors forming complex sentences, aspect markers etc., for those different from Thai structures, such as comparison, and adverbial clause etc., errors still occur. Basically, students can understand the main idea of basic conversation within daily life and social needs, as well as decode key points such as who, where and when. They can connect the meanings of words in sentences. They also are able to remember high-frequency Chinese traditional characters which have been learned, whether printed or hand-printed. However, character-mistake still occurs.

We think that this course also belongs to the novice level since the scope is the same as Chinese 1. Students can control some high-frequency structures as well, though errors are frequent.

3.2.2 Second Year

The second year students have to study 5 courses: Chinese 3 and Chinese 4 mainly teach Chinese social and cultural knowledge, as well as training listening, speaking and reading skills. Chinese Conversation 1 and Chinese Conversation 2 mainly focus on improving the listening and speaking ability of the students, so that they can communicate with Chinese people. The course Chinese Computer Program aims to make students able to practically use computer programs in Chinese.

(1) Chinese 3

This course focuses on Chinese culture, philosophical and religious concepts. Through the texts, students can understand Chinese ways of thinking and important aspects of Chinese culture. The students can decode, with use of a bilingual dictionary, authentic text within the scope of Chinese culture, as well as some authentic material with considerable difficulty, as it reflects similarity to the learned text. They can understand the main idea and key points, though it is quite difficult and frequent errors. At this stage, students not only can apply learned vocabulary and structures, but also obtain more vocabulary, especially about aspects of culture and art. They have more chances to practice and better understand the high-frequency structures. Regarding those different from Thai language structures, fewer mistakes occur, but misunderstanding arises when grammatical cues are overlooked. Students are limited to understanding only the literal meaning of the text. They can read hand-printed characters in both traditional and simplified form, but confusion usually arises.

This course, although consisting of various aspects of Chinese cultural knowledge, belongs to the novice level. We think that its content still comes within the scope of actual situations that students encounter in everyday life, such as Chinese food, Chinese houses, and tourism sites. Students can control more high-frequency structures. They also are able to decode, with the use of a dictionary, the main idea and some facts in authentic material. They can connect, with difficulty and some misunderstanding, sentence meanings in paragraphs.

(2) Chinese 4

This course's content is mainly to do with social communication, health, economics, internet, environment, and news. Its purpose is to give more strength in listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. In terms of reading, with the use of bilingual dictionaries, students can read and understand main ideas in much broader topics, and also the amount of vocabulary will be increased. As most of the texts are presented in a conversation style, therefore, students will learn about high-frequency oral language used, understand their meanings and usage as well. The students' basic grammatical structures are quite stable, and errors decrease. They are quite familiar with both traditional and simplified characters in typeset form, but still have problems with the teacher's hand-printed forms. Also confusion among graphically-similar characters is common.

We consider this course is also in the novice level because the scope covers a variety of basic and social needs areas. Students have sufficient control over high-frequency social communication vocabulary and structures. They also can decode authentic short passages in much broader topics, and understand the main point.

(3) Chinese Computer Program

This course focuses on the practical use of the Chinese computer, as well as broadening the knowledge about computers. In terms of reading ability, students are able to understand some computer instructions, such as file, edit, insert, format, tool, table, exit etc, but confusion usually arises.

Though this course is taught in the second year, we have decided not to consider the level of language proficiency by the length of study, but by its content. The content of this course is entering the professional aspect, all the teaching materials are in Chinese, and most of the vocabulary is about computer terms. Therefore, we think that this course should belong to the intermediate level.

(4) Chinese Conversation 1

This course mainly focuses on improving students' listening and speaking ability, as well as training their communicative ability in different situations and practicing common social phraseology. However, this course also assists in improving students' reading ability, because they have to prepare and practice the texts and understand the meaning of words, so that they can use these words properly. Students can control some oral language used in their day-to-day communication, such as buying goods, inviting etc. They also can understand simple sentences in familiar topics, such as self introduction, and personal interests. They also can understand some social communication courtesies, such as greeting, expressing appreciation, blessing etc., but some misunderstanding arises. The students can understand high-frequency use of oral vocabulary and simple structures. Misunderstanding arises when grammatical cues are overlooked.

We think that this course belongs to the novice level since the content is limited within the scope of life needs and social communication. The structures are also in simple spoken language form and are easy to understand.

(5) Chinese Conversation 2

This course continues Chinese Conversation 1 in both the content and teaching method, so the scope remains covering day-to-day communication. Students have

sufficient comprehension in vocabulary and structures parallel to oral language as well as understanding the main idea and some facts in the topics which are quite concrete and familiar, such as sports, clothing, and food etc. and some conversation, such as making an appointment, associating, negotiation etc. They begin to understand some topics dealing with abstract concepts, thoughts and feelings, such as love, work expectations etc, as well as some polite communication. They have better control over topics and vocabulary dealing with Chinese culture.

We decided to put this course in the novice level because the contents in the text are within the scope of daily life and social needs. Vocabulary and structures also reflect oral language, therefore, students can understand the main idea and some facts. Misunderstanding arises when grammatical cues are overlooked.

3.2.3 Third Year

The third year students learn 10 courses in total. Many courses deal with Chinese linguistics, such as Chinese Characters, Chinese Grammar, Classical Chinese etc. As for the matter of improving reading ability, this is the responsibility of Chinese Reading 1 and Chinese Reading 2 and is also included in each course activity.

(1) Chinese Public Speaking

Although this course is aimed at practicing students' speaking ability, it helps in improving students' reading ability as they can accumulate various patterns used in different situations such as politics, education, culture, society etc., and increase their vocabulary. At this stage, students' reading ability is developed together with listening and speaking ability. Their vocabulary and grammatical structures are stable. Students' understanding gradually goes beyond a sentences' literal meaning. They have sufficient comprehension to understand main ideas and some facts in authentic materials, and errors are fewer.

We think that this course belongs to the intermediate level because the students can read authentic materials from a broader range of topics, such as economics, politics etc. These topics usually present some concrete and abstract concepts, subjective opinion and value evaluation. The students are able to read much longer and more complex sentences, not only in conversation form, but also simple narration and description.

(2) Chinese Reading 1

This course is mainly aimed at practicing students' reading ability and reading techniques. Through reading various types of authentic materials such as historical stories, prose, novels, political articles etc., students are able to understand classical Chinese history. As their vocabulary is dramatically increased, the topics they can read are also much broader. The students can decode, with the use of a bilingual or monolingual dictionary, main ideas and some essential information, such as who, when and where, though it is quite difficult, and mistakes are frequent. The texts are selected from edited authentic materials, reflecting spoken and written languages. Lexical guessing usually emerges as a strategy to understand the content, but explanation from the teacher is also crucial to figuring out the connotations. Because of the continuous practice in reading, students have full control over high-frequency vocabulary and structures, but confusion still arises with some graphically-similar characters. At this stage, students rely on lexical identification to understand the literal

meaning of the sentences, so lexical misunderstanding is common. They can connect the meaning of sentences in a passage, and understand the whole meaning, but mistakes are common.

This course is considered to be in the intermediate level since the contents do not just concern basic life and social needs, but also cover Chinese history. Students begin to read authentic materials presented in both spoken and written languages, but errors are frequent. They are able to read concrete narrative texts which reflect more complex structures, but are still unable to read descriptive texts which are too abstract to understand.

(3) Chinese Reading 2

This course continues Chinese Reading 1 in both content and teaching method. The content mainly deals with modern Chinese history, and the teaching method is also quite similar to Chinese Reading 1. Students not only develop their reading ability, but also deepen their understanding of the periods of Chinese history. Through reading the authentic texts used, including novels, prose, political commentary etc, the students' vocabulary and background knowledge about Chinese history will be increased. At this stage, students are able to comprehend, without use of a dictionary, the main ideas and some facts in narrative materials written in the spoken language and a straightforward expository style. Errors occur in grammatical meaning and understanding the connotations of the content rather than literal meaning. Confusion among graphically-similar characters still arises. Basically, they can read the longer prose of several paragraphs in length, particularly on unfamiliar topics. Based on context, the students can guess the connotations of the sentences, but misunderstandings will occur.

We also consider this course to be in the intermediate level because the scope mainly deals with Chinese history. Though quite difficult and with frequent misunderstandings, students can guess, based on the context, the broader meaning of words and connotation of the materials.

(4) Classical Chinese 1

The main objective of this course is to train students to understand some vocabulary and structures used in classical Chinese, as well as give them some basic reading ability in classical passages and literary texts. Through the teacher's explanations of vocabulary and structures, students begin to understand the characteristics of classical Chinese and the meaning of selected short classical passages presented in the textbook. These passages mostly reflect philosophical concepts of that particular time, or famous proverb stories. Therefore, the students can get some exposure to Chinese culture and the origin of basic concepts and way of thinking, which they can apply while they are reading typical Chinese materials. This is because these typical Chinese materials usually portray classical tradition, like classical words and proverbs. If the students have some basis in classical Chinese, they will be able to read with better understanding, the other authentic Chinese materials. The students are also able to interpret, with use of a dictionary, from classical Chinese to modern Chinese, and get the gist, but mistakes are frequent.

