Building a Solid Foundation for

The Instruction and Learning of the Chinese Language

Sabbatical Proposal, Report and Project for fall 2008 – spring 2009

By

Chih Ping Chang, Ph.D.

Table of Contents

Sabbatical Project Proposal for Fall 2008 – Spring 2009

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Our Achievement

On October 15, 2005, an article entitled <u>Classes in Chinese Grow as the Language Rides a Wave of Popularity</u> in *New York Times* stated: "With encouragement from the Chinese and American governments, schools across the United States are expanding their language offerings to include Chinese, the world's most spoken tongue, not to mention one of its most difficult to learn." Following that trend, the Chinese Program at Mt. San Antonio College has been consistently growing from an enrollment of an average of 100 students per semester in 1997 to the current enrollment of 425 students. Such a growth makes the Chinese Program here one of the largest Chinese programs in higher education in the United States.

The Challenge

Like other Chinese programs, however, our program also faces a challenge that requires immediate attention. That challenge, as mentioned earlier, lies in the difficulties of learning the language. To start with, as a tonal language, the Chinese language is difficult for beginners to pronounce. For example, <u>wèn</u> in Chinese is pronounced as the fourth tone meaning 'to ask.' If the tone is mispronounced as the third tone like <u>wěn</u> meaning 'to kiss,' the learners, as well as the listeners, may be greatly embarrassed.

While beginners are struggling to master the oral communication, they also need to face the challenge of reading and writing the language. It is a well-known fact that characters instead of letters are used in the Chinese written language. As a result, characters like 圖 <u>tú</u> 'map,' 安 <u>ān</u> 'peace' and 霧 <u>wù</u> 'fog' are extremely difficult for learners with little knowledge of how Chinese characters are formed.

Although fascinated by this language, a large number of beginning students do not continue on to upper levels Chinese because of the difficulties described above. As for the instructors of this language, the preparation of systematic exercises to improve students' listening, speaking, reading and writing skills, especially in the context of the Chinese culture, is simply too time consuming. For instance, I have been teaching Chinese here as a full time professor for over ten years, but I have learned to teach only about 200 characters in terms of their methods of formation in the context of the Chinese culture. Furthermore, I have not even had time to write down what I learned about teaching these characters. This personal example shows how time consuming this project of analyzing characters is.

Furthermore, in the present textbooks, the Pīnyīn is generally not presented as a unit. As for character learning, one may find a number of publications discussing Chinese characters by listing commonly used characters (around 3000 in number) alphabetically according to their phonetic spellings. If students need to look up a character that they just learned in class, they

may have to go through several books to find the origin of that character, not to mention that they may not understand the explanation because generally these publications are intended for people with a background in Chinese language and culture.

The Determination and the Scope of the Project

I have worked here as a tenured professor for over 10 years. I have postponed the application of sabbatical leave because I wanted first to build up the Program. Now that the Chinese Program has been established with steady enrollment, improving the quality of teaching and learning of the Chinese language has become the next logical goal.

Therefore, as a pioneering work, my project will (1) present the phonetic spelling system as a unit and (2) reorganize and analyze basic 100 to 150 Chinese characters according to the topics that beginning Chinese students typically learn. Each character will be presented in appropriately one page, depicting the formation of the character in the context of the Chinese culture. The focused level of this project will be Beginning Chinese One because a solid foundation of the phonetic spelling system and character learning will ensure that students have a solid foundation and become motivated to continue on to advanced levels of learning this language.

The phonetic spelling system in my project will include (A) Chinese Tones, (B) consonants (also known as Chinese Initials) and vowels (also known as Chinese Finals), (C) rules for combining Initials, Finals and Tones into syllables and (D) exercises to master the phonetic spelling system. Please see **Attachment One** for examples of the phonetic spelling system that will be presented as part of my project.

As for Character Analysis in my project, Chinese characters for beginning students will be analyzed in terms of the simplified three methods of forming Chinese characters, and in the context of interesting stories or cultural notes. These three distinctions are Pictographic, Associative and Semantic-Phonetic characters (see **Attachment Two**). The purpose of the analysis is to help students to appreciate the Chinese culture even more through character learning.

With a clear understanding of these three distinctions, students may then find it easier to recognize the three characters mentioned earlier in this proposal. For example, the character 圖 tú 'map,' as an example of a Pictographic character, shows the meaning of the character as 'map' with an actual drawing of a map detailing roads which connect places.

Likewise, 安 ān 'peace' can be better recognized if students know that the meaning of the character 'peace' is derived from the association of the upper side of the character 宀 'roof' and the lower side 女 'a woman.' This example of Associative characters also reveals the deeply rooted concept of 'peace' in the Chinese culture, since this culture defines 'peace' as having a woman under one's roof to take care of everything.

As an example of Semantic-Phonetic characters, the character 霧 wù 'fog' can be better understood as 'fog' from the upper part of the character 雨 'rain,' which provides the clue for the meaning of the character, while the lower part of the character 務, pronounced as wù, reminds learners the pronunciation of the character.

In addition to presenting these items [phonetic system, character analysis] in writing, all the materials will also be prepared in the format of PowerPoint so that instructors, tutors and students of the Chinese language may use them in class or after class. A time line for accomplishing these is detailed in **Attachment Three**. References used for my sabbatical project are also listed in **Attachment Four**.

The Benefits

This project will be beneficial to other instructors of the Chinese Program (including myself), students in the Chinese Program, the Foreign Language Department and the College.

1. <u>**Benefits to All the Instructors (including myself) in the Chinese Program:**</u>

This will benefit all the instructors in the Chinese Program here by
- Preparing all the instructors in the Chinese Program to be better equipped with systematic instruction and presentation
- Allowing all the instructors of the Chinese language to learn more about the Chinese characters in the context of the fascinating Chinese culture
- Providing detailed and systematic teaching materials, which require long time preparation

2. <u>**Benefits to the Students:**</u>

This will benefit them by
- Providing a better means to understand and learn Chinese characters and their cultural foundations.
- Appreciating the Chinese culture.

3. <u>**Benefits to the Department:**</u>

This will benefit the department by
- Making learning Chinese characters easier and more interesting for all students, especially for students learning other Asian languages, such as the Japanese language
- Sharing the new resources with my colleagues so that all instructors will be working at the same pace and cover the same materials per chapter and per semester.
- Bringing better retention for the whole department.

4. <u>**Benefits to the College:**</u>

This will benefit the college by
- Making Mt. San Antonio College a leader of teaching the phonetic spelling system and Chinese characters more systematically
- Bringing about greater retention in more advanced Chinese classes
- Increasing the number of students in the Chinese Program.

Attachment One: Examples of the Phonetic Spelling System in the Project

1.1 How to describe a character phonetically

Pīnyīn is one of the most commonly used phonetic spelling systems to spell Chinese characters phonetically. In Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, a character like 人 'people' is written phonetically as *rén*. The pīnyīn *rén* is composed of three parts: **Initial** (*r*), **Final** (*en*) and **Tone** (/).

Tone	
Initial	Final

The **Tone** is always placed above the **Final**. There are a total of five tones. Four of them are indicated by tones marks: first tone (—), second tone (/), third tone (ˇ) and fourth tone (\ ). The fifth tone is called *neutral tone*, which is indicated by the absence of a tone mark such as the second *ba* in *bàba* 'father'.

Tones distinguish meaning in Chinese. For example, in the following four characters 媽 (**mā** 'mother'), 麻 (**má** 'flax'), 馬 (**mǎ** 'horse') and 罵 (**mà** 'to scold'), the only differences among them are their different tone marks.

The key to pronounce the four tones correctly is as follows:

1st tone:	Remember to pitch it <u>high</u> enough and keep it <u>level</u> throughout.
2nd tone:	This is a clear <u>rising</u> tone similar to the "*Huh*?" in English used when one has not heard clearly.
3rd tone:	Be sure to pronounce it as <u>low</u> as possible.
4th tone:	Start high and don't be afraid to let it <u>fall</u> right down. Similar to a sharp command in English, e.g., "Don't!"

1.2 Finals and Initials in Mandarin

大　家　一　起　學　中　文
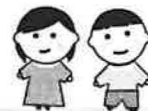
Initials: b p m f d t n l g k h j q x z zh c ch s sh y w r

Finals: a o e (1) hé (2) yě i u ü ai ei ao ou an en ang eng er ong ia iao ie iu ian in ing iang iong üe (y)uan (y)un ua uo uai ui

1.3 Important Rules for Pīnyīn

1. If there are no initials before the finals *i* and *u*, one should write the finals as *yi* and *wu*, respectively.

1.4 Exercises in listening and writing

a　　　　māma (mother), chá (tea), Fǎguó (France), bàba (father)

Attachment Two: Examples of Analyzing Chinese Characters in the Project

2.1 The Three Methods to Create Characters

Most of the modern Chinese characters are created by the following three methods, namely: Pictographic, Associative and Semantic-phonetic Methods.

2.1.1 Pictographic Method

The Pictographic method draws a picture of the thing or person depicted, for instance, 人 rén 'person'. In the character 人, the two lines in the lower part of the character represent the two legs of a human being. Being able to walk with two legs is something unique about human beings, so this character is used to mean 'person.'

2.1.2 Associative Method

Associative Method forms a new character by means of association. The associative meaning can be derived by the position of symbols. For example, to indicate the meaning "above", the character 上 shows the concept by having a short horizontal line "above" a long horizontal line.

Most of the characters created by the Associative Method combine two or more radicals that represent meanings. For instance, we get the character 林 lín 'woods' by doubling the pictographic character 木 mù 'tree.' The derivation of the meaning of 林 lín is based on the following logic. When one 木 mù means 'a tree', a character such as 林 lín, which has two trees as its radicals, leads us to derive the meaning 'woods'. This is so because that is where more than one tree grows. By the same reasoning, when one sees three trees in a character like 森 sēn, the meaning comes naturally as 'forest', a place that has many trees.

2.1.3 Semantic-phonetic Method

Characters created by the Associative Method usually have two or more radicals, and the meaning of the character is derived from the meaning of all the radicals. Semantic-phonetic Method, by contrast, combines (A) a semantic radical and (B) a phonetic radical to form a new character. There are two basic rules to identify the semantic and the phonetic radicals:

Rule 1: Semantic radical on the **left** and *Phonetic* radical on the *right*. For example, in the character 嗎 'a yes-no question marker', the semantic component 口 kǒu 'mouth' is on the left side of the character, while the phonetic component 馬 mǎ is on the right side of the character. The phonetic radical, however, may not have the exact pronunciation as the character itself. For example, the pronunciation of the phonetic radical 馬 mǎ and the character 嗎 ma is different in their tones.

Rule 2: Semantic on the **top** + *Phonetic* at the *bottom*
For example, 爸 (bà 'father') has its semantic part 父 (fù 'father') on the top and its phonetic part 巴 (bā) at the bottom.

Attachment Three: Sabbatical Time Line

August	4th	Research the phonetic spelling system by studying Peng's *Chinese Treasury Hanyu Pinyin*
September	1st	Research the phonetic spelling system, continued
	2nd	Write instruction and exercises for the phonetic spelling system
	3rd	Write instruction and exercises for the phonetic spelling system, continued
	4th	Review traditional methods of forming Chinese characters by studying Norman's *Chinese*
October	1st	Review traditional methods of forming Chinese characters, continued
	2nd	Write instruction for simplified methods of forming Chinese characters
	3rd	Research characters for numbers by studying Yin and Rohsenow's *Modern Chinese Characters*
	4th	Categorize and write the culture notes for characters indicating numbers
November	1st	Research the characters for greetings by studying Wilder & Ingram's *Analysis of Chinese Characters*
	2nd	Categorize and write the culture notes of characters for greetings
	3rd	Research the characters for wh-question words by studying Wilder & Ingram's *Analysis of Chinese Characters*
	4th	Research the characters for wh-question words, continued
December	1st	Categorize and write the culture notes of characters for wh-question words, continued
	2nd	Research the characters for names of places in China by studying Wang's *General Principles for Applying Chinese Characters*
		Research the characters for names of places in China, continued
February	4th	Categorize and write the culture notes for characters indicating names of places in China
		Research the characters for Chinese first names and last names by studying Du's *Things Chinese.*
March	1st	Research the characters for Chinese first names and last names, continued
	2nd	Categorize and write the culture notes for characters indicating Chinese first names and last names
	3rd	Research the characters used in business cards by studying Fazzioli's *Chinese Calligraphy*
	4th	Research the characters used in business cards, continued
April	1st	Categorize and write the culture notes for characters used in business cards
	2nd	Research the characters for entertaining guests by studying Wilkinson's *Chinese Language, Life and Culture*
	3rd	Research the characters for entertaining guests, continued
	4th	Categorize and write the culture notes for characters of entertaining guests
May	1st	Research the characters of Chinese kinship terms by studying Wieger's *Chinese Characters*
	2nd	Research the characters of Chinese kinship terms, continued
	3rd	Categorize and write the culture notes for characters of Chinese kinship terms
	4th	Write Project Report
		Write Project Report
		Write Project Report
June	1st	Apply the contents of the Project Report in the format of PowerPoint for Instruction
	2nd	Apply the contents of the Project Report in the format of PowerPoint for Instruction

Attachment Four: References

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Sabbatical Report

I am truly grateful to have the opportunity to take a sabbatical leave and enjoyed doing a project entitled *Building a Solid Foundation for the Instruction and Learning of the Chinese Language*. In this sabbatical report, I will first have a narrative report of my sabbatical activities. Then I will share the benefit and value of the sabbatical activity to the college, as well as to my professional growth and enrichment.

(1) The Narrative Report of Sabbatical Activities

Since this is a one-year sabbatical leave, according to the agreement, I started my project on the fourth week of August in 2008 and finished my project at the end of the second week of June in 2009. There is a total of 32 weeks for me to finish my project. I spent the first 6 weeks preparing the instruction of the *Pīnyīn system*, the most popular phonetic spelling system to learn the Chinese language.

By studying previous works on the Pīnyīn (Peng 1987 and Li and Thompson 1981) in the first week, I noticed that these previous works generally presented the whole system (23 Initials and 32 Finals) one by one, which makes the learning way more complicated for learners to master efficiently.

After studying previous works on the Pīnyīn system, I used the second and third weeks working on the Initials (equivalent to consonants in English). Unlike the previous works, I proposed to focus on only 11 Initials because all the other Initials have the same pronunciations as their English counterparts. In addition, for the 11 Initials such as /c/ that may not be pronounced the same as their English counterparts, I provided clues in English like /ts/ to help learners to pronounce accurately.

Furthermore, Initials with contrasting features are also compared so that learners can master these focused Initials even more efficiently. For example, /z/ and /c/ as Initials are compared and translated into English as /ds/ and /ts/ so that learners know that the only difference between these two Initials lies in the voiced /d/ versus the unvoiced /t/. In addition, exercises are also designed after the instruction of Initials to reinforce the learning.

In a similar manner like Initials, I spent the fourth and fifth weeks working on the Finals (equivalent to vowels in English). Again, to make the instruction and learning efficient, I proposed to focus on only 13 Finals, instead of using a lot of time on all the 32 Finals in Mandarin Chinese since most of them are pronounced the same as their English counterparts. Like the instruction of Initials, the focused 13 Finals are compared in terms of their differences and similarities with their English counterparts. Then exercises are added after the instruction to reinforce the learning.

The sixth week was devoted to the preparation of important rules for combining Initials, Finals and Tones. Unlike previous works which generally did not provide clear rules about the Pīnyīn system, nine important rules are constructed and explained in details in this project. These nine rules are presented in Section 2.3 of my project report. In the spirit of efficiency, these nine rules are further simplified as four important rules in the conclusion of the project report.

After finishing the instruction for learning the Pīnyīn system, I continued to work on the formation of Chinese characters for another 3 weeks. First, I studied previous publications about the formation of Chinese characters. These publications are *Chinese* by Norman, *Modern Chinese Characters* by Yin and Rohsenow, *Analysis of Chinese Characters* by Wilder & Ingram, *General Principles for Applying Chinese Characters* by Wang and *Chinese Characters* by

Wieger. Being enlightened by these previous works, I began to have a clearer understanding about the roles that radicals play in the formation of a Chinese character. From these previous works, I also noticed that the traditional six ways of forming Chinese characters could be simplified as three methods to make learning the formation of Chinese characters more efficient. The discussion of radicals and the three methods of creating Chinese characters are presented in Section 3 of my project report.

After the ninth week, I began to work on the analysis of characters. I used the tenth week to select characters for analysis. A total of 149 characters were chosen and categorized as six groups. These characters are selected because they are commonly used in practical daily conversations for the elementary level of the Chinese language. The six groups are characters for (1) Numbers and Greetings, (2) Asking Questions, (3) Place Names, (4) Personal Names and Professions, (5) Addresses and Phone Numbers and (6) Welcoming Guests and Talking about Family.

