

**Producing asymmetric patterns of determiner phrases in Chinese Relative Clauses by
Second Language learners: A cross-linguistic perspective**

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Abstract

Chinese has (S)VO word order, just like English. But different from VO languages that typically have postnominal relative clauses (RC), Chinese has prenominal RCs, which is typologically characteristic of OV languages such as Japanese and Korean. Furthermore, Chinese has numeral classifiers, similar to Japanese and Korean, whereas English has no classifiers. When the head noun of a RC is modified by a demonstrative-classifier (DCL) phrase (or a determiner phrase, DP) in Chinese, the DCL can occur either before or after the RC. These typologically unique properties of Chinese RCs, together with the flexible word order of DCL, may impose difficulties to L2-Chinese learners whose L1 are either strictly VO with postnominal RCs (i.e., English) or OV with prenominal RCs (i.e., Korean and Japanese).

Existing work on Chinese RCs has shown a pre-RC DCL positioning bias in subject-extracted RCs, and a post-RC DCL bias in object-extracted RCs (Ming & Chen, 2010; Wu, 2011; Sheng & Wu, 2013). Could L2 learners of Chinese master this asymmetric pattern when producing RCs online? What factors govern the positioning bias of DCLs found with L2 learners? In this talk, I will report a series of word-based sentence production experiments conducted with highly advanced L2 learners of Chinese whose L1s are English (N=23), Korean (N=27) and Japanese (N=26). I will discuss the results in light of two important second language acquisition models, specifically Shallow Structure Hypothesis (Clahsen & Felseer, 2006) and the Unified Competition Model (MacWhinney, 2005).