We think that this course belongs to the intermediate level since the scope of content is much higher than the range of routine and social needs. Although the scope is in part related to specialized areas, we think that it is just a basic part of a language

major. Students have only basic understanding, but they are unable to cope with this area of knowledge.

(5) Classical Chinese 2

This course continues Classical Chinese 1 in both teaching material and teaching method. Students get more practice in reading short passages written in the classical Chinese style, as well as gaining more knowledge about vocabulary and structures, so they can apply this knowledge when they read authentic Chinese materials. The aim of this course is not meant to be about using it practically, but to let the students know the origin of the modern Chinese vocabulary, as well as to broaden their vocabulary. Generally, students still need explanations from the teacher, though they can guess the main idea of the passage, with use of a dictionary by themselves though they still make frequent errors. The activity of recounting proverb stories also increases the knowledge of Chinese culture, as well as practicing their reading ability.

We also consider this course to be in the intermediate level because the content mainly deals with professional aspects.

(6) Chinese Grammar

The major content of this course deals with Chinese grammatical knowledge, such as parts of speech, sentence structure analysis, so that the students will have a better understanding of Chinese grammar and be able to use it correctly. If they have accurate understanding in each component and its function in a sentence, then they will have a correct comprehension of the content of the materials, both the literal meaning and connotation, and can figure out their ambiguities as well. In addition, while they are reading, they can easily locate key points and important information, as well as connect the meaning of the sentence, and understand the meaning of the whole content very quickly. Therefore, students not only can strengthen their grammatical structures, but also improve their reading ability. They also acquire some terminology dealing with Chinese syntax, such as subject, predicate, affix, morpheme etc., so the students will be able to read other authentic materials dealing with Chinese syntax.

This course is considered to be in the intermediate level because its content mainly deals with the professional aspect, not routine and social needs. Although Chinese grammar belongs to linguistic knowledge, its content mostly suggests basic concepts about Chinese grammar, also the comprehensive ability of the students is practiced and their Chinese language knowledge is increased.

(7) Evolution of the Chinese Characters

The major content of this course deals with the evolution of Chinese characters and the construction of Chinese characters. Since this course is conducted in a series of lectures, students have to prepare by reading the textbook before class, which means that they can practice their reading ability. The students have sufficient comprehension to understand the majority of the content, with use of a dictionary, supplemented with the teacher's explanations. This course not only gives the students greater chance to practice their reading ability, but also gives them some terminology dealing with Chinese characters and knowledge in Chinese linguistics. Furthermore, it also offers some techniques to guess word meaning, which help the students guess the meaning more accurately and decrease errors.

Since this course deals with the basic concepts of Chinese characters, and the students are able to understand only the basic knowledge and are still unable to further analyze or research in this aspect, we think that this course belongs to the intermediate level.

(8) Chinese Phonetics

This course mainly focuses on Chinese phonetics, to let students understand the Chinese phonetic system and produce accurate sound. So, the teaching method also pays attention to practicing pronunciation with the students. Thus, it does not involve any aspect of reading proficiency improvement. However, students can broaden their phonetic terminology, such as plosive, fricative, aspirated, bilabial, velar etc. so that they can understand these terms while they are reading authentic materials about Chinese phonetics.

We think that this course belongs to the intermediate level. Though the content mainly deals with the linguistic aspect, most of the content is just basic knowledge in Chinese phonetics. Therefore, the students are able to understand only some basic concepts to apply in real communication and study further.

(9) Translation: Chinese-Thai

This course mainly practices students' translation skill. The students have to translate Chinese sentences and passages into Thai, so it directly relates to students' reading ability. It means that the students have to understand the whole meaning of the Chinese sentences or passages first, and then they can translate them into Thai. In order to understand the sentences, students have to use the vocabulary and structures that have been learnt. The teacher also can examine which structures the students still have problems with, and whether they really understand the meaning of the sentences. At the first stage, students usually translate Chinese into Thai directly, but they are gradually able to translate much better according to the length of practice.

We think that this course is still located at the intermediate level since the materials used are authentic articles written for the general Chinese reader. If their Chinese language ability has not reached a certain level, it is quite difficult for them to carry out the translation.

(10) Chinese for Business

This course mainly focuses on listening, speaking and reading skills. In the case of the reading ability, the teacher asks the students to prepare by reading the text before class, and sometimes assigns some reading supplementary materials. Therefore the students will have more chance to read authentic materials, and broaden their vocabulary dealing with business aspects. The students are able to decode, with use of a dictionary, business conversation, formulaic business letters, short and long passages, get the gist and some facts, but mistakes still arise and details are overlooked. The students can understand, with difficulty and misunderstanding, vocabulary reflecting spoken language, as well as some documents using polite written language. But for passages which are too long or about unfamiliar topics, students still need some explanation.

Though the content deals with professional aspects, we think that it is knowledge for occupational needs. Moreover, the contents are mostly basic knowledge in Chinese business, so students will have some concepts for dealing with Chinese

business, such as China's economic and commercial conditions. Therefore, we think that this course belongs to the intermediate level.

3.2.4 Fourth Year

The courses taught in the fourth year mostly deal with Chinese language areas, including Chinese literature, Chinese writing and translation.

(1) Chinese from Audio-Visual Media

Since this course aims at improving students' listening ability, the teacher mainly focuses on practical and authentic Chinese listening materials, such as news, cartoons, interviews etc. It does not assist in improving the Chinese reading skill. Students can only increase their vocabulary.

Based on the scope of the content, the materials used in this course are authentic multimedia materials, such as television programs, broadcasts and films etc. The targets of these materials are also not foreign students, but general Chinese people. The contents are also not basic routine and social needs, but more professional for foreign students, such as news etc. Therefore, the students need to have certain Chinese language ability, so they can understand these materials. We think that this course has already entered the phase of the advanced level.

(2) Reading of Chinese Newspaper 1

This course mainly aims at improving students' reading ability in Chinese newspapers and being able to control some high-frequency sentence patterns used in the newspapers. Students can read various topics, written in different styles of writing, such as news, political commentaries, education, social discussion, economic analysis, sports etc. The students also can decode, with use of a monolingual or bilingual dictionary, the main ideas as well as follow essential points of written discussion, even in unfamiliar subjects. Generally, the students are able to understand news items, general reports written for the general reader and technical material in their professional interests, but occasional misunderstandings arise.

We think that the reading ability used in this course is at the advanced level because all the texts used are authentic and the scope is much broader. Since the language used in newspapers is significantly different from other writing, the students have to possess quite a high level of Chinese language both in vocabulary and sentence patterns, so that they can understand the content of the materials.

(3) Chinese Writing 1

As this course focuses on improving students' writing ability, their reading activity is limited to reading the textbook. Students can read various types of letters, narratives, and stories. They also are able to apply the learnt vocabulary and structures in their writing assignments, as well as read their own essays, make corrections and evaluate the content.

We think that this course belongs to the intermediate level because the scope is limited to daily life and a part of occupational situations.

(4) Chinese Writing 2

This course continues from Chinese Writing 1. It uses the same textbook, teaching method and objectives. Students are able to read various types of narration, exposition, and argument. They also are able to apply the learned vocabulary and structures in their writing assignments, as well as read their own essays, make corrections and evaluate the content.

The scope of this course is limited to the demands of life and work requirements, so we think that this course should be at the intermediate level.

(5) History of Chinese Literature 1

This course mainly introduces the history of classical Chinese literature from the origin of literature until the Six Dynasty period. The teaching method focuses on lectures with students' discussion as peripheral, so reading the textbook is also an important activity. Normally, students have sufficient comprehension, with some use of a dictionary, to understand the narrative content written in limited classical stratum, and can get most of the detail, but they still need explanations from the teacher in the poetry section. This is because all of the poems are classical. The words used and the meanings completely reflect the figurative sense of that particular time. Students have significant problems with prose more characteristic of the literary style, and often fail to detect the writer's subjective attitudes, values and judgments.

We think that this course belongs to the intermediate level because the content deals with a basic knowledge in Chinese literature to allow the students to have a good basis in Chinese literature for their future study and research.

(6) History of Chinese Literature 2

This course is the continuation of History of Chinese Literature 1, the content continues from Tang Dynasty literature to Qing Dynasty literature. As the students have accumulated some experience in reading classical Chinese literature, they gradually read, with use of a dictionary, the poetry section on their own, but it is quite difficult and frequent misunderstandings occur. Students can understand some well-known classic poems, and also increase their background knowledge about Chinese culture that will help them a lot when they read other authentic literary texts, such as novels, newspapers, comment essays etc. Normally, they are able to read with almost complete comprehension, both narrative and descriptive parts written in straightforward sentence patterns. They still have some problems with the more strict classical styles.

As the content of this course is similar to that of History of Chinese Literature 1, we think that it also belongs to the intermediate level.