The next 17 weeks were devoted to the analysis of the characters of the six groups just mentioned. Sixteen reference books were used. They are Peng's *Fun with Chinese Characters (Collections 1,2 and 3)*, Yin and Rohsenow's *Modern Chinese Characters*, Li's *Evolutionary Illustration of Chinese Characters*, Shi's *Hanzi de Gushi* (Stories of Chinese Characters), Lindqvist's *Hanzi de Gushi* (Stories of Chinese Characters), Go's *Understanding Chinese Characters*, Lo's *Chinese Characters for Beginners*, Wang's *The Origins of Chinese Characters*, Xie's *The Composition of Common Chinese Characters*, Shi's *Picture within a Picture-An Illustrated Guide to the Origins of Chinese Characters*, Gu's *Picture Characters*, Fazzioli's *Chinese Calligraphy-From Pictograph to Ideogram* and Wieger's *Chinese Characters*.

The eleventh, the twelfth and the thirteenth weeks were devoted to the analysis of the first group of characters for Numbers and Greetings. Twenty eight Chinese characters were analyzed in terms of the method that they were created with explanations to help learners better comprehend the formation of these characters, as well as appreciate interesting Chinese culture involved. Useful expressions employing characters for numbers and greetings are also discussed at the end of the analysis so that learners can apply these characters to practical and daily conversations.

The next two weeks, the fourteenth and the fifteenth weeks, were used to analyze characters for asking questions. A total of twenty three Chinese characters were researched with regard to their formation, cultural aspect and usage.

After the discussion of Group 2 characters, Group 3 characters for place names were analyzed. Three weeks (the sixteenth, the seventeenth and the eighteenth weeks) were used to analyze twenty three characters with focus on their formation, cultural aspects, as well as practical usage. Since Chinese characters used for place names usually provide a lot of information about features or locations of the place names indicated, a more detailed discussion is also included to make learners appreciate this unique aspect of the Chinese language.

Since I was teaching the winter session of 2009, I applied what I learned in the project to my winter elementary Chinese classes. After applying what I learned in this project, I found that the project really benefited my students, especially in their mastering of the Pīnyīn system and ability to recognize Chinese characters.

After the analysis of characters for place names, I began to focus on group 4 characters for asking names and professions. Another three weeks (the nineteenth week, the twentieth week and the twenty first week) were devoted to have twenty four characters researched. In addition

to character formation and usage, some unique Chinese cultural aspects in relation to Chinese names and professions were also included in the discussion.

When the analysis of characters for Chinese names and professions was completed, group 5 characters became the focus of attention for three weeks (the twenty second, the twenty third and the twenty fourth weeks). Another new twenty three Chinese characters for addresses and phone numbers were analyzed in terms of the method they were created. Useful expressions applying these characters were also discussed to reinforce the learning of these characters.

Following the discussion of characters for addresses and phone numbers, the last group, Group 6 (Characters for Welcoming Guests and Talking about Family), was researched for the twenty fifth, the twenty sixth and the twenty seventh weeks. Beside the analysis of how these characters were created and their practical applications, some interesting Chinese cultural aspects about tea, manners and family values are also discussed.

After the research on the Pīnyīn system, character formation and the six groups of characters, I followed the original proposed schedule to use the next three weeks (the twenty eighth, the twenty ninth and the thirtieth weeks) to write my sabbatical report. A written report of six chapters is completed. These six chapters are Chapter 1 Introduction, Chapter 2 Teaching the Chinese Phonetic Spelling System, Chapter 3 the Formation of Chinese Characters, Chapter 4 the Analysis of Chinese Characters, Chapter 5 the Analysis of Characters for Interpersonal Communication and Chapter 6 Conclusion.

In addition to a written report, PowerPoint presentations are also prepared in the last two weeks of my sabbatical leave. All the important points discussed in the project are summarized using PowerPoint presentations for the convenience of classroom instruction and learning. These presentations include: 1 The Pīnyīn system, 2 The Formation of Chinese Characters and 3

The Analysis of Chinese Characters for the Elementary Level. There are 18 pages of PowerPoint presentation for the Pīnyīn system (see Attachment 1 as an example). The Formation of Chinese Characters PowerPoint presentation has a total of 5 pages (see Attachment 2 as a example). The PowerPoint presentation for the Analysis of Chinese Characters has a total of 66 pages (see Attachment 3 as an example).

(2) The Benefit and Value of the Sabbatical Activity to the College

This sabbatical activity will benefit the college by making Mt. San Antonio College a leader of teaching the Pīnyīn system, the phonetic spelling system, more systematically. As shown in the project report, the instruction of the phonetic spelling system becomes much more efficient than previous ways of teaching the 23 Initials and 32 Finals one after another without clear rules for describing syllables accurately. In my sabbatical project, only 11 Initials and 13 Finals are focused with reference to their English counterparts to make the instruction efficient and the learning easier. Besides, unlike other previous works that have scattered rules or no clear rules for describing syllables accurately, this project proposed nine rules with detailed explanations, as well as comparisons with the other rules to show their relations. In addition, these nine rules are further simplified as four important rules after comparing their similarities and differences.

In addition to a more efficient instruction of the phonetic spelling system, the sabbatical project also benefits the college by making Mt. San Antonio College a leader of teaching the Chinese characters at the elementary level more systematically. To start with, unlike other colleges with a Chinese program that generally does not have a clear instruction about semantic radicals, this project proposed to teach 66 radicals instead of the traditional 144 radicals to make

the acquisition of this aspect of learning the Chinese language more efficient by relating to the characters appropriate for the elementary level.

Besides, instead of devoting all the energy on about 400 characters that traditionally a student at this level will be required to master, this sabbatical project proposed to focus on 149 characters, which can be further categorized into six groups of practical topics. Furthermore, the simplification of the traditional six ways of creating Chinese characters to only three and the application of this more efficient system to the acquisition of Chinese characters proposed by this sabbatical project again makes Mt. San Antonio College a leader in the education of the Chinese language.

The improvement of the instruction of the phonetic spelling system and Chinese characters may then lead to a more effective learning in elementary Chinese language classes. More effective education at beginning levels thus may encourage students to have more motivation to continue to more advanced Chinese classes. Bringing about greater retention in more advanced Chinese classes then is more likely to increase the number of students in the Chinese Program.

Besides being beneficial to the Chinese Program, the sabbatical activity may also benefit the department of Foreign Languages in the following three aspects. First of all, it makes learning Chinese characters easier and more interesting for all students, especially for students learning other Asian languages, such as the Japanese language. Secondly, by sharing the new resources with my colleagues, all instructors will be working at the same pace and cover the same materials per chapter and per semester. Thirdly, a more efficient way of instruction and learning may also bring better retention for the whole department.

Furthermore, this sabbatical project will also benefit students learning the Chinese language in at least the following three aspects. First of all, it provides a better means to master

the phonetic spelling system more efficiently at the beginning stage of their acquisition of the Chinese language. Secondly, it helps students understand and learn Chinese characters and their cultural foundations. Thirdly, it is beneficial to students because they will appreciate the Chinese culture even more through the education of Chinese characters.

(3) The Benefit and Value of the Sabbatical Activity for my Professional Growth and Enrichment

Since this is the first time that I had a sabbatical leave as a tenured professor at Mt. San Antonio College, I found the sabbatical activity both joyful and beneficial for my professional growth and enrichment. To start with, I find it a real joy to have thirty two weeks of time to do some research about the instruction of the phonetic spelling system and Chinese characters.

Although I did put great efforts trying to make the instruction of these two challenging aspects of the Chinese language efficient and enjoyable, I did not really have the time or motivation to make the instruction more systematic until I was granted this sabbatical activity. Reading previous works on the phonetic spelling system and the analysis of Chinese characters is truly joyful to me personally because it helps me obtain numerous insightful solutions. Reading a lot without writing, however, may make things very confusing because different resources may have conflicting theories or solutions.

Writing it down as a project report helped me tremendously by clearly identifying the problems in the past and constructing a more systematic way to present challenging tasks efficiently. For example, the simplification of Initials, Finals and semantic radicals really helps me to present complicated concepts in an efficient and easy to understand manner. Moreover, after completing the project, I find myself being in the habit of writing and presenting difficult

and complicated concepts in a more effective way. I also discovered that writing is truly a joy that I look forward to writing more for my professional growth and enrichment.

In addition to the above stated benefits for my professional growth and enrichment, this sabbatical activity will also benefit all the instructors (including myself) in the Chinese Program here at Mt. San Antonio College in at least the following three aspects. First of all, the sabbatical project, especially the part for the PowerPoint presentations, will prepare all the instructors in the Chinese Program to be better equipped with systematic instruction and presentation in terms of teaching the phonetic spelling system and Chinese characters. Secondly, the sabbatical project will also allow all the instructors of the Chinese language to learn more about the Chinese characters in the context of the fascinating Chinese culture. Lastly, this sabbatical project will also provide detailed and systematic teaching materials, which require long time preparation.

Four Tones & Neutral Tone

■ The **Tone** is always placed above the **Final**.

■ There are a total of five tones.

■ The first four tones are major tones and they are indicated as first tone (—), second tone (/), third tone (ˇ) and fourth tone (\ ).

■ The fifth tone is called *neutral tone*, which is indicated by the absence of a tone mark such as the second *ba* in *bàba* 'father'.

Exercise I for Distinguishing Tones: Listen and Select the Correct One

■ (1) A. mā   B. má   C. mǎ   D. mà   E. ma
▨   Answers: C. mǎ

■ (2) A. bā   B. bá   C. bǎ   D. bà   E. ba
▨   Answers: B. bá

■ (3) A. wēn   B. wén   C. wěn   D. wèn   E. wen
▨   Answers: D. wèn

■ (4) A. hāo   B. háo   C. hǎo   D. hào   E. hao
▨   Answers: C. hǎo

■ (5) A. gē   B. gé   C. gě   D. gè   E. de
▨   Answers: B. gé

■ (6) A. māmā   B. māmá   C. māmǎ   D. māmà   E. māma
▨   Answers: E. māma

■ (7) A. bàmā   B. bàma   C. bàmá   D. bámà   E. bāma
▨   Answers: A. bàmā

■ (8) A. dìyí   B. dīyǐ   C. dìyī   D. dǐyì   E. díyì
▨   Answers: C. dìyī

■ (9) A. lǎoshì   B. lǎoshí   C. lǎoshī   D. lāoshǐ   E. láoshī
▨   Answers: C. lǎoshī

■ (10) A. háobà   B. hàobǎ   C. hāobà   D. hǎobǎ   E. hǎoba
▨   Answers: E. hǎoba

Attachment 2: An Example of the PowerPoint Presentation for Teaching the Formation of Chinese Characters

2.1 Radicals in Chinese

- **Basic elements of characters:** If a character is a house, radicals are the materials that build the house. Different characters can share the same radical. For example, the radical 女 (nǚ 'female') is part of the characters 好 (hǎo 'good') and 她 (tā 'she'). Likewise, the radical 子 (zǐ 'child') is also part of the character 好. Therefore, 好 is formed by two radicals: 女 and 子.

- **Functioning to either indicate meaning or pronunciation of a character:** For instance, a radical such as 口 (kǒu 'mouth') indicate the meaning of the character 嗎 (ma 'a yes-no question marker') in that one generally needs to open a mouth to ask a question, while the other radical 馬 (mǎ) provides a clue about the pronunciation of the character 嗎 (ma).

- **Radicals as Characters:** Some radicals can be characters by themselves, e.g., 女 and 子. Some other radicals such as 宀 representing the roof a house, by contrast, can never stand alone and must combine with other radicals to form a character, e.g. 安 (ān 'peace').

Attachment 3: An Example of the PowerPoint Presentation for Teaching the Analysis of Chinese Characters

3.1 Characters for Numbers and Greetings

一，二，三，四，五，

六，七，八，九，十，

早，安，午，晚，你，

我，他，們，不，很，

好，忙，嗎，和，也，

呢，再，見

(1) The Characters for 一 yī 'one,' 二 èr 'two' and 三 sān 'three'

- The ancient forms for these three numbers are basically the same as their modern characters. In addition, these three characters are all formed by the Associative method in that the concepts of 'one,' 'two' and 'three' are obtained by associating the number of line presented in the characters.

- Furthermore, culturally these three numbers are also very interesting. People interested in the Chinese culture most likely are also familiar with terms like 'Tao' and 'Taiji.' The ancient Chinese people believed that before the formation of the universe there were chaos and infinity. The character 一 indicates that the universe was formed in an instant and Tao was generated from 一. At the same time, Ying and Yang were created and thus the concept of 'two' 二. Then the concept of 'three' 三 represents that Heaven and Earth and everything else in the universe were evolved from the interactions of Yin and Yang.

- Commonly used expressions for these three numbers are as follows.
  一 tiān   'one day'
  二 yuè   'February'
  Xīngqí 三 'Wednesday'

Building a Solid Foundation for

The Instruction and Learning of the Chinese Language

Sabbatical Project for fall 2008 – spring 2009

By

Chih Ping Chang, Ph.D.

Abstract

Many schools across the United States are expanding their language offerings to include Chinese. Following that trend, the Chinese Program at Mt. San Antonio College has been consistently growing as one of the largest Chinese programs in higher education in the United States. Like other Chinese programs, however, our Chinese program also faces a challenge that requires immediate attention. That challenge lies in the difficulties of learning the language, especially in the areas of Pīnyīn (the phonetic spelling system) and Chinese character learning.

In the present textbooks, however, the Pīnyīn is generally not presented as a unit. As for character learning, one may find a number of publications discussing Chinese characters by listing commonly used characters (around 3000 in number) alphabetically according to their phonetic spellings. If students need to look up a character that they just learned in class, they may have to go through several books to find the origin of that character, not to mention that they may not understand the explanation because generally these publications are intended for people with a background in Chinese language and culture.

Therefore, as a pioneering work, my project will (1) present the phonetic spelling system as a unit and (2) reorganize and analyze 149 basic Chinese characters according to six topics that beginning Chinese students typically learn. The focused level of this project will be Beginning Chinese One, because a solid foundation of the phonetic spelling system and characters will ensure that students have a solid foundation and become motivated to study advanced levels of Chinese.

The phonetic spelling system in my project will include (A) Chinese Tones, (B) consonants (also known as Chinese Initials) and vowels (also known as Chinese Finals), (C) rules for combining Initials, Finals and Tones into syllables and (D) exercises to master the phonetic spelling system. As for Character Analysis in my project, Chinese characters for beginning students will be analyzed in terms of the simplified three methods of forming Chinese characters presented in the context of interesting stories or cultural notes. The purpose of the analysis is to help students to appreciate the Chinese culture even more through character learning. In addition to presenting these in writing, all the materials will also be prepared in the format of PowerPoint so that instructors, tutors and students of the Chinese language may use them in class or after class.

This project will be beneficial to all the instructors (including myself) and students in the Chinese Program directly, and the Foreign Language Department and the College in general, especially in the areas of the appreciation of the Chinese culture through character learning, improvement in the quality and the excellence of the instruction and learning of the Chinese language.

1. Introduction

On October 15, 2005, an article entitled <u>Classes in Chinese Grow as the Language Rides a Wave of Popularity</u> in *New York Times* stated: "With encouragement from the Chinese and American governments, schools across the United States are expanding their language offerings to include Chinese, the world's most spoken tongue, not to mention one of its most difficult to learn." Following that trend, the Chinese Program at Mt. San Antonio College has been consistently growing from an enrollment of an average of 100 students per semester in 1997 to the current enrollment of 425 students. Such a growth makes the Chinese Program here one of the largest Chinese programs in higher education in the United States.

1.1 The Challenge

Like other Chinese programs, however, our program also faces a challenge that requires immediate attention. That challenge, as mentioned earlier, lies in the difficulties of learning the language. To start with, as a tonal language, the Chinese language is difficult for beginners to pronounce. For example, <u>wèn</u> in Chinese is pronounced as the fourth tone meaning 'to ask.' If the tone is mispronounced as the third tone like <u>wěn</u> meaning 'to kiss,' the learners, as well as the listeners, may be greatly embarrassed.

While beginners are struggling to master the oral communication, they also need to face the challenge of reading and writing the language. It is a well-known fact that characters instead of letters are used in the Chinese written language. As a result, characters like 圖 <u>tú</u> 'map,' 安 <u>ān</u> 'peace' and 霧 <u>wù</u> 'fog' become extremely difficult for learners with little knowledge of Chinese character formation.

Although fascinated by this language, a large number of beginning students do not continue on to upper levels Chinese because of the difficulties described above. As for the instructors of this language, the preparation of systematic exercises to improve students' listening, speaking, reading and writing skills, especially in the context of the Chinese culture, is simply too time consuming. For instance, I have been teaching Chinese here as a full time professor for over ten years, but I have learned to teach only about 200 characters in terms of their methods of formation in the context of the Chinese culture. Furthermore, I have not even had time to write down what I learned about teaching these characters. This personal example shows how time consuming this project of analyzing characters is.