(7) Seminar in Modern Chinese Fiction

This course mainly trains the students' reading and appreciation skills in modern Chinese fiction. The teacher not only introduces some well-known writers and their biographies, but also gives students practical reading and analysis of original texts. As the students have learnt and accumulated a large amount of vocabulary, grammatical structures, and Chinese cultural background knowledge in social and historical aspects, so they can apply this knowledge while reading authentic materials. Although, students are able to decode, with use of a dictionary, some main ideas and essential information, the teacher's explanation is still crucial. This is because this fiction

mostly carries a particular meaning in the words used, reflecting the characteristics of the language used and the social conditions at that particular moment. Students often overlook these details causing some misunderstanding. Students begin to understand the aesthetic significances and different genres of modern Chinese fiction. Moreover, they can gain a complete concept of Chinese literature from the classical time to the modern age. Therefore, they can apply this knowledge in analysis, conducting research and in criticizing the value of literature.

As the materials used in this course are authentic original texts of Chinese fiction written for the general Chinese reader, the language used is quite difficult for the students, the scope is unfamiliar and quite professional, so we decided to put this course in the advanced level.

(8) Translation: Thai-Chinese

Since this course focuses on Thai-Chinese translation, it offers no help in improving the Chinese reading skill. Students can only revise and increase their vocabulary knowledge.

This course is considered to be at the intermediate level because its content mainly deals with daily life needs, work requirements and professional fields.

In conclusion, the subjects of Chulalongkorn University Chinese curriculum can be classified into three different types : First, the Comprehensive Course, a course which practices four types of language skills namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing, such as Chinese 1 and Chinese 2. Second, the Particular Skill Course, a course which lets students practice each aspect of the ability to use language, including listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation, such as Chinese Conversation, Chinese Reading and Chinese from Audio-Visual Media. Third, the Lecture Courses which focus on training Chinese majors in professional knowledge, such as Chinese literature, Chinese grammar, and Chinese Characters. Such courses are mostly in the higher years of studying.

Although our curriculum is divided into three different courses, however, there is a mutual influence between all three in reading proficiency training. At the beginning, the students have to study the comprehensive course in order to gain a basic ability in using the language. When their language ability reaches a certain level, they move onto the knowledge areas of the linguistics and literature fields. However, although the content of such courses do not correspond with communicative competence, the teaching methods of each course are helpful. The teachers try to arrange various activities, such as prepare texts before class, supplementary reading in order to let the students have opportunities to practice their reading ability.

3.3 Classification Principles of the Chinese Reading Proficiency Guidelines of Chulalongkorn University Chinese Curriculum

3.3.1 The Novice Level

According to the courses they have learnt, it is considered that the Novice Level of Chulalongkorn University students are able to read, for basic survival and social needs, simple specially-prepared materials. They are also able to read some authentic materials of considerable difficulty, as they are similar to specially-prepared material and/or to high-frequency oral vocabulary and structural patterns, but errors are frequent. With the use of a dictionary, they also are able to understand main ideas and

decode some facts of simple narration in authentic materials paralleling oral language. Detail is overlooked and errors are frequent. The students have full control over syntax structures paralleling Thai structures, whereas, for those that do not parallel Thai constructions, they can understand them but still make some errors. At this stage, they still have to pause over or read materials several times for understanding, though the topics are highly familiar. Confusion among graphically-similar characters is common. Students are able to connect, with some difficulty and frequent errors, the meaning of sentences in discourse and understand their literal meanings. However, they are still unable to understand the connotations and subjective concepts in the materials.

Function	Context and Content	Accuracy
-decode simple conversation and narrative materials -understand main ideas and some facts	Most of daily life and social needs	-frequent misunderstandings -reading speed is slow -frequent errors

Table 3-2 The Novice Level of Chulalongkorn University Chinese Guidelines

3.3.2 The Intermediate Level

According to the courses they have learnt, we think that the Intermediate level of Chulalongkorn University students have sufficient comprehension to read authentic materials not only within the scope of daily life and social needs, but also within the basic knowledge of the Chinese language, such as areas of Chinese characters, Chinese phonetics, Chinese grammar, Chinese literature etc. together with some work demands, such as in Chinese computers and business Chinese etc. They have full control over high-frequency sentence patterns as well as being able to connect the meanings of sentences in the materials. There is sufficient comprehension to understand, with some dictionary use, some descriptive long passages reflecting spoken and written languages and the literal meaning of the main idea and concrete details can be understood. They, moreover, can read, with use of dictionary and lecturer's explanation, some literature which reflects more the characteristics of the literary/classical style. Lexical guessing, if highly contextualized, has always emerged as a strategy to understand the surface meaning as well as the connotations of the materials, though errors are frequent. Generally, their vocabulary is dramatically increased and their grammatical structural knowledge is also in the high range. Their reading ability is faster when the topic contents are very familiar, but for those that are unfamiliar, they might need to reread. They have increasing skill at extracting main and subsidiary ideas in texts, but may be unable to detect or understand subtlety and nuance. Occasionally, they are able to figure out the author's subjective attitudes and value judgments. But they still are unable to comprehend the real meaning of the materials.

Function	Context and Content	Accuracy
-Can read long prose paralleling oral language -texts include narrations and descriptions -Understand main ideas and concrete key points	Most of daily life and social needs Basic knowledge of Chinese language A part of work demands	-understand literal meaning -unable to detect connotative meanings -reading speed is faster -errors are occasionally

Table 3-3 The Intermediate Level of Chulalongkorn University Chinese Guidelines

3.3.3 The Advanced Level

According to the courses they have learnt, we consider the Advanced level of Chulalongkorn University students as being able to comprehend authentic materials dealing with Chinese language areas. As the objective of Chulalongkorn University Chinese Language Major is to produce Chinese language lecturers or Chinese linguists, they are able to read within a normal range of speed and with almost complete comprehension a variety of the authentic materials within the scope of the Chinese language, such as Phonetics, Semantics, Pragmatics, Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language, as well as Chinese Literature and Art etc. They also are able to appreciate some literature written in a high literary style. The writers' implicit intention and author's judgments can be figured out and the values of the materials can be appraised as well. They can read, without the use of a dictionary, authentic materials written in a straightforward expository style on topics dealing with areas of professional interest. Students are able to use linguistic context and real-world knowledge to make sensible guesses about unfamiliar material, and are almost always able to interpret materials correctly, relate ideas and 'read between the lines' (that is, understand the writers' implicit intents in texts), though some errors take place. Lexical guessing is usually used as a strategy, with some errors, while reading idiomatic expressions, such as proverbs not common to the spoken language, and prose in the classical style. Reading matter includes descriptions and narrations in contexts such as standard newspaper items, popular novels, essays, and most literature addressed to the general public, printed or typed routine correspondence, reports and technical material in fields of interest. However, they may experience some difficulty with unusually complex structures and low frequency idioms, and some details are overlooked.

Function	Context and Content	Accuracy
-Can read authentic materials with almost comprehension	-daily life and social needs -Chinese linguistics area	-understand literal and connotative meanings -errors are rare -fluency

Table 3-4 The Advanced Level of Chulalongkorn University Chinese Guidelines

3.4 The Hierarchical Improvement of Chulalongkorn University Students Reading Proficiency

3.4.1 Language Function

According to the discussion in Chapter 2, the term function refers to what the user does with the language. The following continua of task ranges are roughly represented through the reading proficiency progression:

basic recognition of the surface meaning	-----	real comprehension of the whole content
concrete description	-----	abstract evaluation

(1) Reading ability

At the beginning, the limitation of vocabulary and grammar as well as students' reading ability is limited to recognizing the literal meaning of learned vocabulary. However, after a period of practicing, students, then, are able to decode, with use of dictionary, simple connected written materials. According to our classification, we believe that Chulalongkorn University novice students have possessed the ability of decoding. At the intermediate level, students have sufficient comprehension to obtain some main ideas and locate prominent information in authentic materials written in straightforward and high-frequency sentence patterns, and they will have almost complete comprehension when they reach the advanced level.

(2) Text range

The term 'concrete' refers to everything concerned with regarding who or what is where and what is happening or supposed to happen and that which conveys information about real-world occurrences or existing objects and events, whereas the term 'abstract' refers to analysis and evaluation of shared background events to the highly individualized, culture-bound texts in which shared information and assumptions are at a minimum and personal input is paramount. According to our classification, Chulalongkorn University novice students, as well as common novice learners, are able to read materials dealing with concrete topics only. We believe that the ability to read the abstract text range emerges at the intermediate level; that is, students are able to read authentic materials dealing with history, philosophical concepts and wisdom.

The above discussion can be described as follow:

Function \ Level	Novice	Intermediate	Advanced
reading ability	recognize/decode	comprehend	comprehend
text range	concrete	abstract	abstract

Table 3-5 The Hierarchical Improvement of Language Function of Chulalongkorn University Chinese Guidelines

3.4.2 Language Context and Content

The term 'context' refers to the various situations in which an individual uses the language. The context in terms of reading proficiency highlighted several key aspects, including predictable situation, familiarity, and degree of integration.

The term 'content' refers to the types and ranges of topics addressed through conversation. In the reading skill, the content refers to topic selection of a text. The following continua might be constructed to reflect situational expectations with which readers approach a given text:

- ability to deal with the situation
- ability to understand different genres
- relationship between real experience, cultural background and language skills
- relationship between familiarity of the content and language skills

(1) Situation

At the novice level, since the students' knowledge is limited, they can understand only the scope of daily life. When they reach the intermediate level, as the Chulalongkorn University Chinese curriculum aims at producing Chinese lecturers or Chinese researchers, they have to read materials dealing with a basic knowledge of the Chinese language and parts of work demands. At the advanced level, they are able to read authentic materials within their professional interests.

(2) Genre

We believe that the ability to understand and follow events of simple narration in prepared material paralleling oral language is a characteristic of the novice level, whereas the intermediate students are able to read descriptive material written in a straightforward expository style where such materials reflect the spoken and written language. When they reach the advanced level, they have almost enough comprehension to understand the authentic materials written in a literary style.

(3) Experience and Cultural Background

Since Thai culture has been greatly influenced from Chinese culture, the majority of Thai people possess some Chinese cultural background knowledge, including the students undertaking studies in Chulalongkorn University. Thus, the students will accumulate more knowledge in Chinese culture according to the period of study. In other words, the longer they study Chinese language, the more knowledge in Chinese culture they possess.

(4) Familiarity of Content

It is a common characteristic for novice students to be able to read only materials on familiar topics. The objective of Chulalongkorn University's Chinese curriculum is to produce Chinese experts or Chinese researchers so our students have to study the specialized field in Chinese Linguistics and Literature. We decided to have them start studying after their language proficiency is high enough to be able to cope with everyday life areas, so students will enter the unfamiliar areas of knowledge at the intermediate level.

As illustrated above, the topic of a text is highly related to the degree of familiarity or extent to which the topic is what the reader can directly relate to or it lies within the realm of general public consumption or in more esoteric and specialized domains. The guidelines represent the appropriateness of a topic at each level through four continua, which pass from familiarity to topics more unfamiliar.

Context	Level	Novice	Intermediate	Advanced
situation		daily life	daily life, work demands , professional needs	professional interest
genre		oral narration	oral and written description	literary style
experience and cultural background		have a little	have	have
familiarity of content		familiar	unfamiliar	unfamiliar

Table 3-6 The Hierarchical Improvement of Language Context and Content of Chulalongkorn University Chinese Guidelines

3.4.3 Language Accuracy

Accuracy refers to a host of factors that, with a given situation, topic and task, respond to the questions “how” and “how well”. This can be represented as follows:

frequent misunderstanding	-----	occasional misunderstanding
repetition	-----	fluency
linguistic simplicity	-----	linguistic intricacy

(1) Misunderstanding

The first criterion translates into fidelity of comprehension in meeting reader purpose or author intent. Since there is a limitation in Chinese language knowledge, it is very common for the novice students to have frequent misunderstandings. At the intermediate and advanced level, their mistakes are fewer. It is assumed that the more competent students are, the less misunderstandings arise.

(2) Fluency

This criterion concerns speed-the amount of text-involvement time required for the reader to fulfill the designated purpose. Chulalongkorn University novice students have a very limited fluency. Not only is their reading speed quite slow, but they also have to read several times for understanding. Their fluency is increased according to the time of study.

(3) Language Complexity

The third criterion is textuality. It is contained in the language used continuum, consisting of factors involving the manner in which the author develops a message and identifies and approaches the readership. Therefore, the novice level is characterized by the simple language continuum. We believe that students' ability to read materials written in complex language emerges at the intermediate level.

The above discussion can be concluded as the following progression:

Level \ Accuracy	Novice	Intermediate	Advanced
misunderstanding	frequent	occasional	occasional
fluency	repeated	occasional repeated	fluent
language complexity	simple	complex	complex

Table 3-7 The Hierarchical Improvement of Language Accuracy of Chulalongkorn University Chinese Guidelines

3.5 Conclusion

According to the analysis and discussion in this chapter, the following conclusions can be reached :

1) The Chinese Proficiency Guidelines of Chulalongkorn University is a specific classification of reading ability. We do not intend to use it as a general guideline for other university students since it is aimed to be used as a proficiency guideline for Chulalongkorn Chinese-major students.

2) The components of reading proficiency that underlie the Chulalongkorn University proficiency guideline descriptions entirely correspond with the communicative ability.

CHAPTER IV

THE COMPARABILITY OF ACTFL CHINESE PROFICIENCY GUIDELINES AND CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY CHINESE GUIDELINES

In Chapter 2, ACTFL CPG was discussed and it was found that (1) CPG belongs to the universal guidelines and (2) CPG completely corresponds with so-called “communicative competence”. In Chapter 3, the CU Chinese language curriculum was mainly discussed and “Chulalongkorn University Chinese Reading Proficiency Guidelines” were designed. As the result of the analysis, it is found that CU guidelines also depend upon “communicative competence”, but it is appropriate for Chulalongkorn University students only, and not for other university students, which is to say it is not universal. In this chapter, the differences between both guidelines is mainly discussed.

Guidelines \ Level	ACTFL Chinese Proficiency Guidelines	Chulalongkorn University Chinese Guidelines
Novice	Able to identify very limited characters in the aspects of narrow life and social needs	Sufficient comprehension to read simple conversation in areas of elementary needs
Intermediate	Able to decode main ideas and key facts dealing with much broader scope in day-to-day needs and social situations	Comprehension areas include such basic needs and specialized fields, including the basic knowledge of Chinese major special field.

Guidelines Level	ACTFL Chinese Proficiency Guidelines	Chulalongkorn University Chinese Guidelines
Advanced / Superior	Almost comprehension in all types of authentic materials	Almost comprehension to understand the authentic materials dealing with Chinese linguistic area.

Table 4-1: The Comparability between ACTFL Chinese Proficiency Guidelines and Chulalongkorn University Chinese Guidelines

It is already known that ACTFL CPG is not based on the amount of hours, the particular teaching materials used or the pedagogical methods, whereas the CU guidelines are inevitably concerned these matters. As the result, many differences are to be found between both guidelines. Therefore, both guidelines will be compared in vertical and horizontal planes. The vertical plane discusses the differences between both, dealing with the content of ability in each level. The horizontal plane will consider the progression of Chinese reading ability from novice to advanced.

4.1 The Comparability in Content Construction of ACTFL Chinese Proficiency Guidelines and Chulalongkorn University Chinese Guidelines

This section mainly discusses the different content in each level, regarding the aspect of language functional trisection.

4.1.1. The Novice level

Guidelines Functional Trisection	ACTFL Chinese Proficiency Guidelines	Chulalongkorn University Chinese Guidelines
Function	-identify isolated characters -identify vocabulary	-identify isolated characters -identify vocabulary -decode simple sentence -decode conversation and short passage -understand main idea
Context and Content	Basic needs in daily life	-most of life needs and social demands -oral vocabulary and structure
Accuracy	-unable to identify characters	-identify wrong characters -control over high-frequency structure -low speed on reading

Table 4-2: The Comparability in Content Structure of the Novice Level between ACTFL CPG and Chulalongkorn University Chinese Guidelines

4.1.1.1 Language Function

(1) Ability to identify Chinese Characters

The term 'Chinese characters' includes isolated characters, compound characters and radicals. CPG has mentioned that the Novice-Mid learners are able to "identify a small set of graphic elements and a small set of characters, which have been previously memorized, as well as being able to recognize isolated characters and compounds frequently encountered in public writing in high-context situations...". According to CU guidelines, we do not describe any ability to Chinese characters, but we all know that learning Chinese has to start from Chinese characters, memorizing its script, pronunciation and meaning, and then gradually progressing to reading phrases, sentences, paragraphs and then whole passages. Regarding the matter of radicals, Chulalongkorn University students are able to identify and know the meaning of high-frequency radicals, such as 'wood', 'water', 'fire' etc. They also can apply their knowledge by using a dictionary and guessing word meanings.

(2) Ability to decode sentences

The term 'decode' refers to the ability to understand, with the use of a dictionary or by guessing, the meaning of a word or sentence mostly for literal meaning. CPG novice learners are still unable to read connected sentences, whereas CU students have full control over high-frequency structures, as well as being able to connect the meaning of words in a sentence and to decode its literal meaning. Normally, CU novice students have enough comprehension to understand the meaning of the whole sentence.

(3) Ability to decode conversations

According to the above discussion, it is found that the reading ability of CPG novice learners is not high. They are unable to read connected sentences, they also definitely cannot read any conversation, but the reading ability of CU novice students is very different from that of CPG. Our students have to study Chinese syntax right from the start; in addition, most of the contents in the textbooks are presented in conversation form. Therefore, we believe that CU students not only can understand isolated sentences, but also can connect the meaning of dialogue in order to decode the main idea and essential facts. They also should be able to understand various conversational structures which are frequently used in real life, so they can make simple communication in real-life situations.