Furthermore, in the present textbooks, the Pīnyīn is generally not presented as a unit. As for character learning, one may find a number of publications discussing Chinese characters by listing commonly used characters (around 3000 in number) alphabetically according to their phonetic spellings. If students need to look up a character that they just learned in class, they may have to go through several books to find the origin of that character, not to mention that they may not understand the explanation because generally these publications are intended for people with a background in Chinese language and culture.

1.2 The Scope of the Project

My project will (1) present the phonetic spelling system as a unit and (2) reorganize and analyze basic 100 to 150 Chinese characters according to the topics that beginning Chinese students typically learn. Each character will be presented depicting

4

the formation of the character in the context of the Chinese culture. The focused level of this project will be Elementary Chinese One because a solid foundation of the phonetic spelling system and character learning will ensure that students have a solid foundation and become motivated to continue on to advanced levels of learning this language.

1.3 The Benefits

This project will be beneficial to other instructors of the Chinese Program (including myself), students in the Chinese Program, the Foreign Language Department and the College.

A. Benefits to All the Instructors (including myself) in the Chinese Program:

This will benefit all the instructors in the Chinese Program here by

- Preparing all the instructors in the Chinese Program to be better equipped with systematic instruction and presentation

- Allowing all the instructors of the Chinese language to learn more about the Chinese characters in the context of the fascinating Chinese culture

- Providing detailed and systematic teaching materials, which require long time preparation

B. Benefits to the Students:

This will benefit them by

- Providing a better means to understand and learn Chinese characters and their cultural foundations.

- Appreciating the Chinese culture.

C. <u>Benefits to the Department:</u>

This will benefit the department by

- Making learning Chinese characters easier and more interesting for all students, especially for students learning other Asian languages, such as the Japanese language

- Sharing the new resources with my colleagues so that all instructors will be working at the same pace and cover the same materials per chapter and per semester.

- Bringing better retention for the whole department.

D. <u>Benefits to the College:</u>

This will benefit the college by

- Making Mt. San Antonio College a leader of teaching the phonetic spelling system and Chinese characters more systematically

- Bringing about greater retention in more advanced Chinese classes

- Increasing the number of students in the Chinese Program.

2. Teaching the Chinese Phonetic Spelling System

The Chinese written language, unlike western alphabetic languages, uses characters as its basic unit. For example, an English sentence such as 'I like Chinese' will be indicated as five characters 我喜歡中文 in the Chinese language. As a result, a learner will find it very difficult to study the Chinese language without a Romanized Chinese phonetic system. The most popular Romanized Chinese Phonetic System, also called as Hànyǔ Pinyin, will be introduced in terms of Distinction of Tones (section 2.1), Finals and Initials (section 2.2), Important Rules for Combining an Initial, a Final and a Tone (section 2.3). Following the idea of learning by doing, practical exercises will also be provided at the end of each section to help students master what they are learning.

2.1 Distinction of Tones

As mentioned earlier, Hànyǔ Pīnyīn is the most commonly used system to spell Chinese characters phonetically. In Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, a character like 我 'I' is written phonetically as wǒ. The wǒ is composed of three parts: **Initial** (w), **Final** (o) and **Tone** (ˇ), as shown by the following illustration.

	Tone
Initial	**Final**

The **Tone** is always placed above the **Final**. There are a total of five tones. The first four tones are major tones and they are indicated as first tone (—), second tone (/), third tone (ˇ) and fourth tone (\ ). The fifth tone is called *neutral tone*, which is indicated by the absence of a tone mark such as the second *ba* in *bàba* 'father'.

7

Tone distinction is extremely important because tones distinguish meanings in Chinese. For example, in the following four characters 媽 (**mā** 'mother'), 麻 (**má** 'flax'), 馬 (**mǎ** 'horse') and 罵 (**mà** 'to scold'), the only differences among them are their different tone marks. Whenever there is a miscommunication, usually it is because of a mistake in tone distinction. An example of this will be **wèn** 'ask' and **wěn** 'kiss.' Although these two expressions are identical in terms of their initial and final, a switch in tones changes the meaning from asking to kissing, which can be very confusing and embarrassing.

The key to pronounce the four tones correctly is as follows:

1st tone: Remember to pitch it <u>high</u> enough and keep it <u>level</u> throughout.

2nd tone: This is a clear <u>rising</u> tone similar to the "***Huh***?" in English used when one
                has not heard clearly.

3rd tone: Be sure to pronounce it as <u>low</u> as possible.

4th tone: Start high and do not be afraid to let it <u>fall</u> right down. Similar to a sharp
                command in English, e.g., "Don't!"

A good way to distinguish the four tones is by looking at the symbols used to indicate them, i.e., first tone (—), second tone (/), third tone (ˇ) and fourth tone (\ ). For instance, as shown in the symbol for the first tone (—), the tone should be level without fluctuations. Another difference to pay attention is the distinction between the second and the fourth where the second is a rising tone, while the fourth is the opposite, a falling one. The third confusion that students generally have is the distinction between the second and the third. As shown in their symbols, these two tones are similar in that they both have a rising tone, but the difference is that the third tone emphasizes on lowering one's voice when it is pronounced.

As for the fifth tone, the neutral tone, it is not considered as a major tone because it is not as productive, compared with the four major tones. Moreover, the fifth tone is generally predictable in terms of where it appears in an expression. For example, a fifth tone is usually applied in the second repeated syllable of a two-syllable expression such as the second repeated syllable *ma* in the expression *māma* 'mother.'

The following are exercises to help student master tone distinction. In Exercise I, students will listen to a pronunciation and select a right tone from a multiple-choice question. Simple questions focusing on one syllable tone distinction are provided first, and then more advanced items where students need to distinguish the tones of two-syllable expressions are supplied.

Exercise I for Tone Distinction

(1) A. mā	B. má	C. mǎ ·	D. mà	E. ma
(2) A. bā	B. bá	C. bǎ	D. bà	E. ba
(3) A. wēn	B. wén	C. wěn	D. wèn	E. wen
(2) A. hāo ·	B. háo	C. hǎo	D. hào	E. hao ·
(5) A. gē	B. gé	C. gě	D. gè	E. de
(6) A. māmā	B. māmá	C. māmǎ	D. māmà	E. māma
(7) A. bàmā	B. bàma	C. bàmá	D. bámà	E. bāma
(8) A. dìyí	B. dīyǐ	C. dìyī	D. dǐyì	E. díyì
(9) A. lǎoshì	B. lǎoshí	C. lǎoshī	D. lāoshǐ	E. láoshī
(10) A. háobà	B. hàobǎ	C. hāobà	D. hǎobǎ	E. hǎoba

Answers for Exercise I:

(1) C. mǎ
(2) B. bá
(3) D. wèn
(4) C. hǎo
(5) B. gé
(6) E. māma
(7) A. bàmā
(8) C. dìyī
(9) C. lǎoshī
(10) E. hǎoba

In Exercise II, students will listen to an expression and mark the tones in the right place. The same principle of simplicity to complexity is also applied in this exercise.

Exercise II for Tone Distinction

(1) di

(2) hao

(3) kan

(4) didi

(5) dage

(6) zhe ben shu

(7) na zhi gou

(8) xile man yi

(9) mama qi ma

(10) ma man mama ma ma

Answers for Exercise II:

(1) dǐ
(2) hào
(3) kān
(4) dìdi
(5) dàgē
(6) zhè běn shū
(7) nà zhī gǒu
(8) xǐlè mǎn yì
(9) māma qí mǎ
(10) mǎ màn māma mà mǎ

2.2 Initials and Finals

The following is a list of the Initials and Finals used in the Hànyǔ Pīnyīn system

(henceforth the Pīnyīn system).

Initials

b	p	m	f
d	t	n	l
g	k	h	
j	**q**	**x**	
z	**zh**		
c	**ch**		
s	**sh**	**r**	
y	**w**		

Finals

a	o	e (1) /ə/ h<u>é</u> (2) /ɛ/ y<u>ě</u>
i	u	ü
ai	ei	ao
ou	an	en
ang	eng	er
ong		
ia	iao	ie
iu	ian	in
ing	iang	iong
üe	yuan	yun
ua	uo	uai
ui		

11

To start with, Initials in the Chinese language are generally consonants in English, while Finals are vowels. The reason that Initials are not called consonants is because consonants in the Chinese language always occur in the initial position of a syllable. Likewise, Finals in the Chinese language are not called vowels because vowels in the Chinese language always appear at the end of a syllable. In other words, consonants and vowels in the Chinese language are predictable. Such an understanding of the Chinese language may also help English teachers to help their Chinese students learning English to distinguish the following words: car, cart and card. That is, since the consonants *t* in car*t* and *d* in car*d* are something that is not in the Chinese language, English teachers should remind their students to emphasize these consonants when they pronounce English words ending with a consonant.

The second point to efficiently master the seemly complicated Initials and Finals is to focus on those that cannot be easily associated with the pronunciations of English alphabets. Since initials like *b, p, m* and *f* and finals like *a, i* and *u* are pronounced the same as they are in English, native speakers of English should be able to pronounce them well without much effort. As a result, the Initials that require special instruction can be simplified as the following.

Initials to Focus

j	q	x
z	zh	
c	ch	
s	sh	r
y	w	

The above listed Initials should be explained because they cannot be pronounced as intuitively as their counterparts in English. However, instead of learning these Initials

through pure memorization, students can master these difficult symbols by associating them with something that they are familiar with in English or by comparing the differences and similarities between related symbols. For example, as shown in the following, the symbol **j** has a similar pronunciation as the English capital G, while the symbol **q** is similar to English ch as in <u>ch</u>eese and the symbol **x** is pronounced as something between c and sh in English. Likewise, the Initials **y** and **w** has the same pronunciation as the Finals **i** and **u**, both of which are also called semivowels. Besides, the Initial **r** is similar to the pronunciation of the *r* in the English word <u>r</u>un without pronouncing its vowel *un*. Another feature to pronounce this Initial **r** correctly is to roll up one's tongue to pronounce this Initial.

In addition to associating something similar in English, students should also compare related Initials, as shown in the following.

Initial	English	Initial	English
z	ds (as in wor<u>ds</u>)	zh	dsr
c	ts (as in wan<u>ts</u>)	ch	tsr
s	s	sh	sr

Besides finding a similar pronunciation in English for the Initials **z**, **t** and **s** as ds, ts and s, students should also pay attention to the systematic difference for **z** vs. **zh**, **c** vs. **ch** and **s** vs. **sh**. One may notice that the symbol **h** in **zh**, **ch** and **sh** functions as a reminder to roll up one's tongue when these initials are pronounced. By contrast, when the symbol **h** is not present as in the Initials **z**, **c** and **s**, one should never roll up one's tongue in order to pronounce them accurately.

By the same token, the complicated Finals in the Pīnyīn system can also be more efficiently learned in a similar manner as we analyzed the Initials. To start with, for the Finals that can be pronounced the same as their counterparts in English, one should spend as little time as possible on them. These Finals are **a, i, u, ai, ei, ao, ou, an, en, er, ong, iong, ia, iao, ie, in, ua, uo** and **uai.**

After mastering the above easy Finals, the Finals that bear a resemblance to their English counterparts but with significant differences should be introduced. They are **o** and **e.** In the Pīnyīn system, the Final **o** is not pronounced the same as its English counterpart *o.* The difference is that while *o* in English in reality is pronounced as /ou/, the Final **o** in the Pīnyīn system is pronounced without the /u/. In addition to the Final **o,** the symbol **e** is also important because the same symbol can be pronounced as either /ɛ/ as in the example of yě 'also' or /ə/ as in the example of hé 'and.'

Once the Finals **o** and **e** are taken care of, the Final **ü** should be the focus in that it is a pronunciation not found in English. The key of pronouncing **ü** correctly is to say the Initial **y** and the Final **u** as **yu** at the same time. Another trick is to say the Initial **y** while rounding one's lips. Because **ü** and **yu** are pronounced the same in this system, they are both used as symbols to represent the same pronunciation. When we know that the symbols **ü** and **yu** represent the same pronunciation, the pronunciation for related Finals such as **üe, yuan** and **yun** should then become easier to master.

After learning the pronunciation for **ü,** one should also notice that whenever the symbol **g** is used as part of a Final in this system, a nasal sound is always involved. Furthermore, one should also know that nasality is a contrasting feature in the Chinese language. This is shown in the following comparison.

14

an	vs.	ang
en	vs.	eng
in	vs.	ing
ian	vs.	iang

Last but not least, the inconsistencies in the pronunciation and spelling for the Finals **iu** and **ui** definitely deserve our attention. The symbol **iu** in reality should be pronounced as /iou/, but in the Pīnyīn system the *o* in the middle of *iou* must be omitted in writing. Likewise, **ui** should be pronounced as /uei/, but in the Pīnyīn system the **e** in the middle of *uei* must be omitted and therefore it should be spelled as **ui**.

Following the same principle of learning by doing, we will put our learning of the Initials and Finals in the Pīnyīn system into practice with the following two exercises.

Exercise I: Listen and select the correct Initial(s)

(1) __ǐ
    A. j   B. q   C. x   D. z

(2) __ǐ__iān
    A. g, d   B. j, d   C. j, t   D. g, t

(3) __ǐ__uáng
    A. ch, ch   B. q, ch   C. ch, q   D. g, q

(4) __iàn__ài
    A. q, zh   B. s, zh   C. x, zh   D. x, z

(5) __èn__ì
    A. z, s   B. zh, sh   C. r, sh   D. r, s

Answers for Exercise I:

(1) C. x
(2) B. j, d
(3) B. q, ch
(4) D. x, z
(5) C. r, sh

Exercise II: Listen and select the correct Final(s)

(1) w___
    A. ǒ   B. ǔ   C. ǎo   D. ǒn

(2) x___
    A. iǎo   B. yǎo   C. ǎo   D. iǔ

(3) l___
    A. ù   B. ǜ   C. yù   D. yǜ

(4) h___m___
    A. ěng, áng   B. ěn, áng   C. ǐn, éng   D. ěng, án

(5) h___j___
    A. uéi, iā   B. uéi, yā   C. uí, iā   D. uí, yā

Answers for Exercise II:

(1) A. ǒ
(2) A. iǎo
(3) B. ǜ
(4) B. ěn, áng
(5) C. uí, iā

16

2.3 Important Rules for the Pīnyīn System

The following nine rules are important rules to accurately describe the pronunciation of Mandarin Chinese using the Pīnyīn system.

1. If there are no initials before the finals *i* and *u*, one should write the finals as *yi* and *wu*, respectively.

2. If there are no initials before finals such as *ia, iao*, and *ie*, the *i* will be changed to *y*. That is, we should write them as *ya*, *yao* and *ye*.

3. If there are no initials going before finals such as *ua, uo*, and *uai*, the *u* will be changed to *w*. That is, we should write them as *wa*, *wo* and *wai*.

4. Always put the tone mark on the first vowel except in the following two situations:
   (1) If there are two vowels in a syllable such as the *ua* in *huā* (flower) and the first vowel is an *u*, put the tone mark on the second vowel.
   (2) If there are two vowels in a syllable such as the *ian* in *xiān* (first) and the first vowel is an *i*, put the tone mark on the second vowel.

5. Write the pronunciation for *uei* as *ui*, e.g. *duì* 'right', and for *iou* as *iu*, e.g. *xiū* 'rest'.

6. When *zh, ch, sh, r, z, c, s* are pronounced alone, an -i should be added to fulfill the *Initial+Final* requirement. Therefore, their pīnyīn should be *zhi, chi, shi, ri, zi, ci, si*.

7. When an expression has two consecutive third tones such as *nǐ hǎo* 'hi', the first third-tone *nǐ* may sound like the second tone. However, you still need to write them with two third tones.

8. The pronunciation of *yī* 一 'one':
   (1) When *yī* is followed by a first, second or third tone, *yī* should be pronounced as fourth tone, e.g. *yì tiān* 'one day', *yì nián* 'one year' and *yì diǎn* 'one o'clock.'
   (2) When *yī* is followed by a fourth or neutral tone, *yī* should be pronounced as second tone, e.g. *yí xià* 'for a while' and *yí ge* 'one + measure word'.

9. When bù 不 'not' is followed by a fourth tone, bù should be pronounced as second tone, e.g. bú shì 'to be not.'

However, a simple list of nine seemingly complicated rules may not truly help learners to understand and apply these rules. Therefore, these nine rules will be

explained in terms of a few key concepts, as well as their relations with each other, to make learning these rules more efficient.

To start with, rule number 1 is repeated here for the convenience of discussion.