(4) Ability to decode concrete narration

According to what has been described above, it is already known that CPG does not mention about any reading ability in sentences and conversation at the novice level, we also cannot discuss any aspects on reading prose. However, since CPG gives more importance to authentic materials, so what learners read is what they can frequently encounter in their day-to-day life, which is also very concrete for the learners. However, CU novice students possess more competency in reading ability than those students under CPG. They can connect sentences, decode conversation, decode the main idea in a descriptive text, and figure out concrete information as well.

4.1.1.2 Language Context and Content

(1) Scope of daily life needs

Although both CPG and CU novice learners are able to handle routine needs, there is a slight difference between both. That is the scope of CPG is limited within the areas of basic survival and routine demands, whereas that of CU is extended to most life needs and social demands, including introductions and casual conversations about current events, family and autobiographical information.

4.1.1.3 Language Accuracy

(1) Accuracy in Chinese characters and vocabulary

CPG believe that the novice learners have a very limited amount of Chinese characters and vocabulary because they have just begun learning Chinese. Also, Chinese characters are very different from those of English, so errors regarding characters commonly occur. However, in the case of CU novice students, even though they have just started learning Chinese and Chinese characters are totally different from those of Thai, the number of Chinese characters and vocabulary that CU students are able to identify are more than those of CPG novice learners. This is because CU students spend more time reading the textbooks and practicing Chinese characters, so they can memorize a large amount of vocabulary. However, confusion among graphically-similar characters frequently arises.

(2) Accuracy in grammar

At the novice level, CPG does not mention any ability in grammar, whereas CU guidelines already mention some basic structures of which students have sufficient ability in controlling. For instance, ‘*Tā méi qián yīnwèi tā bù gōngzuò.*’ (‘He does not have money because he does not work.’) ‘*Māma zài chúfáng zuò fàn.*’ (‘Mother is cooking in the kitchen.’) etc. This is because there are a lot of Chinese structures which are quite similar to those in Thai, so students can directly translate from Chinese into Thai and vice versa. Although, students have sufficient control over structures and can decode the main ideas in conversations and short passages, it does not mean that they can read fluently. Their speed, actually, is quite slow and requires some rereading.

4.1.2 The Intermediate Level

Guidelines Functional Trisection	ACTFL Chinese Proficiency Guidelines	Chulalongkorn University Chinese Guidelines
Function	-decode simple sentence -decode main idea and some facts -decode concrete range of narration	-understand concrete detail in long prose -decode simple abstract detail in descriptive part

Guidelines Functional Trisection	ACTFL Chinese Proficiency Guidelines	Chulalongkorn University Chinese Guidelines
Context and Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -most of life and social needs -limited work requirements -discourse reflecting oral language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -most of life and social needs -basic knowledge of Chinese language and part of work requirements -materials reflecting spoken and written language
Accuracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -confusion on graphically-similar characters -misunderstand on longer discourse -control over simple, high-frequency structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -fewer grammatical errors -decode extended meaning of words -guess connotative meaning of material content -reading speed faster

Table 4-3: The Comparability in Content Structure of the Intermediate Level between ACTFL CPG and Chulalongkorn University Chinese Guidelines

4.1.2.1 Language Function

(1) Ability to read prose

This ability outlined in CPG in the intermediate level is not quite high. The intermediate-low learners can read simple connected, specially-prepared materials, and are able to read simple discourse when they reach intermediate-high level. But CU students are able to read consistently with sufficient understanding of simple connected texts dealing with basic personal and social needs since they are in the novice level. Consequently, when they reach the intermediate level, they have sufficient comprehension to understand long passages, with less use of a dictionary, as well as being able to get the gist of the main and subsidiary ideas in texts. They also are able to use linguistic context to make sensible guesses about unknown words and connotative meaning of texts.

(2) Ability to comprehend concrete narration

For CPG, the ability to read connected prose begins at the intermediate level. At the intermediate-low level, they can read very simple connected material dealing with basic life and social needs. The intermediate-high learners are able to understand the literal meaning of simple narrations dealing with familiar concrete topics, such as current events, routine activities etc. whereas CU novice students have already been able to decode and follow concrete events of narration in materials. When they reach the intermediate level, they have better comprehension in understanding narrative prose with use of a dictionary, as well as detecting the connotative meaning.

(3) Ability to decode descriptive material

Normally, the ability to describe something is a characteristic of a skilled person. It indicates that the speaker or writer has a certain language ability which is the same

as the reader. When a person is able to read descriptive materials, it means that this person also possesses a quite high reading ability. CPG does not mention any ability on reading descriptive material, whereas CU intermediate students can decode part of a text featuring descriptions. They can decode, with use of a dictionary, the main ideas and some essential information, but are still unable to figure out the author's subjective opinion or judgment.

4.1.2.2 Language Context and Content

(1) Scope of daily life needs

The intermediate learners of CPG are able to read about most areas of life needs and social demands, whereas CU students have been able to handle these scopes since the novice level. Therefore, when they are in the intermediate level, they can practice what they have learnt and fulfill those areas where they have been deficient. As a result, they are able to handle a much broader scope of daily life needs.

(2) Scope of professional and work requirements

The intermediate learners of CPG are able to read materials on familiar topics and limited work requirements, whereas CU students can handle these topics within a much broader scope. As CU's objective is that its graduated students are able to apply their Chinese knowledge to their future jobs, especially in the field of Chinese language, our intermediate students are able to read authentic materials dealing with the Chinese language area as well as some work requirements, such as business, secretarial work etc.

(3) Genre

CPG requires that intermediate level learners must be able to read written materials reflecting oral vocabulary and structure, whereas CU students are able to read authentic materials reflecting oral and written language, as well as some literary texts, such as short stories, novels etc.

4.1.2.3 Language Accuracy

(1) Accuracy in Chinese character and vocabulary

The intermediate learners of CPG usually encounter confusion among graphically-similar characters. CU students also have the same problems. However, our students' vocabulary dealing with historical, political, social and cultural aspects are dramatically increased.

(2) Accuracy in grammar

CPG learners start learning grammatical structures at the intermediate level, so they can control some high-frequency structures paralleling oral language or native language, such as SVO, the interrogative pronoun (*shéi, shénme*), complex sentence connectors (*suīrán...kěshì*). However, they still have some confusion in understanding the precise relationship of multiple modifiers to the element being modified, such as '*hòutou de fāngzi*' ('the house behind') and '*fāngzi de hòutou*' ('the back of the house') etc. For CU students, as they have been able to control many basic structures since the novice level, at the intermediate level they are able to apply these structures to what they read. At this stage, they do pay attention to the main content of the material rather than the structure. In addition, they also can

strengthen their syntax both in comprehension and usage since they have to study Chinese Grammar.

(3) Sentence connection

Concerning the intermediate level of CPG, at intermediate-low they are able to read simple connected, specially-prepared material, and at intermediate-high they begin to connect the meaning of sentences in discourse, whereas the CU intermediate level is different. Our novice students are already able to connect sentences and consistently understand main content of the material. When they reach the intermediate level, they are able to read authentic texts, such as novels reflecting Chinese history or society, but misunderstandings are frequent.

4.1.3 The Advanced Level

Guidelines Functional Trisection	ACTFL Chinese Proficiency Guidelines	Chulalongkorn University Chinese Guidelines
Function	-successful understanding material content -able to detect subjective attitudes, value judgments -understand humor	-successful understanding -able to understand writers' implicit intention
Context and Content	-areas of professional, high interest, non-technical material -prose addressed to the general public -prose reflecting spoken language	-most of daily life and social needs -areas of language and other professional requirements -texts with literary style
Accuracy	-abundance of vocabulary -full control over syntax -read with normal speed	-abundance of vocabulary -full control over grammatical structure -read with normal range of speed -fewer errors

Table 4-4: The Comparability in Content Structure of the Advanced Level between ACTFL CPG and Chulalongkorn University Chinese Guidelines

4.1.3.1 Language Function

(1) Ability to comprehend prose

The advanced level of CPG can decode the main ideas of simple authentic prose, and can extract concrete minor details in authentic expository prose. When they reach the superior level, they are able to read with almost complete comprehension on a variety of texts. In the case of CU guidelines, it is also expected that the advanced students are able to read with almost complete comprehension on a variety of authentic prose material, not only on a variety of unfamiliar subjects, but also those that are pertinent to their professional needs, especially in the area of Chinese linguistics.

(2) Ability to comprehend concrete narration

CPG advanced learners are able to read authentic expository prose on concrete topics and extract its concrete minor details. This is the same as CU advanced students. Actually, CU intermediate students are already able to understand the main idea and follow concrete details, but misunderstandings might occasionally arise. Therefore, when they reach the advanced level, they should have successful understanding with a high degree of accuracy.

(3) Ability to comprehend abstract description

The superior level students of CPG are able to understand the implicit figurative meaning and humor lying behind the literal meaning of the material. In the case of CU advanced students, they are not only able to understand the figurative meaning and humor, but are also able to interpret the writers' implicit intention in the texts. It is also expected that they are able to accurately read standard newspapers, popular novels and most literature for the general public. They also are able to comprehend a variety of styles and forms pertinent to Chinese linguistic areas.