Rule # 1: If there are no initials before the finals *i* and *u*, one should write the finals as *yi* and *wu*, respectively.

This rule points out two important concepts in the Pīnyīn system. The first one is that the Finals *i* and *u* as semivowels have their counterparts *y* and *u* respectively as Initials. The second concept is that in the Pīnyīn system whenever possible one should always try to have a representation for the Initial in a syllable. As a result of these two concepts, rule number 1 makes sense in that only the Finals *i* and *u* do have their Initial counterparts as *y* and *w*, so they should be spelled as *yi* and *wu* to fulfill the requirements mentioned.

Rules number 2 and 3, repeated in the following, are related to rule number 1 in that they all have something to do with the finals *i* and *u*.

Rule # 2: If there are no initials before finals such as *ia*, *iao*, and *ie*, the *i* will be changed to *y*. That is, we should write them as *ya*, *yao* and *ye*.

Rule # 3: If there are no initials going before finals such as *ua*, *uo*, and *uai*, the *u* will be changed to *w*. That is, we should write them as *wa*, *wo* and *wai*.

Unlike rule number 1 that adds a dummy initial *y* or *w* in front of the finals *i* or *u*, rule number 2 states that the semivowel *i* needs to be change to the initial *y* when there are no other vowels like *a*, *o* or *ai* present in the same Final. The reason for doing so is to fulfill the requirement of having an initial and a final in a syllable whenever possible, as discussed earlier.

Following the same logic as rule number 2, rule number 3 states that the semivowel *u* must be change to the initial *w* when there are no other vowels in the same Final.

Rule number 4, repeated here, is again related to the semivowel *i* and *u*.

Rule # 4: Always put the tone mark on the first vowel except in the following two situations:
  (1) If there are two vowels in a syllable such as the <u>ua</u> in <u>huā</u> (flower) and the first vowel is an *u*, put the tone mark on the second vowel.
  (2) If there are two vowels in a syllable such as the <u>ian</u> in <u>xiān</u> (first) and the first vowel is an *i*, put the tone mark on the second vowel.

The reason for such a rule is that being a semivowel, *u* or *i* give their privilege of carrying a tone mark to a full vowel as shown in the above examples in rule number 4.

Rule number 5, repeated below, is about two unique spellings in the Pīnyīn system that requires learner's attention.

Rule # 5: Write the pronunciation for *u<u>e</u>i* as *ui*, e.g. *duì* 'right', and for *i<u>o</u>u* as *iu*, e.g. *xiū* 'rest'

The first half of the rule is about the pronunciation /uei/, which in the Pīnyīn system must be spelled as *ui* by omitting the middle *e* and the reason is to avoid having too many vowels in the same Final. The second half of the rule is about the pronunciation of /iou/, which in the Pīnyīn system must be spelled as *iu* by omitting the middle *o* for the same reason as the spelling of *ui*. Because such a practice of the Pīnyīn system is against one's intuition, learners should pay attention to such a rule to avoid making mistakes. Another point related to this rule also deserves our attention. That is, although the Finals *ui* or *iu* have *i* or *u* as their second vowel, their tone mark must still be put on the second vowel, following rule number 4 just discussed.

As for rule number 6, it is repeated below for the convenience of discussion.

Rule #6: When *zh, ch, sh, r, z, c, s* are pronounced alone, an -i should be added to fulfill the *Initial+<u>Final</u>* requirement. Therefore, their pīnyīn should be *zhi, chi, shi, ri, zi, ci, si*.

This rule points out a very important aspect of using the Pīnyīn system. That is, in a syllable a Final cannot be omitted. As a result, although the Initials *zh, ch, sh, r, z, c, s* are pronounceable by themselves, they still require a dummy final *i* to fulfill this important requirement.

While rules number 1 through 6 are about Initials and Finals, rules number 7 through 9 are about tone changes. Rule number 7, repeated here for the convenience of discussion, is considered as the most important tone change rule for Mandarin Chinese.

Rule # 7: When an expression has two consecutive third tones such as *nǐ hǎo* 'hi', the first third-tone *nǐ* may sound like the second tone. However, you still need to write them with two third tones.

This rule is very important for at least three reasons. First of all, it is a general rule that applies to all the consecutive third tones. Secondly, it is a simple rule to remember. When a rule is simple but is used frequently, it is always good for learners to remember. The third and the most important reason is that this rule is counter-intuitive. That is, what you hear is not what you should write using the Pin1yin1 system. As shown in the example above, one will always hear a second and third tone combination, but because of the knowledge of this important tone change rule, one must mark both as third tones[1]. Since it goes against one's perception of tones, it will certainly be beneficial to keep in mind of this rule to avoid making mistakes frequently.

Compared with rule number 7, rules number 8 and 9, repeated below, are much more complicated.

Rule # 8: The pronunciation of *yī* — 'one':
        (1) When *yī* is followed by a first, second or third tone, *yī* should be pronounced as fourth tone, e.g. *yì tiān* 'one day', *yì nián* 'one year' and *yì diǎn* 'one o'clock.'

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[1] Some may ask to distinguish the result of this rule from a true second + third tone combination. The answer is that there are rarely combinations of a true second + third tone in Mandarin Chinese.

(2) When *yī* is followed by a fourth or neutral tone, *yī* should be pronounced as second tone, e.g. *yí xià* 'for a while' and *yí ge* 'one + measure word'.

Rule # 9: When bù 不 'not' is followed by a fourth tone, bù should be pronounced as second tone, e.g. bú shì 'to be not.'

Although these two rules are complicated, one, however, should not spend too much time on them for the following two reasons. First of all, contrary to rule number 7 as a general rule, rules number 8 and 9 only apply to two specific cases, the characters *yī* 一 and bù 不. Secondly, it is too complicated to memorize the details of these two rules, but the benefits of such a memorization are almost none because these two rules go with one's perception of tones, unlike rule number 7. That is, what one hears is exactly the same as what one should write using the Pīnyīn system. Since one can simply pay attention to the pronunciation of the tones related to these two rules and describe them accordingly using the Pīnyīn system, one really does not need to burden oneself memorizing the details of these two rules.

Now with a better understanding of these important rules for describing the Chinese language phonetically using the Pīnyīn system, let us have some exercises to reinforce what we have learned.

Exercise I: Listen and Select the Correct Answer

(1) A. yī   B. ī   C. y   D. yi

(2) A. ū   B. wū   C. w   D. wu

(3) A. yiào   B. iào   C. yaò   D. yào

(4) A. wuāi   B. uāi   C. wāi   D. wī

(5) A. hwuǒ   B. huǒ   C. hǔo   D. hwǒ

(6) A. xiǎo	B. xǐao	C. xyǎo	D. xyiǎo
(7) A. suèi	B. swì	C. suì	D. sùi
(8) A. liú	B. lióu	C. líu	D. lyóu
(9) A. zhīshè	B. zhīshì	C. zhēshè	D. zhsh
(10) A. níhǎo	B. níháo	C. nǐhǎo	D. nǐháo
(11) A. hénhǎo	B. hěnhǎo	C. hěnháo	D. hénháo
(12) A. zǒngtǒng	B. zóngtǒng	C. zǒngtóng	D. zóngtóng
(13) A. yīxiá	B. yìxià	C. yīxià	D. yíxià
(14) A. yīxiǎng	B. yìxiǎng	C. yíxiǎng	D. yìxiáng
(15) A. búduì	B. búduí	C. bùduì	D. būduì

Answers for Exercises I

(1)　A. yī
(2)　B. wū
(3)　D. yào
(4)　C. wāi
(5)　B. huǒ
(6)　A. xiǎo
(7)　C. suì
(8)　A. liú
(9)　B. zhīshì
(10) C. nǐhǎo
(11) B. hěnhǎo
(12) A. zǒngtǒng
(13) D. yíxià
(14) B. yìxiǎng
(15) A. búduì

Exercise II: Dictation (Write down the Chinese phrases or sentences you hear using the Pīnyīn system)

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

(5)

(6)

(7)

(8)

(9)

(10)

Answers for Exercises II

(1) wǔyì
(2) yěwài
(3) huíxiǎng
(4) duìliú
(5) cìzì
(6) hěnhǎo yòu hěnzǎo
(7) tā yíxiàng dōu hěn máng
(8) wǒ yìdiǎn yě bú yào
(9) nǐmen yīnggāi cháng lái
(10) zhāng lǎoshī xǐhuān jiāoshū.

3. The Formation of Chinese Characters

After learners master the Pīnyīn system to accurately describe the pronunciation of the Chinese language, they will then face another challenging but exciting part of learning this unique language. The Chinese written language is very different from English. One distinctive difference between the two languages is that while an English word 'good' is presented in terms of alphabets, the Chinese equivalent for 'good' is 好, being presented in terms of a character. The English word 'good' is composed of four letters, while its Chinese counterpart is composed of what are called Radicals, 女 and 子.

Furthermore, the methods to form Chinese characters are also different from English word formation. Therefore, before learning Chinese characters, it is essential to know Radicals in Chinese (Section 3.1) and Methods of Forming Chinese Characters (Section 3.2).

3.1 Radicals in Chinese

Radicals are the basic elements of characters. In other words, if a character is a house, radicals are the materials that build the house. Different characters may share the same radical. For example, the radical 女 (nǚ 'female') is part of the characters 好 (hǎo 'good') and 她 (tā 'she'). Likewise, the radical 子 (zǐ 'child') is also part of the character 好. Therefore, 好 is formed by two radicals: 女 and 子.

Generally radicals function to either indicate meaning or pronunciation of a character. For instance, a radical such as 口 (kǒu 'mouth') indicates the meaning of the character 嗎 (ma 'a yes-no question marker') in that one generally needs to open a mouth

24

to ask a question, while the other radical 馬 (mǎ) provides a clue about the pronunciation of the character 嗎 (ma).

Some radicals can be characters by themselves, e.g., 女 and 子. Some other radicals such as 宀 representing the roof a house, by contrast, can never stand alone and must combine with other radicals to form a character, e.g. 安 (ān 'peace').

In addition, some radicals such as 人 and 心 have shortened forms like 亻 (rén 'people') and 忄 (xīn 'heart'), respectively. These shortened forms are used in a combination with other radicals such as 也 (yě 'also') or 亡 (wáng 'die') to form new characters such as 他 (tā 'he') and 忙 (máng 'busy').

Unlike an English dictionary that uses 26 alphabets to look up a word, a traditional Chinese dictionary uses a chart listing the most commonly used 214 Chinese radicals (also called *Bushou*[2]) to look up a character.

For example, to look up a character such as 他 /tā/ 'he/she,' one needs to first look up the *Bushou* 亻 in the chart. A *Bushou* is generally the left hand side radical of a character with two radicals side by side. For a character with a radical on top of another radical like 花 /huā/ 'flower,' the *Bushou* is generally the top one.

For a character such as 他 /tā/ 'he/she,' if a dictionary is electronic like the Chinese software NJSTAR, all the characters having the same radical 亻 will appear on top of the radical chart, as shown in the following chart.

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[2] The system of 214 radicals came up during the late Ming dynasty (about 400 years ago) and the most famous dictionary using them is the Kangxi dictionary 康熙字典 from 1716.

A Chart of 214 Commonly Used Radicals
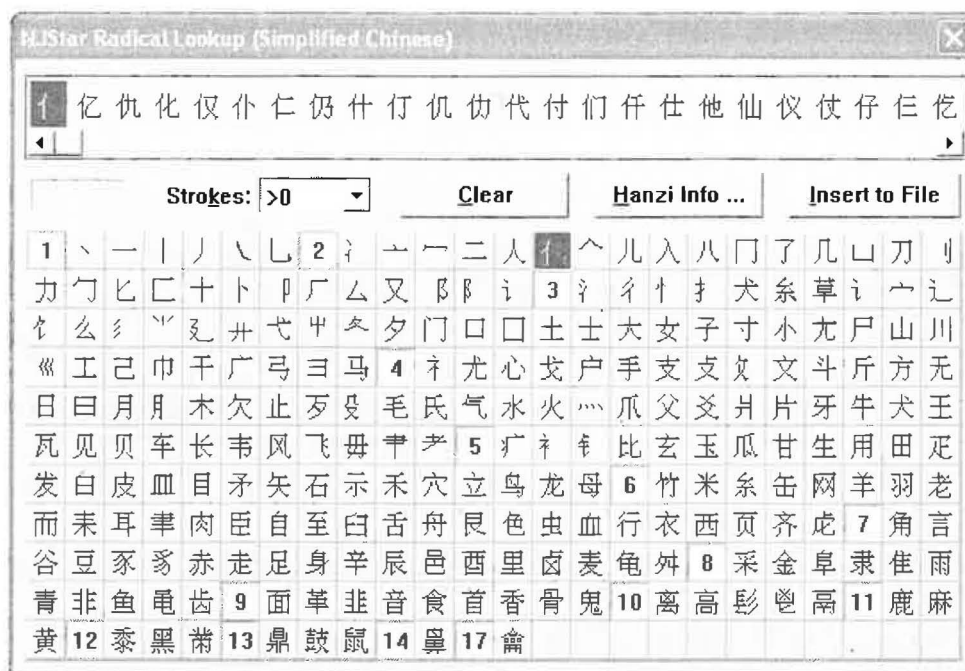
If the dictionary is in paper, the specified radical 亻 will have a page number where one

can turn to so that all the characters with the same radical are listed in terms of their

stroke orders.

3.2 Methods of Chinese Character Formation

Once we understand how Chinese radicals are used as components to form

characters, we will continue to discuss methods of Chinese character formation for at

least two benefits. First of all, a lot of characters that look unrelated will be learned much .

more efficiently once learners of the Chinese language understand the methods these

characters are constructed. Secondly, learners will have more appreciation in terms of

the culture, when they know how interestingly these characters are created.

Traditionally, six methods called *Liùshū* 六書 are used to analyze Chinese

characters. These six methods are based on the most famous book on analysis of Chinese

characters, *Shuō Wén Jiě Zì* 說文解字, dated 147 AD by Xǔ Shèn 許慎 of the Eastern

Han period. These six methods are Pictographs 象形 *xiàngxíng*, Ideographs 指事 *zhǐshì*,

Composite ideographs 會意 *huìyì*, Phonetic compounds 形聲 *xíngshēng*, Transferred

characters 轉注 *zhuǎnzhù* and Borrowed characters 假借 *jiǎjiè*.

These six methods, however, were not created by Xǔ Shèn. They are only his

summary and induction of ancient ways of creating characters. Besides, these six

methods were not all developed at the same time.· That is, some were earlier and some

later. Strictly speaking, only the first four methods (Pictographs, Ideographs, Composite

ideographs and Phonetic compounds) are real methods of character formation. The last

two methods, Transferred characters and Borrowed characters, are simply methods of

expanding the range of use of an existing character.

Therefore, the first four methods will be our focus of discussion, while the last

two will be discussed briefly. Furthermore, for the efficiency of teaching and learning, I

will further simplify the traditional six methods into three methods, namely, Pictographic,

Associative and Semantic-Phonetic, in the following discussion.

3.2.1 The Pictographic Method

The Pictographic method draws a picture of the thing or person depicted, for

instance, 人 rén 'person', 日 rì 'sun', 月 yuè 'moon', 山 shān 'mountain', etc. As shown in

the character 人 rén 'person,' one draws the side view of a person, showing head, hands

and legs. Such a depiction becomes even clearer when we look at the ancient character

人 where the modern character developed from.

The following is a list of more examples of the Pictographic method. Every listed modern character is accompanied by its ancient form, as well as a definition with more detailed explanation to help learners better understand characters formed by the Pictographic method.

Ancient[3] Form	Modern Character	Definition
	人	person: side view of a person, showing head, hands and legs
	日	sun: a depiction of the sun
	月	moon: a depiction of a crescent moon
	山	mountain: a depiction of mountain peaks
	水	water: water flowing in a curve
	木	tree: a tree with branches and roots
	口	mouth: an open mouth
	目	eye: a person's eye with the eyeball
	馬	horse: side view of a horse, showing legs, tail and mane

Chinese characters formed by the Pictographic method, however, are different from pictures representing a word in at least two aspects. Pictographic characters are far simpler in form than drawings or pictures. Moreover, pictographic characters can be used directly to express individual words in a language.

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[3] The ancient forms presented in this paper are mainly Seal script, developed before 221 B.C. Some ancient forms are even earlier than Seal script, for example, Bronze inscriptions and Oracle bone script.

As shown in the examples above, pictographic characters have a great advantage over other types of characters in that they have a more direct visual appeal. That is, it is often easy to remember what object a character represents just by looking at it. In addition, pictographic characters are all characters which cannot be analyzed into smaller meaningful components. Therefore, they can be used as building blocks in constructing new characters.

Although characters formed by the Pictographic method have the advantage of conveying meanings directly, this method is quite limited. To start with, there are far more objects in the world that cannot be easily depicted using this method. Moreover, it will be extremely difficult to describe abstract concepts directly using the Pictographic method. For these reasons, this method was used only during the early stages of Chinese character evolution, and later gradually phased out of use. As a result, pictographic characters are few in number. For example, among the 9353 Chinese characters found in *Shuō Wén Jiě Zì*, the most famous book for analyzing Chinese characters, only around three hundred (4 percent of the total) are pictographic characters.

3.2.2 The Associative Method

Because of the limitations of the Pictographic method just discussed, other methods to construct Chinese characters were employed. In Xǔ Shèn's *Shuō Wén Jiě Zì*, two methods, namely Ideographs, Composite ideographs, were mentioned. Because both methods discussed in Xǔ Shèn's book require association to some extent to construct a new character, these two methods will be regarded as one method in this paper as the Associative method so that learners can easily apply it to analyze characters of this type.

The Ideographs, Composite ideographs mentioned in Xǔ Shèn's *Shuō Wén Jiě Zì* will be presented first, and then the definition and reasons for combining the two methods into one as the Associative Method will also be discussed. To start with, the Ideographs mentioned in Xǔ Shèn's book are generally constructed out of some association, for example,

Ancient Form	Modern Character	Definition
⌣̇	上	above: the long curve indicates a border, the dot shows the direction
ニ	二	two: two lines to show the concept of 'two'
岗	本	root: The pictographic character 木 'tree' is added with a horizontal line across its lower half to indicate the 'root' of a tree.
日	甘	sweet: a short line in the mouth 口 shows the place where sweetness is tasted.

As shown above, the association involved can be two symbols as in the examples of 上 shàng 'above' and 二 èr 'two.' It can also be the association of a pictograph and a symbol like the examples of 本 běn 'root' and 甘 gān 'sweet.'

Furthermore, characters belonging to Ideographs are a lot fewer than characters constructed by the Pictographic Method. Of the 9,353 characters listed in the *Shuō Wén Jiě Zì*, only about one hundred (one percent) are ideographic characters.

Compared with either pictographic or ideographic characters, characters belonging to Composite ideographs mentioned in Xǔ Shèn's *Shuō Wén Jiě Zì* are more numerous. Of the 9,353 characters in *Shuō Wén Jiě Zì*, about 1200 (or 13 percent) are characters of Composite ideographs. The following are some such examples.

Ancient Form	Modern Character	Definition
林 (ancient)	林	woods: two trees implies some trees
森 (ancient)	森	forest: three trees means many trees
旦 (ancient)	旦	dawn: a sun just rises over the horizon
休 (ancient)	休	rest: a person is leaning again a tree to rest
比 (ancient)	比	compare or compete: two persons are racing
明 (ancient)	明	bright: when the sun and the moon are put together
寒 (ancient)	寒	cold: the person is 'cold' under a roof, where grass is spread out for insulation inside a house, while ice can be seen underneath

As shown above, Composite ideographs mentioned in Xǔ Shèn's *Shuō Wén Jiě Zì* generally need at least two ideographs to form a character. The association of different components of a character produces the meaning of the character. Composite ideographic characters can be composed of identical parts such as 林 lín 'woods' and 森 sēn 'forest.' Characters of this type can also consist of different components associated to express a new meaning, as shown in the rest of the examples above, and this type accounts for the majority of Composite ideographic characters.

Compared with pictographic and ideographic characters, Composite ideographic characters are a great step forward in that they are clearly much more flexible and adaptive. Unlike a pictographic or an ideographic character using only one ideograph, a Composite ideographic character uses at least two ideographs to express its intended meaning. Such an advantage of Composite ideographic characters over pictographic and ideographic characters can be observed in two obvious differences.

The first difference is that the percentage of Composite ideographic characters (13 percentage) found in Xŭ Shèn's *Shuō Wén Jiĕ Zì* is much higher than that of pictographic characters (4 percent) and Ideographic characters (1 percent). The second difference can be observed in the classes of words that characters of different types belong to. Pictographic and Ideographic characters for the most part represent concrete nouns, while Composite ideographic characters can be verbs such as 休 xiū 'rest' and 比 bǐ 'compare' or adjectives such as 明 míng 'bright' in the examples shown.

In this paper, the Ideographic and Composite ideographic characters mentioned in Xŭ Shèn's *Shuō Wén Jiĕ Zì* will be put together as the Associative Method in that the formation of both types requires some association of their components in a character. The main difference between an Ideographic character and a Composite ideographic character is that the meaning of the former is generally derived from the association of a single ideograph with at least one symbol, while the meaning of the latter comes from the association of at least two ideographs.

Although it is far more productive than the Pictographic method, the Associative method is unable to leap outside the system of pure ideographs, i.e., symbols based on meaning. One of the limitations of relying on pure ideographs is that no information is provided regarding the pronunciation of the character, which is a great advantage of any alphabetically based languages.

Another serious limitation of the Associative method is that a simple concept may require complicated meaning based components to derive. For instance, as shown in the examples above, to derive the meaning of the character 寒 hán 'cold,' the symbols for

'house,' 'grass,' 'person,' and 'ice' need to be associated. Furthermore, the association of these symbols may open to more than just the interpretation of the meaning 'cold.'

As an improvement of the limitations the Associative method presented, a new and more scientific category of grouping characters, namely Phonetic compounds, was also discussed in Xǔ Shèn's *Shuō Wén Jiě Zì*. In this paper, the term will be renamed as Semantic-phonetic method to make it easier to understand the concept.

3.2.3 The Semantic-Phonetic Method

The Phonetic compounds 形聲 mentioned in Xǔ Shèn's *Shuō Wén Jiě Zì* in reality uses the combination of a phonetic component and a semantic radical to form a character. The Phonetic compounds by Xǔ Shèn will therefore be renamed as the Semantic-Phonetic Method in this paper to make the concept clearer and easier to understand. The following are some characters constructed by this method.

Character	Semantic	Phonetic	Meaning & Pronunciation of the Character
城	土 (dirt)	成 (chéng)	wall (chéng)
吐	口 (mouth)	土 (tǔ)	spit (tǔ)
油	氵(water)	由 (yóu)	oil (yóu)
騎	馬 (horse)	奇 (qí)	ride (qí)
爸	父 (father)	巴 (bā)	father (bà)
固	囗 (boundary)	古 (gǔ)	secure (gù)

As shown above, each character formed by this method has two components, one indicating the meaning of the character and the other the pronunciation. For instance, the character 城 chéng 'wall' is formed by the semantic radical 土 'dirt' because a wall in the old time was generally made of dirt and the phonetic component being 成 chéng.

33

If the two components are positioned side by side such as 吐 tǔ 'spit,' 油 yóu 'oil,' and 騎 qí 'ride,' a rule to distinguish the semantic component from the phonetic component is that the semantic component is generally on the right, while the phonetic component is usually the left one. As a result of this, we know that the right-hand sided component such as 口 'mouth' in 吐 tǔ 'spit,' 氵 'water' in 油 yóu 'oil' and 馬 'horse' represents the semantic part of the characters. As for their phonetic representation, the left-hand sided 土 tǔ, 由 yóu and 奇 qí show the pronunciation for 吐 tǔ 'spit,' 油 yóu 'oil,' and 騎 qí 'ride,' respectively.

If the two components of a character are positioned as one above the other, the top one generally represents the semantic component, for example, the upper component 父 'father' in 爸 bà 'father.' On the other hand, the lower component usually shows the pronunciation of the character, in instance, 巴 bā in 爸 bà 'father.'

If the two components of a character are positioned as one outside and the other inside, such as 固 gù 'secure.' The outside component like 囗 'boundary' generally is related to the meaning, while the inside one such as 古 gǔ is related to the pronunciation of the character.

As can be observed in the last two examples discussed, 爸 bà 'father' and 固 gù 'secure,' the phonetic components such as 巴 bā and 古 gǔ may not be identical as the pronunciation of the characters they represent. Likewise, the semantic part of a character, which originally bore only a general relation to the meaning of the character, over time may only have a weak and very limited ability to convey the character's meaning because the meaning of the character may have changed, expanding and shrinking continually.

This is very important to mention so that learners will not be so surprised when they find little resemblance between a character and its semantic or phonetic components.

Although the semantic and the phonetic components of a character formed by the Semantic-Phonetic method may not be completely reliable in predicting the precise meaning and pronunciation of a character, this method breaks through the restrictions binding the purely meaning-dependent Pictographic and Associative methods.

The Semantic-Phonetic method makes it easier to create large number of new characters to express various kinds of concepts. For instance, by adding different semantic radicals to the phonetic component 胡 hú, one can create many new characters with the same pronunciation hú yet with a variety of meanings, as shown in the following.

胡 + 氵 (water)	= 湖 hú 'lake'
胡 + 米 (rice)	= 糊 hú 'paste'
胡 + 虫 (insect)	= 蝴 hú 'butterfly'
胡 + 王 (jade)	= 瑚 hú 'coral'
胡 + 鳥 (bird)	= 鶘 hú 'pelican'

On the other hand, one can keep the semantic part constant and add many different phonetic components to form many different meaning related characters. For example, as shown below, by adding various phonetic components to the semantic radical 木 'wood', one can form many different characters linked to wood or trees semantically.

木 + 干 (gān)	= 杆 gān 'flagpole'
木 + 丈 (zhàng)	= 杖 zhàng 'walking stick'
木 + 才 (cái)	= 材 cái 'lumber'
木 + 支 (zhī)	= 枝 zhī 'branch'
木 + 風 (fēng)	= 楓 fēng 'maple'

Many characters were created semantically or phonetically related using the Semantic-Phonetic method. This method gradually became the dominant method for creating characters while other methods ceased being used. For instance, in Xǔ Shèn's

Shuō Wén Jiě Zì, more than 80 percent of the characters listed are formed by the Semantic-Phonetic method.

3.2.4 The Transferred characters and Borrowed Characters

Although the Transferred characters 轉注 *zhuǎnzhù* and Borrowed characters 假借 *jiǎjiè* were mentioned in Xǔ Shèn's *Shuō Wén Jiě Zì* as two of the six categories of creating characters, in reality these two categories cannot be considered as methods for creating characters. It is because the characters belonging to these two categories were not really new creations but were either transferred or borrowed from existing characters, as their names suggested.

Xǔ Shèn, however, did not give a clear definition for Transferred characters in his work *Shuō Wén Jiě Zì*. From the examples cited by Xǔ Shèn, we can reason as follows: if two characters belong to the same radical category and if their pronunciation and meaning are the same or similar, then the two characters can be used to define each other. For instance, the two characters 頂 dǐng 'peak' and 顛 diān 'top' share the radical 頁 and are close in both meaning and pronunciation. Thus they may be considered as transferred characters.

Like transferred characters, borrowed characters are not new creations. Borrowed characters, however, makes use of homophones to attach existing characters to words lacking a written form. That is, if two characters have the same pronunciation, then a character representing one meaning may be borrowed and used to represent the other meaning. A character showing a concrete meaning would generally be borrowed and used to represent a homophonous expression with a more abstract meaning.

36

Two examples of borrowed characters are 其 and 亦. The character 其 was originally a pictographic character meaning 'dustpan.' It was later borrowed to be the written character for the homophonous pronoun functioning as 'he or it.' A bamboo radical was later added to the original character 其 to express the original meaning 'dustpan' because dustpans are usually made of bamboos in China. Likewise, 亦 as an associative character originally meant 'armpit.' It was borrowed to express the homophonous adverb functioning as 'also.' Later, the Semantic-Phonetic character 腋 was created to represent the original meaning of 亦.

To sum up, from the above discussion, we know that transferred and borrowed characters simply transferred or borrowed from existing characters and therefore will not regarded methods of forming characters in this paper. The concepts, however, still may help us understand the development of characters. As a result, instead of using six categories mentioned in Xǔ Shèn's famous book, *Shuō Wén Jiě Zì*, for analyzing characters, this paper will simply them as three methods, namely, the Pictographic method, the Associative method and the Semantic-Phonetic method.

4. The Analysis of Chinese Characters for Elementary Level

Having three methods of forming Chinese characters, this section will be devoted to the analysis of the Chinese characters, focusing on those that will be introduced in elementary Chinese One level. The following is a list of these characters according to the order and topics that will be learned.

Group 1 (Characters for Numbers and Greetings):
一，二，三，四，五，六，七，八，九，十，早，安，午，晚，你，我，他，們，不，很，好，忙，嗎，和，也，呢，再，見

Group 2 (Characters for Asking Questions):
這，是，什，麼，請，問，那，書，誰，的，哪，國，中，人，從，兒，來，去，會，語，言，怎，英，文，說

Group 3 (Characters for Place Names):
世，界，地，圖，美，洲，北，南，西，東，歐，非，亞，台，在，長，城，江，黃，河，京，上，海

Group 4 (Characters for Names and Professions):
您，貴，姓，大，名，叫，字，李，張，偉，小，姐，先，生，做，工，作，老，師，個，學，生，電，腦

Group 5 (Characters for Talking about Addresses and Phone Numbers):
住，市，路，幾，號，多，少，崗，百，零，片，碼，辦，公，室，家，可，以，打，行，動，手，機

Group 6 (Characters for Welcoming Guests and Talking about Family):
歡，迎，進，坐，喝，茶，謝，客，氣，常，看，影，喜，有，沒，兩，太，爸，媽，孩，子，兄，弟，姐，妹，哥

For the convenience of discussion, the analysis of these six groups of characters will be presented in two sections: Section 4 and Section 5. Section 4 will be devoted to the first three groups, while Section 5 will be used to the analysis of the characters in groups 4, 5 and 6. When a character is presented, components of the character will be analyzed in terms of the 214 commonly used radicals, and then the method employed to create this character will be discussed to better appreciate the Chinese culture. Finally, commonly used expressions related to the character will be presented so that learners can apply this character to practical situations.

4.1 The Analysis of Characters for Numbers and Greetings

A total of 28 characters commonly used for numbers and greetings will be analyzed in this section. The analysis of characters for numbers will be presented in Section 4.1.1 and that for greetings will be discussed in Section 4.1.2.

4.1.1 The Analysis of Characters for Numbers

A total of 10 characters for numbers are analyzed. These characters represent one through ten in that they are the most commonly used characters for numbers. These ten characters will be presented in five groups for the convenience of discussion.

(1) The Characters for 一 yī 'one,' 二 èr 'two' and 三 sān 'three'

The ancient forms for these three numbers are 一, 二, 三, and they are basically the same as their modern characters. In addition, these three characters are all

formed by the Associative method in that the concepts of 'one,' 'two' and 'three' are obtained by associating the number of line presented in the characters.

Furthermore, culturally these three numbers are also very interesting. People interested in the Chinese culture most likely are also familiar with terms like 'Tao' and 'Taiji.' The ancient Chinese people believed that before the formation of the universe there were chaos and infinity. The character 一 indicates that the universe was formed in an instant and Tao was generated from 一. At the same time, Ying and Yang were created and thus the concept of 'two' 二. Then the concept of 'three' 三 represents that Heaven and Earth and everything else in the universe were evolved from the interactions of Yin and Yang.

Commonly used expressions for these three numbers are as follows.

一 tiān	'one day'
一 nián	'one year'
一yuè	'January'
一rì	'first day of a month'
Xīngqí一	'Monday'
二yuè	'February'
二rì	'second day of a month'
Xīngqí二	'Tuesday'
三 tiān	'three days'
三 nián	'three years'
三yuè	'March'
三rì	'third day of a month'
Xīngqí三	'Wednesday'

One can notice easily that numbers in Chinese are generally used to count days and years with the exception that 二 cannot. Instead, the expression for 'two days' is 兩(liǎng)tiān and 'two years' is 兩(liǎng)nián where a different character 兩 liǎng must be employed.

Furthermore, as shown in the above examples, for months of a year, days of a month and days of a week, numbers in Chinese are also very useful.

(2) The Characters for 四 sì 'four' and 五 wǔ 'five'

Like the previous three numbers, 四 sì 'four' and 五 wǔ 'five' are also created by the Associative method. The ancient form for 'four' is ☰, which later around 200 B.C. ancient Chinese people started to use a frame as 𝕏 to develop into the modern character 四.

Comparatively, the ancient form for 'five' was represented by five horizontal lines, but at the same time it was simplified by an X as indicated here as X. This form is identical with the Roman number 10, from which the modern character is derived. It is also interesting to note that the ancient form is composed of the character 二 'two' representing Heaven and Earth and the X in between indicating 五行 *Wǔxíng* 'the five elements (metal, wood, fire, water and dirt) where ancient Chinese people believe that everything is made from.