4.1.3.2 Language Context and Content

(1) Scope of daily life and social situations

Both CPG and CU advanced learners are able to read within a normal range of speed a variety of authentic materials dealing with life and social needs

(2) Scope of Professional Interests

For CPG advanced learners, though it has been mentioned that advanced learners have to be able to read authentic material in the areas of specialization or high interest, however, it does not specify which specialized areas the learners are in. This is because CPG is universal; it is not meant for any specific group of people, which is different from that of CU. CU guidelines have been mentioned which state that our advanced learners have to be able to read authentic material dealing with Chinese linguistic areas. This is because our objective is to produce Chinese lecturers or Chinese language researchers.

(3) Genre

CPG has mentioned that the advanced-plus learners can read some types of authentic, expository prose which tends to reflect the spoken language, and are able to decode popular novels and most literature for the general public. However, they have significant problems with prose more characteristic of the literary style. For CU advanced level students, they are able to read authentic materials reflecting spoken and written language when they are intermediate learners, consequently, when they reach the advanced level, they are able to read various styles of authentic prose materials, such as novels, poems etc. In addition, they also are able to understand the writers' implicit intention expressed in the texts through various writing styles, such as simile, metaphor, irony etc.

4.1.3.3 Language Accuracy

(1) Accuracy in vocabulary

The advanced learners of both CPG and CU have a similar ability in vocabulary and structures. That is, they possess a wide range of vocabulary and they also are able

to understand idiomatic expressions, such as proverbs not common to the spoken language. This is because we believe that using proverbs is characteristic of the advanced speaker or writer. Therefore, advanced readers also should have the ability to read materials that tend to make use of idiomatic expressions.

(2) Accuracy in grammar

The advanced learners of CPG have control over structures paralleling oral language and high-frequency sentence patterns. For CU guidelines, we believe that our advanced students should have full control over high-frequency syntax, and occasional errors may arise with low-frequency sentence patterns.

4.2 The Hierarchical Improvement of Reading Proficiency

In the last section, the differences in the content of language proficiency between CPG and CU guidelines was compared. In the following part, the language progression from novice to advanced is going to be compared vertically. Based on the analyzed results of Chapter 2 and Chapter 3, it is found that the hierarchical improvement of CPG reading proficiency is very different from that of CU guidelines. Therefore, the differences in detail are discussed as follows.

4.2.1 Language Function

basic recognition of the surface meaning	-----	real comprehension of the whole content
concrete description	-----	abstract evaluation

4.2.1.1 Reading Ability

Level \ Reading ability	Novice	Intermediate	Advanced
ACTFL Chinese Proficiency Guidelines	recognize	decode	comprehend
Chulalongkorn University Chinese Guidelines	recognize/decode	comprehend	comprehend

Table 4-5: The Comparability of Reading Ability Progression between ACTFL CPG and Chulalongkorn University Chinese Guidelines

The term 'recognition' refers to a person who knows the literal meaning and main idea of the word or sentence, whereas if a person is able to carry out tasks that lie within the realm of author-intended purpose, it means he/she possesses a 'comprehension' ability. The lower level, normally, has a very limited knowledge, so he/she can understand only the literal meaning of the learned word. However, his/her ability increases according to the period of study. The more knowledge he/she has, the better comprehension he/she has.

According to Table 4-5, it is found that the major differences between CPG and CU are present at the novice and intermediate levels. CPG considers novice learners

as only being able to recognize learned isolated characters or compounds, and that the ability to decode emerges at the intermediate level, whereas CU students are one step ahead of CPG. Consequently, CU's novice and intermediate students possess higher competence than CPG. CU's beginner students also start to recognize the literal meaning of learned vocabulary, but they have practiced continuously with reading materials so their reading ability progresses rapidly. We believe that students are at the stage of recognition in a short time, and that then they are able to decode the main idea and essential information with the use of a dictionary. CU intermediate level is represented by comprehension. This does not mean that intermediate students and advanced students possess similar reading competence. Rather, the comprehension ability of the intermediate students is still limited. They have sufficient comprehension to understand authentic written material on subjects within a familiar context, but are still unable to understand "between the lines". Students have almost total comprehension by the time they reach the advanced level.

4.2.1.2 Text Range

Level	Novice	Intermediate	Advanced
Text range			
ACTFL Chinese Proficiency Guidelines	concrete	concrete	abstract
Chulalongkorn University Chinese Guidelines	concrete	abstract	abstract

Table 4-6: The Comparability of Text Range between ACTFL CPG and Chulalongkorn University Chinese Guidelines

The term 'concrete' refers to all things regarding who or what is where and what is happening or supposed to happen and that which conveys information about real-world occurrences or existing objects and events. That which includes analysis and evaluation of shared background events, the highly individualized, culture-bound texts in which shared information and assumptions are at a minimum and personal input is paramount, is represented as 'abstract'. The researchers believe that novice language learners, whether first language or second language, have to start from reading concrete material, and gradually progress to reading abstract content.

According to Table 4-6, it is found that the main difference in text range between CPG and CU is at the intermediate level. CPG divides the progression from concrete to abstract at the advanced level, whereas CU divides it at the intermediate level. The novice and intermediate level of CPG are represented by the concrete. The novice learners are able to read only a limited amount of learned characters, which are frequently encountered in their daily life. However, the intermediate learners possess more competency. They can connect the meaning, decode the main idea and determine concrete key points, like who, when and where. At the advanced level, their language ability is quite high. They not only can understand concrete material, but even material reflecting abstract concepts.

The language progression of CU is a little different from CPG, that is, we divide the progression at the intermediate level. The novice students are able to read descriptive material reflecting concrete topics, mostly related to daily life needs, such

as personal interests, news, making purchases etc. The intermediate students have to read various types of authentic materials dealing with Chinese culture, and wisdom, such as proverb stories, Chinese literature, Chinese history etc., and so their reading ability develops rapidly. They can not only understand concrete material, but also understand parts of abstract material. The advanced level learners have almost complete comprehension in understanding material reflecting both the concrete and the abstract.

In brief, CU students' reading ability starts from at the novice level. At this stage, we not only expect them to identify learned vocabulary, but also to decode the main idea and key points. This means that they are able to understand concrete narrative material; however, CPG novice learners have very limited reading ability. They can only identify concrete as well as learned characters. CU intermediate students not only can read concrete narration, but also can figure out part of the abstract material, whereas those at the CPG intermediate level have just begun to decode the main idea and essential concrete details.

4.2.2 Language Context and Content

ability to deal with the situation

ability to understand different genre

relationship between real experience, cultural background and language skills

relationship between familiarity of the language content and language skills

4.2.2.1 Situation

Situation \ Level	Novice	Intermediate	Advanced
ACTFL Chinese Proficiency Guidelines	daily life	life, occupational needs	professional interest
Chulalongkorn University Chinese Guidelines	daily life	daily life, work demands , professional needs	professional interest

Table 4-7: The Comparability of Situational Understanding Improvement between ACTFL CPG and Chulalongkorn University Chinese Guidelines

The term 'context' refers to the various situations in which an individual uses the language. The term 'content' refers to the type and ranges of topics addressed through conversation. In reading skills, content refers to topic selection of a text. Generally, a person's ability to handle a situation is different. Some can handle very limited situations, some can handle every kind of situation. We believe that the ability to handle situations is related to their language competence. The lower level student has a very limited knowledge so they can handle only limited situations, normally of a familiar scope. The high level learners know a wide range of vocabulary and grammatical structures so they can handle a broader and broader scope.

According to Table 4-7, the novice level of CPG is able to handle a very limited daily life scope, and the intermediate level is able to cope with a much broader scope of daily life needs and social demands, as well as some work requirements. The advanced level is able to read authentic materials dealing with professional interest areas, and a wide range of topics, such as newspaper, novels etc.

CU novice students are also able to read material dealing with daily life needs, but our students can handle a broader range of topics, including most life needs and social demands. Our intermediate students are able to read authentic materials dealing with a basic knowledge of Chinese language and literature, and some work requirements. The advanced students are able to read authentic Chinese linguistic materials, such as semantics, and pragmatics etc., as well as various styles of prose aimed at the general public, such as literature, standard newspapers.

4.2.2.2 Genre

Genre \ Level	Novice	Intermediate	Advanced
ACTFL Chinese Proficiency Guidelines	-	oral narrative	literary style
Chulalongkorn University Chinese Guidelines	oral narration	oral and written description	literary style

Table 4-8: The Comparability of Genre Understanding Improvement between ACTFL CPG and Chulalongkorn University Chinese Guidelines

According to Table 4-8, the major differences between CPG and CU guidelines are at the novice and intermediate level. A student at CPG novice level has no ability in reading any genre, only knowledge of isolated and compound characters. They begin to read connected material at the intermediate level. Texts at this level are mostly narrations paralleling oral language or native language syntax. The advanced learners can understand edited materials which tend to reflect the spoken language. They are also able to read standard newspaper items, popular novels addressed to the general public, and understand some idiomatic expressions, such as proverbs not common to the spoken language, but errors still occur.