Likewise, these two numbers are also culturally interesting. The number four 四 sì, however, is probably the worst number for the Chinese people because the pronunciation is similar to the pronunciation of another character 死 sǐ meaning 'death.' As a result of this taboo, hospitals in Taiwan or China generally do not have the fourth floor, and the fourth floor of a building is usually the cheapest.

41

Comparatively, expressions involving the use of 五 'five' generally function as a cover term for the things described, for example, 五彩 wǔcǎi 'the five colors (blue, yellow, red, white and black); multicolored,' 五指 wǔzhǐ 'all five fingers,' 五穀 wǔgǔ 'grains of all kinds.'

Commonly used expressions for these two numbers are as follows.

四 tiān	'four days'
四 nián	'four years'
四 yuè	'April'
四 rì	'fourth day of a month'
Xīngqí 四	'Thursday'
五 tiān	'five days'
五 nián	'five years'
五 yuè	'May'
五 rì	'fifth day of a month'
Xīngqí 五	'Friday'

(3) The Characters for 六 liù 'six,' 七 qī 'seven' and 八 bā 'eight'

Like all the previous numbers, these three characters are formed by the Associative method. The ancient form for 六 liù 'six' is 六, which shows that a quantity that can be divided into two equal portions. The ancient form for 七 qī 'seven' was originally ＋, which was later changed to 七 with a tail to distinguish from the ancient form of another character 十 shí 'ten.' The ancient form for 八 bā 'eight' is)(, which shows a quantity consisting of two equal halves.

Culturally, the character 八 bā 'eight' is probably the luckiest number for most Chinese people because the pronunciation is similar to that of another character 發 fā

meaning 'prosperous.' In relation to 八 bā 'eight' being the lucky number, another expression 一六八 yī liù bā 'one six eight' is also a well liked number by the Chinese people because its pronunciation is similar to that of 一路發 yī lù fā meaning 'prosperous all the way.'

Commonly used expressions for these two numbers are as follows.

六 tiān	'six days'
六 nián	'six years'
六 yuè	'June'
六 rì	'sixth day of a month'
Xīngqí 六	'Saturday'

七 tiān	'seven days'
七 nián	'seven years'
七 yuè	'July'
七 rì	'seventh day of a month'

八 tiān	'eight days'
八 nián	'eight years'
八 yuè	'August'
八 rì	'eighth day of a month'

Like the characters 一 yī 'one,' 二 èr 'two,' 三 sān 'three,' 四 sì 'four' and 五 wǔ 'five,' the character 六 liù 'six' can also be used referring to 'Saturday' as in Xīngqí 六 (liù). The expression for 'Sunday' in Mandarin Chinese, however, is Xīngqírì, which does not involve 七 qī 'seven' at all.

(4) The Characters for 九 jiǔ 'nine' and 十 shí 'ten'

The ancient form for 九 jiǔ 'nine' is 九 It is formed by the Pictographic method and it depicts a hand bending and tightening. It can also be looked at as a wavy ten,

meaning almost ten. The concept of 'nine' comes from the idea of a number that figuratively bumps up against the end when counting to ten on one's fingers. As for the modern character 十 shí 'ten,' it was originally written as 𝐉, a symbol for a unit. This symbol was later added by a horizontal line 一 by way of the Associative method to imply the concept of nine plus one to become its modern form.

Second to 八 bā 'eight,' 九 jiǔ 'nine' is another favorite number by the Chinese people because its pronunciation is the same as that of another character 久 jiǔ meaning 'long.' It makes sense that when one becomes prosperous, the next thing most people desire will be long-lasting success. Such a deep-rooted concept about 九 jiǔ 'nine' made the year 1999 a very popular year for the Chinese people to get married because they wanted their marriage to last forever. Likewise, 十 shí 'ten' generally carries a good meaning in that it symbolizes completeness, for example, 十 quán 十 měi meaning 'to be perfect in every way.'

Commonly used expressions for these two numbers are as follows.

九 tiān	'nice days'
九 nián	'nine years'
九 yuè	'September'
九 rì	'ninth day of a month'
十 tiān	'ten days'
十 nián	'ten years'
十 yuè	'October'
十 rì	'tenth day of a month'

After learning that month of a year in Chinese is formed by Number + yuè 'month', one may wonder the Chinese expressions for November and December. They are 十一 yuè 'November' and 十二 yuè 'December.' From these two expressions, we also learn that

eleven in Chinese is indicated by 十一 shíyī 'ten + one' and twelve in Chinese is expressed by 十二 shíèr 'ten + two.' In addition, once we know that twenty one in Chinese is indicated by 二十 èrshí 'two times ten,' we can easily derive ninety nine as 九十九 jiǔshíjiǔ 'nine times ten plus one' in Chinese   In short, as long as we know how to count from one through ten in Chinese, we can easily get any number up to ninety nine.

4.1.2 The Analysis of Characters for Greetings

After introducing the characters for numbers, we will now focus our attention to characters for greetings. Eighteen characters for greetings will be presented in five groups for the convenience of discussion. These characters are 早 zǎo 'morning,' 安 ān 'peace,' 午 wǔ 'noon,' 晚 wǎn 'evening,' 你 nǐ 'you,' 我 wǒ 'I,' 他 tā 'he/she,' 們 men 'a plural marker for pronouns,' 不 bù 'not, no,' 很 hěn 'very,' 好 hǎo 'good,' 忙 máng 'busy,' 嗎 ma 'a Yes-No question marker,' 呢 ne 'an echo question marker,' 也 yě 'also,' 和 hé 'and,' 再 zài 'again,' 見 jiàn 'see.'

(1) 早 zǎo 'morning,' 安 ān 'peace,' 午 wǔ 'noon' and 晚 wǎn 'evening'

The character 早 zǎo 'morning' is created by the Associative method, which can be easily observed from its ancient form 㫐. From this form, we derive the meaning of 'morning' by the time that one can still shield himself from the sun 日 with his armor 甲.

Likewise, from the ancient form 宔 of the character 安 ān 'peace', we can easily judge that this character is also formed by the Associative method in that all is well when the woman 女 is in the house 宀.

45

As for 午 wǔ 'noon', its ancient form 卡 was created by the Associative method in that it depicts an ancient sundial to mark the noontime. Likewise, the ancient form for 晚 wǎn 'evening' is 晚, which is composed of 免 'remove' and 日 'sun.' This is another clear case created by the Associative method in that evening is the time when the sun is removed.

Once we learn these four characters, we can use them for greetings as shown in the following.

Characters	Pīnyīn	English Translation
早安	zǎoān	Good morning.
午安	wǔān	Good afternoon.
晚安	wǎnān	Good evening.

From the above examples, the structure for greetings can be formatted as follows: Time (such as 早 zǎo 'morning,' 午 wǔ 'noon' and 晚 wǎn 'evening') + 安 ān 'peace.'

(2) 你 nǐ 'you,' 我 wǒ 'I,' 他 tā 'he' and 們 men 'a plural marker for pronouns'

The ancient form for 'you' is 爾. 爾 is a pictograph of a balance loaded with x on both sides and topped by a phonetic 介. 爾 gradually was shortened to 尔. By adding 亻 'person' to 尔, the human element was introduced and finally the modern character 你 came to existence, meaning a person who carries the same weight: you.

As for 我 wǒ 'I', its classical form 我 shows two spears against each other in direct confrontation. The conflict is because two sides want their rights asserted. By extension, my right, that is me or I, is emphasized. As for third person pronoun 他 tā 'he/she,' it is a combination of 亻 'person' and 也 yě 'also.' Literally the combination

46

means 'that person also,' and therefore it refers to the third party in a group, that is, he or she.

While the three pronouns 你 nǐ 'you,' 我 wǒ 'I' and 他 tā 'he' are all created by the Associative method, the plural marker for pronouns 們 men is a creation of the Semantic-Phonetic method. The semantic part of 們 men is the radical 亻 'person' and the phonetic component is 門 mén.

Once we learned these four characters, we can start putting them in a variety of ways to form the following expressions.

Characters	Pīnyīn	English Translation
我們	wǒmen	we
你們	nǐmen	you (plural)
他們	tāmen	they

One thing to note about the use of the character 們 men is that this character is a marker for pronouns. However, it generally cannot be used with nouns, unlike the plural marker –s in English.

(3) 不 bù 'not,' 很 hěn 'very,' 好 hǎo 'good' and 忙 'máng'

The ancient form for 不 bù 'not' is 帀 , which depicted a bird flying up towards the sky and disappearing from sight. The horizontal line (一) represents the sky as the limit, block the bird from ever reaching its destination, and hence the idea of 'not.' Therefore, this character is a creation of the Associative method.

Unlike 不 bù 'not,' the character 很 hěn 'very' is an example of the Semantic-Phonetic method. Its ancient form is 很, which is composed of two parts: the semantic 彳

47

'step' and the phonetic 𝄐 hěn. While the semantic part 𝄐 represents someone stepping up to confront with another, the phonetic part 𝄐 also functions to depict another person turning around and looking at his opponent directly in the eye 目. By extension, the meaning of 'very' is derived from such intensity.

The third character in this group is 好 hǎo 'good' whose ancient form is 𝄐. It is formed by the Associative method in that the concept of 'good' for the Chinese culture is represented by having a woman 𝄐 holding her child 𝄐.

Unlike 好 hǎo 'good,' the character 忙 máng 'busy' is formed using the Semantic-Phonetic method. The left-hand side radical 忄, an abbreviated form of 心 xīn 'heart,' is related to the meaning of the character because when one is busy, generally one has something occupied in the heart. The right-hand side component 亡 wáng is related to the pronunciation. The pronunciation discrepancy between the character 忙 máng and its phonetic component 亡 wáng is a result of long historical changes. That is, originally these two had the identical pronunciation and throughout time they developed into different pronunciations with the difference in the Initials.

Once we learn how these characters were created, let us learn some commonly used expressions applying what we learned.

Characters	Pīnyīn	English Translation
我很好。	Wǒ hěn hǎo.	I am fine.
你很忙。	Nǐ hěn máng.	You are busy.
他不忙。	Tā bù máng.	He is not busy.

As shown in the examples, although the character 很 hěn is translated as 'very' in English, when it is followed by an adjective such as 好 hǎo 'good' and 忙 máng 'busy,' it functions as a verb to be in English instead of the meaning of 'very.'

(4) 嗎 ma 'Yes-no question marker,' 呢 ne 'Echo question marker' and 也 yě 'also'

The character 嗎 ma 'Yes-no question marker' is created by the Semantic-phonetic method: While the left-hand side part 口 'mouth' carries the meaning of the character because one generally opens one's mouth to ask a question, the right-hand side part 馬 mǎ provides the clue for the pronunciation.

Likewise, 呢 ne 'Echo question marker' is also a creation of the Semantic-Phonetic method with 口 kǒu 'mouth' as the semantic radical and 尼 ní as the phonetic component. Again, the discrepancy between the pronunciation of 呢 ne and 尼 ní is due to historical changes.

Unlike 嗎 and 呢, the ancient form for 也 yě 'also' is 𠃉, which originally was a representation of an ancient drinking horn. Later, it was borrowed to function as an adverb meaning 'also.'

Commonly used expressions are listed here.

Characters	Pīnyīn	English Translation
你好嗎?	Nǐ hǎo ma?	How are you?
我很好，你呢？	Wǒ hěn háo, nǐne?	I am fine, and you?
我也很好。	Wǒ yě hěn hǎo.	I am also fine.

(5) 和 **hé 'and or agreeable,'** 再 **zài 'again' and** 見 **jiàn 'see'**

The ancient form for 和 hé 'and' is 㕧. The character originally carried the meaning of 'agreeable.' The right-hand side component 禾 is a picture of grain, but in this character it only functions as a phonetic part hé. In contrast, the left-hand side part of the character 口 kǒu 'mouth' is related to the meaning of the character in that harmony is reached when all are in one voice (mouth). Later, this character developed to be a function word meaning 'and.'

As for the character 再 zài 'again,' we can understand its meaning easier by looking at its ancient form 冉, which shows to weigh with a steelyard twice, and hence the meaning 'again.' Therefore, it is formed by the Associative method. Likewise, 見 jiàn 'to see' is also formed by the Associative method. As can be observed from its ancient form 見, it depicts a person with the emphasis on the eye to indicate the meaning of 'see.'

To apply what we have learned so far about characters for greetings, we can put them together to form a conversation like the following.

Characters	Pīnyīn	English Translation
A: 早安。	Zǎoān.	Good morning.
B: 早。	Zǎo.	Morning.
A: 你們好。	Nǐmen hǎo.	Hello everyone.
B: 你好。	Nǐhǎo.	Hello.
A: 你和他忙嗎?	Nǐ hé tā máng ma?	Are you and he busy?
B: 我很忙, 他不忙。	Wǒ hěn máng, tā bù máng.	I am busy, but he is not.
你呢？	Nǐne?	How about you?
A: 我也很忙。	Wǒ yě hěn máng.	I am also busy.
好，再見。	Hǎo, zàijiàn.	Ok, goodbye.
B: 再見。	Zàijiàn.	Goodbye.

50

One may be surprised to find that the above conversation used only 15 characters that we learned. Besides, a few expressions will need some explanations about their usage. For example, as shown in the example, 早安 zǎoān 'Good morning' can be shortened as 早 zǎo 'Morning.'

Furthermore, one should notice that 你好 Nǐhǎo 'Hello' as a fixed expression is different from 你很好 Nǐ hěnhǎo 'You are fine' where 很 hěn is required to function like a verb to be in English. In addition, it is important to notice that the 好 hǎo in the expression 好，再見 Hǎo, zàijiàn does not mean 'good' but 'Ok' as a conversation holder.

4.2 The Analysis of Characters Related to Asking Questions

After learning characters for greetings, we will now focus our attention to the analysis of characters related to asking questions. A total of 25 characters will be analyzed and they will be presented in seven groups. These characters are 這 zhè 'this,' 是 shì 'verb to be,' 什麼 shénme 'what,' 請 qǐng 'please,' 問 wèn 'ask,' 那 nà 'that,' 書 shū 'book,' 誰 shéi 'who,' 的 de 'a possessive marker,' 哪 nǎ 'which,' 國 guó 'country,' 中 zhōng 'center,' 人 rén 'person,' 從 cóng 'from,' 兒 ér 'a particle,' 來 lái 'come,' 去 qù 'go,' 會 huì 'can,' 語 yǔ 'spoken language,' 言 yán 'talk,' 怎 zěn 'how,' 英 yīng 'petal,' 文 wén 'writing' and 說 shuō 'speak.'

(1) 這 zhè 'this,' 是 shì 'verb to be' and 什麼 shénme 'what'

As a creation of the Associative method, two important components are in the character 這 zhè 'this: Speech 言 while in motion 辶. The character describes the position of something and thus the meaning 'this.' Likewise, the character 是 shì 'verb to be' is also created by the Associative method in that it depicts the sun 日 exactly on the meridian 疋. The sun is taken as the standard for correctness, and hence the idea of 'right, yes; am, are, is.'

The two characters 什 shén and 麼 me are combined to mean 'what.' The character 什 means 亻 'men' in a group of 十 'ten,' and 十 shí also functions as a semantic component. Likewise, the character 麼 me is also formed by the Semantic-phonetic method with 麻 má being the phonetic component and 幺 (with the ancient form 𢆶 depicting silk cocoons) representing something very small.

When we put these four characters together and they become the most commonly used question shown in the following.

Characters	Pīnyīn	English Translation
這是什麼？	Zhè shì shénme?	What is this?

(2) 請 qǐng 'please,' 問 wèn 'ask,' 那 nà 'that' and 書 shū 'book'

The expression 請問 qǐngwèn 'May I ask' is a term that is usually seen in a question for politeness. The character 請 qǐng 'please' as a creation of Semantic-Phonetic method is composed of the semantic radical 言 'speech' and the phonetic component 青 qīng.

Unlike 請, the character 問, formed by the Associative method, is made of 門 mén 'door' and 口 kǒu 'mouth.' The meaning of 'ask' is derived from someone knocking on the door to 'ask' a question with one's mouth.

The ancient form for 那 nà 'that' is 𨙸, which is composed of two parts: the phonetic component 冄 rǎn and the semantic radical 邑 'city.' Originally, the character referred to a small country's name, and was later borrowed to mean 'that.' As for 書 shū 'book,' its ancient form 書 reveals that it is composed of 者 'expression' and 聿 'hand holding a pen to write.' The result of expressions using the pen, therefore, leads to a 'book.'

With these newly learned characters, we can easily use them in questions and answers as shown in the following examples.

Characters	Pīnyīn	English Translation
請問，那是什麼？	Qǐngwèn, nà shì shénme?	May I ask, what is that?
這是書。	Zhè shì shū.	This is a book.

One should notice that the word order for questions in Chinese is quite different from that in English. Unlike English, Chinese wh-questions such as 什麼 shénme 'what' remain in the same position as their answers, as shown in the following comparison.

Chinese Word Order			English Word Order
那	是	什麼？	What is that?
That	is	what	
那	是	書。	That is a book.
That	is	book	

(3) 誰 shéi 'who' and 的 de 'possessive marker'

The character 誰 shéi 'who,' created by the Semantic-phonetic method, has the semantic radical as 言 and the phonetic component as 隹 zhuī, although throughout time the phonetic part changed so much that now there is little clue provided about the pronunciation of the character.

As for the possessive marker 的 de, one should definitively pay attention because it is the most commonly used character compared with thousands of other Chinese characters. It was originally written as 旳 de where the semantic radical is 日 'the sun' and the phonetic component is 勺 sháo are combined to mean 'bright and colorful.' Later, this character was borrowed to be used as the most commonly used Chinese function word.

Commonly used expression using these two characters are shown in the following.

Characters	Pīnyīn	English Translation
他是誰？	Tā shì shéi?	Who is he?
這是誰的書？	Zhè shì shéide shū?	Whose book is this?
這是我的。	Zhè shì wǒde.	This is mine.

(4) 哪 nǎ 'which,' 中 zhōng 'center,' 國 guó 'nation' and 人 rén 'person'

The character 哪 nǎ 'where' is a product of the Semantic-Phonetic method where the semantic radical is the 口 kǒu 'mouth', while the phonetic component is 那 nà. Unlike 哪 nǎ 'which,' the character 中 zhōng 'center' is created by the Associative method. Its ancient form 中 shows a target mounted centered on a pole I.

Compared with 中, the character 國 guó 'nation' is much more complicated formed also by the Associative method. It is composed of 口 (boundary), 一 (land), 口 (mouth representing population) and 戈 (spear). Therefore, the meaning of 國 guó 'nation' is derived from associating land, people and weapons within a boundary. As for the character 人 rén 'person,' it is a clear example of the Pictographic method. Its ancient form 𝑓 clearly shows a human figure standing sideways.

After learning these four characters, we can use them in the following expressions.

Characters	Pīnyīn	English Translation
中國	Zhōngguó	China
中國人	Zhōngguórén	Chinese people
你是哪國人？	Nǐ shì nǎguórén?	What is your nationality?
我是中國人。	Wǒ shì Zhōngguórén.	I am Chinese.

From the above examples, we know that the literal meaning of 中國 Zhōngguó 'China' is 'central nation' because China was and still is playing an important role as a country in Asia. In addition, we also learn that the expression 哪國人 nǎguórén can be used as a question to ask someone's nationality. Furthermore, we should also notice that as a general rule we can change a term from a nation to the people of the nation by simply adding the character 人 rén 'person' after the nation, for example, 中國 Zhōngguó 'China' vs. 中國人 Zhōngguórén 'Chinese people.'

(5) 從 cóng 'from,' 兒 er 'a particle,' 來 lái 'come' and 去 qù 'go'

The ancient form for the character 從 cóng 'from' is 𨒤 The component 从 shows that one person is following another; the additional components suggest the

follower steps 彳 and stops 止 according to the leader. Therefore, this character is formed by the Associative method.

As for the character 兒 ér, it originally means 'a baby,' formed by the Associative method, where there is a person 儿 with its head 臼 not closed yet. Later, this character was borrowed to function as a final particle to be placed after another character to form a new expression such as 哪兒 nǎr 'where,' 這兒 zhèr 'here' and 那兒 nàr 'there.'

Unlike the previous two characters, the ancient form for the character 來 as 來 originally meant 'wheat.' It is a pictograph: a wheat plant. The top line was originally horizontal, indicating the head nearly matured; the ∧∧ middle section shows the typical leaves which bend downward; at the bottom are the roots. While the original meaning of this character is now found in another character 麥 mài 'wheat,' the character 來 was borrowed to become its modern meaning as 'come.'

As for the character 去 qù 'go,' its ancient form is 𠫓 It is formed by the Associative method. A mouth 凵 (later changed to 厶) behind a person (seen through the legs); it originally indicated someone going away while turning one's back on another who is speaking.

Once we learn these four characters, we may use them in the following sentences.

Characters	Pīnyīn	English Translation
你從哪兒来？	Nǐ cóng nǎr lái?	Where did you come from?
我從中國來。	Wǒ cóng Zhōngguó lái.	I came from China.
你去哪兒？	Nǐ qù nǎr?	Where are you going?

We should pay attention to two grammatical points about the above example sentences.

First of all, when the character 兒 ér means 'baby or child,' it carries the second tone, but

when it functions as a particle as in 哪兒 nǎr 'where', its tone changes to neutral and even combines with the previous character as one syllable. Secondly, another significant difference between Chinese and English is that generally a prepositional phrase like 從中國 cóng Zhōngguó 'from China' in Chinese has to come before a verb such as 來 lái 'come.' As shown in the following comparison, in English the word order for the prepositional phrase 'from China' is very different from that in Chinese.

Chinese Word Order	**English Word Order**
我　　從　中國　　來。	I came <u>from China</u>.
I　　from China　　come	

(6) 會 huì 'know how to,' 語 yǔ 'spoken language,' and 言 yán 'talk; words'

The ancient form for 會 huì 'know how to' is 會, which is formed by way of the Associative method. Its original meaning 'assemble' is associated by the following components: To gather 亼 to eat 口 a meal ⬭ (pictograph of a large covered vessel containing rice). Later this character was extended to mean 'know how to; can.'

Unlike 會, the character 語 yǔ 'spoken language' is formed by the Semantic-Phonetic method with 言 'speech' as the semantic radical and 吾 wú as the phonetic component. Again, the phonetic component may not be really closed related to the modern pronunciation of the character. As for the character 言 yán 'talk; words,' its ancient form 言 shows that something comes out of the mouth as words or talk.

With these three more characters just learned, we can use them in the following expressions.

Characters	**Pīnyīn**	**English Translation**
你會什麼語言？	Nǐ huì shénme yǔyán?	What languages do you know?

(7) 英 **yīng 'petal,'** 文 **wén 'writing,'** 怎 **zěn 'how' and** 説 **shuō 'speak'**

The ancient form for the character 英 yīng 'petal; flower' is 英 in which the grass

radical 艸 (its modern form ⺿) is the semantic part, while the phonetic component is 央

pronounced either as yīng or yāng. As for the character 文 wén 'writing,' its ancient

form is 文, which depicts a man with torso made prominent implying educated. Later its

meaning was extended to include 'writing.' When these two characters are combined as

英文 Yīngwén, the expression means 'English.'

According to the ancient form 怎 of the character 怎 zěn 'how,' it shows that one

turns one's heart 心 toward something for the first time 乍, implying that he wants to ask

questions. As for the character 説 shuō 'speak,' by associating the right-hand side

component 兌 'exchange' and the left-hand side component 言 'talk' we can easily

derive the meaning of the character as 'speak.'

A very useful question can be formed employing these characters that we just

discussed.

Characters: 'China' 的中文怎麼説？
Pīnyīn: 'China' de Zhōngwén zěnme shuō?
English Translation: How do you say 'China' in Chinese?

This is very useful question in that one can learn a lot of vocabulary in Chinese with this

question by simply changing the English part in the question.

4.3 The Analysis of Characters Related to Place Names

A total of 23 characters for place names will be analyzed in this section, and they

will be further divided into five groups for the convenience of discussion. These

characters are 世 shì 'world,' 界 jiè 'boundary,' 地 dì 'ground,' 圖 tú 'map,' 美 měi 'beautiful,' 洲 zhōu 'continent,' 北 běi 'north,' 南 nán 'south,' 西 xī 'west,' 東 dōng 'east,' 歐 ōu 'Europe,' 非 fēi 'Africa,' 亞 yǎ 'Asia,' 台 tái 'Taiwan,' 在 zài 'to be at,' 長 cháng 'long,' 城 chéng 'wall,' 江 jiāng 'river,' 黃 huáng 'yellow,' 河 hé 'river,' 京 jīng 'capital,' 上 shàng 'go up' and 海 hǎi 'sea.'

(1) 世 shì 'world,' 界 jiè 'boundary,' 地 dì 'ground' and 圖 tú 'map'

The original meaning of the character 世 shí is 'generation,' which may become clearer when we look at its ancient form 世. This early form resembles a foot 止 meaning 'stop' with three places marked with a dot, indicating a generation is marked by three ten years in the Chinese culture. Later, the character was extended to mean 'world.'

By comparison, the character 界 jiè 'boundary' is a clear case of the Semantic-Phonetic method. While the lower component of the character 介 jiè provides the clue for the pronunciation of the character, the top radical 田 tián 'field' functions to relate to the meaning of the character as 'boundary.'

As for the expression 地圖 dìtú 'map,' the meaning of the character 地 dì 'ground' is derived from associating its two components: 也 yě 'also' and 土 tǔ 'soil.' Likewise, the character 圖 is also created by the Associative method. The outside 口 shows a piece of paper showing boundary; the 口 inside depicts a village, while the component 回 describes a city with its downtown; the horizontal and vertical lines 十

represent the roads connecting different locations. With all these associated, we see a map.

With these newly learned characters, we can use them for the following expressions.

Characters	Pīnyīn	English Translation
世界地圖	shìjiè dìtú	map of the world
中國地圖	Zhōngguó dìtú	map of China

(2) 洲 zhōu, 美 měi, 歐 ōu, 亞 yǎ and 非 fēi

The ancient form for 洲 zhōu 'continent' is ⿰. The right-hand side component ⿰ shows that there is an island in the water, and the left-hand side water radical ⿰ emphasizes the abundance of water; hence we get the meaning of 'continent.' This character also provides a clue for the pronunciation in that 州 and 洲 are both pronounced as zhōu. Therefore, this character should be regarded as formed by the Semantic-Phonetic method.

As for the character 美 měi, its ancient form is ⿱ with the original meaning as 'beautiful.' For ancient Chinese people, the concept of 'beautiful' is represented by ⿱ (a man with outstretched arms, meaning 'big') and ⿱ (the horns, legs and tail of a ram, meaning 'sheep'). In short, this character is an example of the Associative method.

The ancient form for the character 歐 ōu is ⿰, which is composed of two parts: the phonetic component ⿰ ōu and the semantic radical ⿰ (A kneeling person exhaling air

60

meaning 'be out of breath; deficient'). Now this character is mainly used as a surname or in transliterating non-Chinese words such as Europe.

As for the character 亞 yǎ, its ancient form 亞 shows a hunchbacked person, implying inferior. Later this character is also used in transliterating non-Chinese words such as Asia.

Like 歐 ōu and 亞 yǎ, the character 非 fēi is used in transliterating non-Chinese words such as Africa. The character, however, originally means 'not; negative,' which can be observed from its ancient form 非 This form shows opposing wings of a bird, in contrast to another ancient form 飛 meaning 'fly' by showing open wings of a flying bird. Therefore, the character 非 fēi denotes the meaning of opposition in general.

With these five characters, we can use them in the following expressions.

Characters	Pīnyīn	English Translation
美洲	Měizhōu	America
美國	Měiguó	United States of America
歐洲	Ōuzhōu	Europe
歐美	Ōuměi	western countries in general
亞洲	Yǎzhōu	Asia
非洲	Fēizhōu	Africa

It is interesting to note that although 美洲 Měizhōu 'America' and 美國 Měiguó 'United States of America' are abbreviated forms, the choice of 美 měi 'beautiful' seems to reflect the general good impression that Chinese people have for them. In addition, using 歐美 Ōuměi 'Europe and America' as a cover term referring to western countries in general is also an interesting combination to note.

(3) Characters for Directions: 北 běi, 南 nán, 西 xī and 東 dōng

As the ancient form 川 shows, the character 北 běi 'north' originally referred to the back of a person by having two persons standing back to back to each other. Later this character was borrowed to mean 'north' because in the old time Chinese people usually faced south and their backs facing north when they spoke in public. Another character 背 bèi 'back' was created with the additional meat radical 月.

As for the character 南 nán 'south,' its ancient form 南 shows that Chinese people in the old time believed that when a tree was moved to the south of China, it started growing more leaves, as shown by the top of the ancient form.

Like north 北 běi and south 南 nán, the character 西 xī is also a product of the Associative method. As shown by its ancient form 西, the meaning of 'west' is represented by a bird sitting in its nest because a bird goes back to its nest at sunset, and the sun sets in the direction of west. Likewise, as shown by its ancient form 東, the concept of 'east' is represented by seeing the sun between trees when the sun rises from the east.

Once we learned these four characters for direction, we can start using them referring to specific parts of a larger place, for example,

Characters	Pīnyīn	English Translation
北美洲	Běi Měizhōu	North America
南美洲	Nán Měizhōu	South America
中美洲	Zhōng Měizhōu	Central America
北歐	Běi Ōu	North Europe
西歐	Xī Ōu	Western Europe
東歐	Dōng Ōu	Eastern Europe
東南亞	Dōngnán Yǎ	Southeast Asia
北非	Běi Fēi	North Africa

As shown in the above example, when the concept of 'central' is needed, generally the character we learned 中 'center; central' will be used, as shown in 中美洲 Zhōng Měizhōu 'Central America.'

(4) 在 zài 'be at,' 台 tái 'Taiwan,' 長 cháng 'long,' 城 chéng 'city' and 江 jiāng 'river'

Although the modern character 在 zài 'to be at' may not be clear about how the character was created, its ancient form 扗 makes it clear that the character is made of two parts: the semantic radical 土 'soil' and the phonetic component 才 cái. Therefore, this character is formed by the Semantic-Phonetic method.

As for the character 台 tái, the original meaning of this character is 'to lift up; platform,' which one may understand it better by looking at its ancient form 㠯 where a mouth 口 exhaling into air, implying 'lift up or platform.' Later this character was used as an abbreviated term for 台灣 Táiwān 'Taiwan.'

As for the character 長 cháng 'long,' its ancient form 長 shows that a man with long hair is holding out his hand, therefore, implying 'long.' Therefore, this character is a product of the Associative method.

Unlike 長 cháng 'long,' the characters 城 chéng 'wall' and 江 jiāng 'river' are formed by the Semantic-Phonetic method. The semantic radical for 城 chéng is 土 tǔ 'soil' because walls in old times were made of soil, and the part that relates to the pronunciation is 成 chéng.

63

Likewise, the semantic radical of 江 jiāng 'river' is 氵meaning 'water,' and the phonetic component is 工 gōng. Although 工 gōng and 江 jiāng may have little resemblance in terms of pronunciation, the classical pronunciation of them was related.

The following are examples of applying these characters we just discussed to useful expressions.

Characters	Pīnyīn	English Translation
台北	Táiběi	Taipei (a city in northern Taiwan)
台中	Táizhōng	Taizhong (a city in central Taiwan)
台南	Táinán	Tainan (a city in southern Taiwan)
長城	Chángchéng	the Great Wall of China
長江	Chángjiāng	the Yangtze River
長城在哪兒？	Chángchéng zài nǎr?	Where is the Great Wall of China?

As shown above, by simply knowing the characters, we can know a lot about the places indicated. For example, since the literal translation of 台北 Táiběi is 'Taiwan north,' we know the city is located in northern Taiwan.

Likewise, 長城 Chángchéng 'the Great Wall of China' and 長江 Chángjiāng 'the Yangtze River' got their names because they are the longest wall and river in China. Last but least, one should note that the character 在 zài 'to be at (a location)' is a verb in Chinese, not simply a preposition as in English.

(5) 黃 **huáng 'yellow,'** 河 **hé 'river,'** 京 **jīng 'capital,'** 上 **shàng 'go up' and** 海 **hǎi 'sea'**

For the ancient Chinese people, the color yellow that the character 黃 represents is considered as the color of fields, and hence there is a semantic radical 田 tián 'field' in the character with 灮 guāng providing the phonetic clue. In addition, the ancient

form 黃 also shows that it had the same pronunciation as the classical character 茨, which has its modern form as 光 guāng.

Similar to 黃 huáng 'yellow,' the character 河 hé is also formed by the Semantic-Phonetic method. The semantic radical is of course the water radical 氵, and the phonetic component is 可 kě, which again may not have a close resemblance after thousands of years' development.

From the ancient form 帛 of 京 jīng 'capital,' we can see that it depicts a tall building and the vertical center column **I** in place of the bottom room accentuates its loftiness, therefore implying that it is not any tall building but the capital.

As for the character 上 shàng 'go up,' its ancient form ▬ originally had only two horizontal lines with the top one higher and shorter to indicate the concept of 'up'; later a connection between the two lines was added, as shown by its modern form.

Unlike 京 jīng or 上 shàng, the character 海 hǎi 'sea' is formed by the Semantic-Phonetic method with the water radical 氵 as its semantic component and 每 měi as its phonetic component. However, due to its dramatic change between the pronunciation of the character and that of its phonetic component over time, one may better recognize this character by associating the meanings of these two components. That is, 海 hǎi 'sea' is the place you see 氵 (water) 每 (every) day.