However, CU guidelines are different from those of CPG. CU students are able to read connected narrative materials reflecting spoken language since they are at the novice level. When they reach intermediate level, they are able to read authentic materials reflecting spoken and written language as well as parts of literary prose. Texts at this level include narrations and descriptions, such as short stories, business letters, and bibliographical information. The advanced learners are able to read various styles of texts, such as standard newspapers, popular novels, essays and most literature. The reason why CU students' progression on understanding different genres is one step faster than CPG is that most Chinese words and sentence patterns are quite similar to those of Thai, so our novice level students face fewer difficulties than those of English speakers. In addition, our students also spend more time practicing Chinese, both inside and outside classroom activities.

4.2.2.3 Experience and Cultural Background

Level	Novice	Intermediate	Advanced
Background			
ACTFL Chinese Proficiency Guidelines	-	have a little	have
Chulalongkorn University Chinese Guidelines	have a little	have	have

Table 4-9: The Comparability of Background Knowledge between ACTFL CPG and Chulalongkorn University Chinese Guidelines

According to Table 4-9, we have seen that the main differences between CPG and CU guidelines are at the novice and intermediate level, which can be described as follows:

China possesses an extremely long cultural history and this culture has had a great effect on East Asian countries around China, as well as always having been a great mystery to Western countries, including the USA. CPG also considers the special characteristics of Chinese culture, and therefore, CPG does not mention any ability of understanding Chinese culture at the novice level. Learners begin to understand Chinese culture when they are at the intermediate level, because when the learners have learnt the Chinese language for a period of time, they have read a lot of authentic Chinese materials, and will gradually accumulate a knowledge of Chinese culture. The longer they learn Chinese, the more knowledge on Chinese culture they possess. As a result, advanced learners will have enough Chinese cultural background knowledge to understand authentic materials aimed at the general public, such as newspapers, novels etc.

In the case of CU guidelines, we have a very different situation. Since much Chinese culture has already been absorbed into Thai culture, for example, important Chinese festivals as well as Chinese songs and soaps which have become a part of Thai people's lifestyles. For this reason, Thai students have already developed some ideas about Chinese culture from the beginning. In addition, some students have been to China or Taiwan before, so they have realistic experience of China or Taiwan. This helps them get the gist easily when they read prepared written materials. At the intermediate level, they have to read various types of authentic texts, including narrative and descriptive prose, poems, novels, short stories, and articles on different topics. Consequently, their reading ability improves rapidly, and their Chinese cultural knowledge is dramatically increased as well. When students read authentic materials, they apply their already acquired knowledge and simultaneously receive more new knowledge. So, they will have abundant knowledge regarding Chinese culture by the time they reach the advanced level.

4.2.2.4 Familiarity of Content

Level	Novice	Intermediate	Advanced
Familiarity			
ACTFL Chinese Proficiency Guidelines	familiar	familiar	unfamiliar

Familiarity \ Level	Novice	Intermediate	Advanced
Chulalongkorn University Chinese Guidelines	familiar	unfamiliar	unfamiliar

Table 4-10: The Comparability of Text Familiarity between ACTFL CPG and Chulalongkorn University Chinese Guidelines

It is recognised that context is different in terms of familiarity or unfamiliarity for each person. Normally, a context which everyone feels most familiar with, is that dealing with daily life scope, and what is unfamiliar is that dealing with professional areas.

CPG draws the line between familiar and unfamiliar contexts at the advanced level. The novice level is able to handle a limited basic life needs scope, mainly for survival. The intermediate level student is still able to read a simple discourse on a familiar topic whereas the advanced level students is able to read authentic materials on unfamiliar subjects. CU guidelines draw the line one step earlier than CPG; that is, at the intermediate level. CU's novice students, like CPG's, are able to read materials on familiar topics, but when they reach the intermediate level they have to read authentic materials dealing with Chinese language and literature. These materials belong to professional areas, so they are quite unfamiliar to the students. The advanced students, as they have high competence in Chinese language, can handle prose on familiar topics, as well as unfamiliar subjects.

In brief, the ability progression on context and content includes four continua, which are situation, genre, background knowledge and familiarity. Based on the comparison results, it is found that CU students' reading ability progression on context and content is one step faster than that of CPG students in all aspects.

4.2.3 Language Accuracy

frequent misunderstanding	-----	occasional misunderstanding
repetition	-----	fluency
linguistic simplicity	-----	linguistic intricacy

4.2.3.1 Misunderstanding

Misunderstanding \ Level	Novice	Intermediate	Advanced
ACTFL Chinese Proficiency Guidelines	frequent	frequent	occasional
Chulalongkorn University Chinese Guidelines	frequent	occasional	occasional

Table 4-11: The Comparability of misunderstanding aspect between ACTFL CPG and Chulalongkorn University Chinese Guidelines

It is believed that foreign language learners cannot usually avoid the effect of their mother tongue at the beginning of learning a foreign language, causing frequent errors.

According to Table 4-11, CPG and CU guidelines have divided the line at different level, that is CPG has divided at the advanced level, and CU has divided at the intermediate level. CPG novice level, since learners have very limited knowledge in Chinese characters, not syntax, so their frequent errors arise on the part of characters. The intermediate level, learners' vocabulary is increased, and able to understand some simple Chinese structures, so errors at this stage usually occur on the part of character confusion and grammatical structure misunderstanding which sometimes also affects material understanding. The advanced level, as their language ability is quite high, also can control many structures, so misunderstandings are fewer. However, learners still have problems with those structures not common to spoken language, or more characteristic of the literary style.

In the case of CU guidelines, our novice students usually have problems with Chinese characters rather than syntax because some Chinese structures are quite similar to those of Thai structures, so students can immediately control these structures, and errors are rare. For those different from Thai structures, students might have problems which sometimes affect material understanding. However, most grammatical misunderstandings rarely arise when students reach the intermediate level, because they have sufficient control over structures. At this stage, students have problems with the connotative meaning of prose rather than its literal meaning. The advanced students, generally, achieve successful understanding when the number of features and structural devices from the literary stratum is limited. But some misunderstandings may occasionally arise if prose contains more characteristics of the literary/classical style.

4.2.3.2 Fluency

Fluency \ Level	Novice	Intermediate	Advanced
ACTFL Chinese Proficiency Guidelines	repeated	repeated	fluent
Chulalongkorn University Chinese Guidelines	repeated	occasional repeated	fluent

Table 4-12: The Comparability of Fluency between ACTFL CPG and Chulalongkorn University Chinese Guidelines

This criterion concerns speed—the amount of text-involvement time required for the reader to fulfill the designated purpose. It is assumed that a low-level individual has a very slow rate of reading, and needs to read several times for understanding, whereas a high-level individual is able to read at a normal range of speed without rereading.

Such a progression is similar to CPG and CU guidelines, but there are major differences between both of them in the stage of the intermediate level. As is already known, CPG novice learners have very limited knowledge on Chinese characters, so what they can read is what they have memorized. It is very common that they have to

think before identifying characters. The intermediate learners are able to read connected discourse, as well as understand some basic structures, so when they read authentic material, they have to connect the meaning of each word and decode the meaning of the whole content. Such a kind of action cannot be done rapidly, therefore, CPG intermediate learners still have slow reading speed and require rereading. They are able to read at normal speed when they reach the advanced level.

The condition of CU novice students is very much the same. Our students also have a limited fluency. They have to read and translate into Thai simultaneously, therefore, the rate is quite slow. However, our intermediate students make dramatic progress since they have to read textbooks used in every course, including a variety of styles, so their speed is much faster than the novice level. They also occasionally require rereading when it comes to some abstract content and to detect connotative meaning. The advanced students have no limitations and can read fluently.

4.2.3.3 Language Complexity

Level	Novice	Intermediate	Advanced
Language Complexity			
ACTFL Chinese Proficiency Guidelines	simple	simple	complex
Chulalongkorn University Chinese Guidelines	simple	complex	complex

Table 4-13: The Comparability of language complexity between ACTFL CPG and Chulalongkorn University Chinese Guidelines

This continuum refers to language used in the text. It is assumed that texts for the low-level should be written in simple language, straightforward and clear cut, whereas those for highly competent learners can be in a complicated, literary style.

As is already known, CPG focuses on practical use of language, so the novice and intermediate learners should be able to understand simple oral vocabulary and structure. Also advanced learners are able to understand the literary style a little, but they have successful understanding of prose reflecting oral language. Yet the condition of CU students is different. At the novice level, they are able to read simple authentic material paralleling oral language. When they reach the intermediate level, they have to read various types of authentic material, including prose, stories, novels, articles etc. These texts mostly use spoken and written language, so students have an ability to read complicated language. At the advanced level, they have no problems reading literary texts containing characteristic of the classical style.

In conclusion, the novice level of both guidelines has limitations in language accuracy. We think that this is very common because they have just started learning Chinese, so the knowledge of vocabulary and structure is very limited. Consequently, they are able to read texts reflecting simple language, but require rereading and misunderstandings are frequent. However, CU students enter the stage of 'accuracy' at the intermediate level, that is they are able to read texts written with complicated language, and occasional reread with fewer misunderstandings.

4.3 Conclusion

Based on the above vertical and horizontal analysis, the following can be concluded:

1) Each aspect of the hierarchical proficiency of Chulalongkorn University Chinese curriculum is higher than the ACTFL Chinese Proficiency Guidelines.

2) The improvement of students in the Chulalongkorn University Chinese Guidelines is faster than those of ACTFL Chinese Proficiency Guidelines.

Chulalongkorn University Chinese Guidelines	ACTFL Chinese Proficiency Guidelines	Content
Advanced	Distinguished	Sophisticated reader
	Superior	Can read authentic expository material, including areas of professional interest, with successful understanding. Can explain assumption, figurative meaning and humor
	Advanced-Plus	Can read authentic expository prose dealing with professional interest as well as newspapers and magazines, and understand concrete, minor details
Intermediate	Advanced	Can read edited materials in areas of specialization or high interest. Can decode authentic prose for general ideas
	Intermediate-High	Can decode key facts in descriptive material, specially-prepared discourse on daily life and routine events
Novice	Intermediate-Mid	Can understand and decode some facts in specially-prepared material paralleling to native language syntax
	Intermediate-Low	Can read, for basic survival and social needs, simple connected, specially-prepared material and understand main ideas
	Novice-High	Can identify a limited number of character components and characters common to high-frequency sets of listable categories encountered in areas of immediate need.
	Novice-Mid	Can identify a small set of graphic elements and characters
	Novice-Low	No functional ability in reading Chinese

Table 4-14: The Comparability of Reading proficiency between ACTFL Chinese Proficiency Guidelines and Chulalongkorn University Chinese Guidelines

Here are the conclusions of the differences between ACTFL Chinese Proficiency Guidelines and Chulalongkorn University Chinese guidelines, including further explanations:

1) The Chulalongkorn University Chinese reading proficiency guidelines only focus on the main objective of the curriculum, that is, to produce graduates who are fully adept and knowledgeable in the Chinese language and Chinese literature, so that they can study further and become Chinese language experts, Chinese language researchers or Chinese language lecturers in the university. Unless the level of proficiency is quite high, it is impossible to reach the superior level.

2) The Chulalongkorn University Chinese reading proficiency guidelines are for students who are majoring in Chinese. Apart from learning Chinese, they have to learn about other aspects of linguistics. This is the reason why students' ability improves so quickly.

3) The Chinese language and Thai language are in the same language family, which is the Sino-Tibetan family. Therefore, phonetics, vocabulary and grammar are rather similar. This can help Thai students to learn Chinese language easier and also has an influence on the improvement of students' reading ability.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

According to the results of the comparison between ACTFL CPG and Chulalongkorn University Chinese reading proficiency guidelines in Chapter IV, we can prove that although our Chinese reading guidelines are rather different from ACTFL CPG. Importance is still given to communicative competence, and the Chinese reading guidelines are also very suitable for Chulalongkorn University students. In this chapter, "Chinese Reading Proficiency Guidelines: A Case Study of Chulalongkorn University Students" is summarised.

5.1 Chinese Reading Proficiency Guidelines: A Case Study of Chulalongkorn University Students

Novice

Novice readers are able to read, for basic survival and social needs, simple specially prepared materials and some authentic materials with considerable difficulty, which reflect similarity to specially prepared material and/or to high-frequency oral vocabulary and structural patterns, but errors are frequent. With use of a dictionary, they also are able to understand the main idea and decode some facts of simple narration in authentic materials paralleling oral language. Detail is overlooked and errors are frequent. They have full control over syntax structures paralleling Thai structures, whereas, for those do not parallel Thai constructions, they can understand them but still make some errors. At this stage, the reader still has to pause over or read materials several times for understanding, though the topics are highly familiar. Confusion among graphically-similar characters is common. Students are able to connect, with some difficulty and frequent errors, the meaning of sentences in discourse and understand their literal meanings. However, they are still unable to understand the connotations and subjective concepts in the materials.

Intermediate

Students at the intermediate level have sufficient comprehension to read authentic materials not only within the scope of daily life and social needs, but also the basic knowledge of Chinese language, such as Chinese Characters, Chinese Phonetics, Chinese Grammar, Chinese Literature etc. and some work demands, such as Chinese Computers and Business Chinese etc. They have full control over high-frequency sentence patterns as well as being able to connect the meaning of sentences in the materials. Students have sufficient comprehension to understand, with some dictionary use, some descriptive long passages reflecting spoken and written languages as well as being able to understand the literal meaning of its main ideas and concrete details. They, moreover, can read, with use of dictionary and lecturer's explanation, some literature which is more characteristic of the literary/classical style. Lexical guessing, if highly contextualized, always emerges as a strategy to understand the surface meanings as well as connotations of the materials, though errors are frequent. Generally, their vocabularies are dramatically increasing, and their grammatical structure knowledge is also highly controlled. Their reading ability is faster when the topic contents are very familiar, but for those unfamiliar, they might need some rereading. They have increasing skill at extracting main and subsidiary ideas in texts, but may be unable to detect or understand subtlety and nuance. Occasionally they are able to figure out the author's subjective attitudes and value judgments. But mostly they still are unable to comprehend the subtle meaning of the materials.

Advanced

The students are able to comprehend the authentic materials dealing with Chinese language areas. As the objective of Chulalongkorn University Chinese Language Major is to produce Chinese language lecturers or Chinese linguists, they are able to read within a normal range of speed and with almost complete comprehension a variety of authentic materials within the scope of the Chinese language, such as Phonetics, Semantics, Pragmatics, Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language, as well as Chinese Literature and Culture etc. They also are able to appreciate some literature with high literary style. The reader can figure out the writers' implicit intentions, the author's judgments and can appraise the values of the materials as well. They can read, without the use of a dictionary, authentic materials written in a straightforward expository style on topics dealing with the areas of professional interest. They are able to use linguistic context and real-world knowledge to make sensible guesses about unfamiliar material. The students are almost always able to interpret materials correctly, relate ideas and 'read between the lines' (that is, understand the writers' implicit intents in texts), though some errors take place. Lexical guessing is usually used as a strategy, with some errors, while reading idiomatic expressions, such as proverbs not common to the spoken language, and prose with classical style. Reading matter includes descriptions and narrations in contexts such as standard newspaper items, popular novels, essays, and most literature addressed to the general public, printed or typed routine correspondence, reports and technical material in fields of interest. However, the reader may experience some difficulty with unusually complex structure and low frequency idioms, and some details are overlooked.

Chulalongkorn University Chinese reading proficiency guidelines sum up as follows:

Level	Language Function	Language Content and Context	Language Accuracy
Novice	- decode discourse - get main ideas and key points	- daily life area	- frequent misunderstanding - slow speed and rereading - simple language
Intermediate	understand authentic straightforward narrative and descriptive and texts	- daily life area and social demands - work demands - basic knowledge of Chinese major	- occasional misunderstandings - faster speed - complicated language
Advanced	Can read with almost comprehension to understand authentic materials	- daily life needs and social demands - Chinese major area - other specialized fields	- rare misunderstandings - fluent reading - literary style

Table 5-1: Chulalongkorn University Chinese Reading Proficiency Guidelines

5.2 The Uses of “Chinese Reading Proficiency Guidelines: A Case Study of Chulalongkorn University Students”

5.2.1 Suggestions for the Reading Test

1) The content of the test must be according to communicative competence, but not the progression of the students. The traditional Chinese language examination is always based on the number of Chinese characters and grammatical structures which students learn. If two persons know 1,000 Chinese characters, but those Chinese characters are not the same, is their reading ability also the same? We think that students' reading ability is not how many Chinese characters or grammatical structures they have learned, but that concern should be given to these three conditions:

Firstly, language comprehension depends upon the qualifications and functions of the language which can be shown in general communicative skills.

Secondly, language comprehension must be according to the specific situation, and this situation is limited by social and cultural conditions.

Thirdly, the differences of language comprehension levels can mostly be seen in a particular situation. Language function should be used appropriately to achieve the purposes that they have to understand.

2) The purpose of the test is to distinguish students' reading ability, whether their ability is good enough to communicate with other people, whether students can use language as a tool of communication, and whether they can deal with various social and professional needs.

5.2.2 Suggestions for Selection of the Teaching Materials

1) To comprehensively design the content of teaching materials: the use of reading materials in practical reading on different writing styles such as letters, factual pieces, newspapers, narration, articles, fiction etc.; these materials should be related to daily life, social situations and occupational needs; the materials should be from China or Taiwan, for authentic purposes. These materials are allocated to each level, the content should suit the social, cultural situation and students' needs.

2) To plan the usages of materials: to train the lecturers how to use materials, to supervise the practical use of the materials, to ask for the lecturers' opinions about the materials, and to adjust the materials to conform to students' needs.



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