Again, once we learned these characters, we should see them in action as shown in the following.

Characters	Pīnyīn	English Translation
黄河	Huánghé	the Yellow River
北京	Běijīng	Beijing
上海	Shànghǎi	Shanghai

It is also interesting to know how these expressions got their names. The expression 黄河 Huánghé 'the Yellow River' got its name because the river is always muddy. Although it floods often, it is also called the cradle of the Chinese culture in that Chinese people originated along the Yellow River Valley because of the fertile soil as a result of the floods.

Like 黄河 Huánghé 'the Yellow River,' the literal translation for 北京 Běijīng 'Beijing' is 'north capital' because it is one of capitals built in the north of China throughout the long Chinese history. In contrast, there is another city in China called 南京 Nánjīng 'Nanjing,' which literally means 'south capital' and was designated as a capital in the past.

Like 黄河 Huánghé 'the Yellow River' and 北京 Běijīng 'Beijing,' the name 上海 Shànghǎi also tells us a lot about this city because this expression literally means 上 shàng 'go on' 海 hǎi 'sea.' Such a name really matches the location of this city where all the imports and exports are transported abroad or to inland China through the longest river in China, 長江 Chángjiāng 'the Yangtze River.'

5. The Analysis of Characters for Interpersonal Communication

This section will continue to finish the analysis of the latter three groups of characters mentioned in Section 4. These three groups include characters mainly for interpersonal communication such as asking about names, professions, contact information and family.

5.1 Characters for Names and Professions

A total of 22 characters for talking about names and professions are analyzed in terms of how they were created so that learners may better appreciate each character. Practical expressions employing these characters are also discussed to reinforce the learning. These characters are 您 nín 'the polite form for you,' 貴 guì 'precious,' 姓 xìng 'last name,' 大 dà 'big,' 名 míng 'name,' 叫 jiào 'call,' 字 zì 'character; name,' 李 Lǐ 'a surname,' 張 Zhāng 'a surname,' 偉 wěi 'great,' 小 xiǎo 'small,' 姐 jiě 'older sister,' 先 xiān 'first,' 生 shēng 'born,' 做 zuò 'do,' 工 gōng 'job,' 作 zuò 'job,' 老 lǎo 'old,' 師 shī 'master,' 學 xué 'study,' 電 diàn 'electronic' and 腦 nǎo 'brain.' For the convenience for discussion, these characters will be analyzed in five groups.

(1) 您貴姓大名? Nín guì xìng dà míng? 'What is your full name?'

As a polite form for 你 nǐ 'you,' the character 您 nín is a product of the Semantic-Phonetic method with 心 xīn 'heart as the semantic radical and 你 nǐ as the phonetic component. This character is also easy to remember because it is a heartfelt respect 心 for you 你.

As for the character 貴 guì 'precious,' its ancient form 贵 shows that originally it depicts a basket 臾 full of money 貝 (seashell in the old was used as money), and hence the meaning of 'expensive' is derived through the Associative method. By extension, when something is expensive, generally it is 'precious.'

The character 姓 xìng 'surname' reflects an interesting part of the ancient Chinese culture because it is composed of 女 nǔ 'woman' and 生 shēng 'born' with the combined meaning as 'born by a woman.' As early as the emperor of Shénnóng, Chinese people made a living by hunting when men might die and never returned. As a result of this, when a baby was born, it was named after the mother's last name. Later, Chinese people started to make a living by agriculture and men became more dominant in the house because of their physical strength and then babies' last names followed their father's.

The expression 大名 dàmíng is a polite form for asking someone's first name in that 大 dà means 'big' and 名 míng means 'first name.' As its ancient form 大 shows, the character 大 dà depicts a person with outstretched arms, and by the Associative method we obtain the meaning 'big.' Likewise, the character 名 míng 'name' gets its meaning by associating what one calls out 口 in the dark evening 夕 to identify oneself.

All these characters we just discussed are commonly used as polite forms to ask for someone's names, as shown in the following.

Characters	Pīnyīn	English Translation
您貴姓大名？	Nín guìxìngdàmíng?	What is your full name?
貴姓？	Guìxìng?	What is your last name?
大名？	Dàmíng?	What is your first name?

It is important to note that the above expressions are formal polite forms to ask for someone's names. They are also fixed expression and therefore do not follow grammatical requirements for regular sentences. That is, unlike other regular sentences, no verbs are required in all these sentences. For example, the character by character translation for 您貴姓大名 Nín guìxìng dàmíng is 'you, precious last name, big first name.'

Furthermore, the expressions 貴姓 guìxìng and 大名 dàmíng can be used by themselves to ask for just last or first names. Moreover, one should note that the polite form for 您 nín instead of the regular form for you 你 nǐ 'you' should always be used to match the formality indicated.

(2) More Name Related Characters

More names related characters such as 叫 jiào 'call,' 字 zì 'name,' 李 Lǐ 'a surname,' 張 Zhāng 'a surname' and 偉 wěi 'great' are analyzed here. To start with, the character 叫 is created by the Semantic-Phonetic method with 口 kǒu 'mouth' as the semantic radical and 丩 jiū (equivalent to the modern 糾 jiū) as the phonetic component.

As for the character 字 zì, its original meaning is 'word; character' and it is also formed by the Semantic-Phonetic method with 宀 (roof; protection) as the semantic radical and 子 zǐ as the phonetic component. The Chinese people have been emphasizing the importance of education, which in the old time was mostly about learning characters. Therefore, for Chinese people, learning characters should be regarded as important as protecting 宀 as one's own baby 子. When used as part of the expression 名字 míngzi

69

'name,' one should also pay attention to the character 字 being pronounced as a neutral instead of the regular fourth tone as zì.

The rest of the characters like 張 Zhāng 'a surname,' 李 Lǐ 'a surname' and 偉 wěi 'great' are commonly used for Chinese names. The character 張 Zhāng has its ancient form as 㢨, which depicts a person opening a bow 弓 ready to shoot an arrow. This character can also be analyzed as having two parts with 弓 'bow' as the semantic radical and 長 cháng as the phonetic component. Later, the character 張 Zhāng is extended to be used as a very commonly used surname.

Likewise, the character 李 lǐ has the original meaning as 'plum' and its meaning is derived from associating the baby 子 of a tree 木. Later, the character is also extended to be used as one of the four commonly used Chinese last names.

Unlike 張 Zhāng and 李 Lǐ as surnames, the character 偉 wěi 'great' is a popular character for male first names. It is formed by the Semantic-Phonetic method with 亻 (person) as the semantic radical and 韋 wěi as the phonetic component.

The above discussed characters can be combined with other characters to form the following expressions.

Characters	Pīnyīn	English Translation
你叫什麼名字？	Nǐ jiào shénme míngzi?	What is your name?
我叫張大偉。	Wǒ jiào Zhāng Dàwěi.	I am called Dawei Zhang.
我姓李。	Wǒ xìng Lǐ.	My last name is Li.

Compared with the polite form 您貴姓大名 Nín guìxìng dàmíng 'What is your full name,' the expression你叫什麼名字 Nǐ jiào shénme míngzi 'What is your name?' is different in at least three aspects. First of all, 你 nǐ instead of the polite form 您 nín is

used to march the level of formality. Secondly, as a regular sentence and not a fixed expression, a verb 叫 jiào is used. Thirdly, this question generally elicits either a full name or a first name as the translation may have implied.

In addition, from the name 張大偉 Zhāng Dàwěi 'Dawei Zhang,' we should notice that a last name in Chinese like 張 Zhāng always precedes its first name 大偉 Dàwěi. Such a practice is opposite of what we have for English word order in terms of first and last names. Furthermore, the literal translation for 大偉 Dàwěi is 'big and great,' which shows why it is a commonly used first name for males.

In contrast, the character 美 měi 'beautiful' is often used for female first names. Finally, the character 姓 xìng in the expression 我姓李 Wǒ xìng Lǐ 'My last name is Li' functions as a verb instead of a noun like 'last name' in English.

(3) Characters for Titles

Some important characters for titles are discussed here and they are 小 xiǎo 'small,' 姐 jiě 'older sister,' 先 xiān 'first' and 生 shēng 'born.' The ancient form for the character 小 is ⺌, which shows three dots to imply something small or tiny. As for the character 姐 jiě 'older sister,' it is formed by the Semantic-Phonetic method with 女 'female' as the semantic radical and 且 qiě as the phonetic component, which is almost identical with jiě with the only difference in Initials.

When 小 xiǎo and 姐 jiě put together, the combination 小姐 xiǎojiě has the meaning of 'Miss.' Such a combination is interesting in that 小 xiǎo here implies young,

71

while 姐 jiě is a respectful term referring to a lady. As a result, when 小姐 xiǎojiě 'Miss' is used, it is both complementary and respectful.

While 小姐 xiǎojiě is used respectfully for females, the equivalence for men will be 先生 xiānsheng meaning 'Mrs.' The character 先 xiān has the ancient form as 𠑱, which depicts 𠆢 a man who 之 goes forward and hence the meaning 'first.' As for the character 生 shēng, its ancient form as 生 shows a plant sprouting 屮 from the ground 土 and hence the meaning of 'born or life.'

The literal translation for 先生 xiānsheng, therefore, is 'first born,' which seems to be similar to the story of Adam in the Bible. Furthermore, when 生 is used in 先生 xiānsheng, its original first tone shēng is changed to the neutral tone as sheng.

The following shows some examples of using these characters in context.

Characters	Pīnyīn	English Translation
張先生	Zhāng Xiānsheng	Mr. Zhang
李小姐	Lǐ Xiǎojiě	Miss Li

Like the last name first practice, last names in Chinese also precedes titles, which can be observed from the examples where the last name 張 Zhāng goes before 先生 Xiānsheng 'Mr.' and the last name 李 Lǐ is placed before the title 小姐 Xiǎojiě 'Miss.'

(4) Characters for Asking Professions

Eight characters for asking professions are analyzed here and they are 工 gōng 'work,' 作 zuò 'work,' 做 zuò 'to do,'老 lǎo 'old,' 師 shī 'master,' 學 xué 'study,'電 diàn 'electronic' and 腦 nǎo 'brain.' To start with, the character 工 gōng has its ancient form as 工, which depicts a carpenter's square, a tool for work.

Unlike 工 as a pictograph, the character 作 zuò is formed by the Associative method. The ancient form for 作 zuò is 作, which shows that a person moved suddenly, implying that he wants to do something. At first, the character 作 zuò was used for both as a verb meaning 'to do' and as a noun meaning 'work; job.' Later, to distinguish the verb from the noun, a new character 做 zuò was created to function as the verb meaning 'to do.'

The 老 lǎo in the expression 老師 lǎoshī 'teacher' means 'old.' Its ancient form, 老, originally shows a pictograph of a man leaning on a cane; later 毛 (hair) and 匕 (change) were substituted to indicate the graying with age. The character 師 shī originally means a division in the Chinese army with 2,500 people. This can be observed by the concept derived from the association of its two components: encircle 帀 a hill 阝, implying a lot of people. This character was later extended to include the meaning of 'master or teacher.'

As for the character 學 xué 'study,' its ancient form 學 shows that hands reaching down 臼 to interact 爻 in a building 宀 (now 冖) with students 子. Therefore, this is character is formed by the Associative method.

Likewise, the ancient form for the character 電 diàn is 電, which shows an extension 申 from the rain 雨, and hence the meaning 'lighting.' Later, this character was used to mean 'electricity' because of its close relation to the original meaning.

As for the character 腦 nǎo 'brain,' its ancient form 腦 shows a brain's relation to meat 肉, its looks 巛 and its location 囟 (top of a head). The combination of 電 diàn and 腦

73

nǎo as 電腦 diànnǎo means 'computer' because Chinese people generally regard computers as electronic brains.

Once we learned these characters, we can use them in the following expressions for conversations about professions.

Characters	Pīnyīn	English Translation
你做什麼工作？	Nǐ zuò shénme gōngzuò?	What do you do for work?
我是老師。	Wǒ shì lǎoshī.	I am a teacher.
張老師。	Zhāng lǎoshī.	professor Zhang.
我是學生。	Wǒ shì xuéshēng.	I am a student.
你學什麼？	Wǒ xué shénme?	What do you study?
我學電腦。	Wǒ xué Diànnǎo.	I study Computers.

As shown in the example, for modern Chinese, 做 zuò is a verb meaning 'to do', while the other character 作 functions as a noun as in 工作 gōngzuò 'job,' and they are clearly distinguished.

Furthermore, one should note that 老師 lǎoshī in the context of 張老師 Zhāng lǎoshī should be translated as 'professor' instead of 'teach' or 'Mr. (in the context of school).' In contrast, Mr. Zhang in Chinese, however, should be translated as 張先生 Zhāng Xiānsheng.

5.2 Characters for Addresses and Phone Numbers

A total of 23 characters for addresses and telephone numbers are analyzed in this section and they are 住 zhù 'live,' 幾 jǐ 'how many,' 號 hào 'number,' 多 duō 'many,' 少 shǎo 'few,' 市 shì 'city,' 路 lù 'road; street,' 崗 gāng 'hill,' 百 bǎi 'hundred,' 零 líng 'zero,' 片 piàn 'card,' 話 huà 'talk,' 碼 mǎ 'yard,' 辦 bàn 'to do,' 公 gōng 'public,' 室 shì 'room,' 家 jiā 'home,' 可 kě 'may,' 以 yǐ 'in order to,' 打 dǎ 'call,' 行 xíng 'to go,' 動

74

dòng 'to move,' 手 shǒu 'hand,' 機 jī 'machine.' For the convenience of presentation, the analysis will be presented in two subsections. Section 5.2.1 is used characters for talking about addresses, and Section 5.2.2 is devoted to characters for conversations about telephone numbers.

5.2.1 Characters for Talking about Addresses

Five characters for asking about addresses are first discussed here and they are 住 zhù 'live,' 幾 jǐ 'how many,' 號 hào 'number,' 多 duō 'many' and 少 shǎo 'few.' As a clear example of the Semantic-phonetic method, the character 住 zhù 'live' is composed two parts: 亻 is the semantic radical and 主 zhǔ shows the phonetic clue.

As for the character 幾 jǐ as a question meaning 'how many,' its ancient form as 𢆶 shows the concept of 'small' being represented by the symbol 𢆶 on top; the concept of 'big' is represented by 大 on the bottom; and a spear is indicated by the radical 戈 in between: the association of them graphically depicts differentiating big and small.

Unlike 幾 jǐ, the character 號 hào originally means 'to roar' and it is formed by the Semantic-Phonetic method. While the phonetic component 号 hào provides the pronunciation clue, the ancient form for the semantic radical 虎 as 𧆞 shows the relation between 'roar' and 'tiger.' The character 號 hào was later extended to include the meaning of 'number.'

As for the character 多 duō, originally it meant two nights indicated by two 夕 'night'; now it indicates multiplicity of anything. Contrast to 多 duō, the ancient form for

75

少 shǎo 'few' as 小 shows four small dots said to be grains of sand, implying the concept of 'few.'

The following examples show how these above discussed characters are used to ask questions about where someone lives.

Characters	Pīnyīn	English Translation
你住哪兒？	Nǐ zhù nǎr?	Where do you live?
你住幾號？	Nǐ zhù jǐ hào?	What number do you live at?
你住多少號？	Nǐ zhù duōshǎohào?	What number do you live at?

Please note that although 幾 jǐ and 多少 duōshǎo both mean 'how many' when used alone, when they combine with the character 號 hào, the combination means 'what number.'

In addition to characters for asking about addresses, five more characters with regard to talking about addresses will be introduced in the following, and they are 市 shì 'city,' 路 lù 'road; street,' 崗 gāng 'hill,' 百 bǎi 'hundred' and 零 líng 'zero.'

The original meaning of the character 市 shì is 'market.' Its ancient form 㞢 shows that it is composed of two parts: the top part 之 means 'to go' and bottom part 兮 xī, shows the noise in a Chinese traditional market. Later, this character was extended to mean 'city' because a city is a place where a lot of people gather just like a market.

As for the character 路 lù 'road,' the meaning is derived by associating a location where everyone 各 chooses to walk 足 differently. Another character for describing a location is 崗 gāng meaning 'hills or heights.' Its ancient form 岡 shows a mountain

ridge or a sentry post and the radical 山 'mountain' in the modern form 崗 was later added to emphasize its close relation to mountains.

In addition to characters like 市 shì 'city,' 路 lù 'road' and 崗 gāng 'heights,' numbers like 百 bǎi 'hundred' and 零 líng 'zero' are also commonly used in telling addresses. The character 百 bǎi 'hundred' is formed by the Semantic-Phonetic method with 一 (indicating a unit of 'ten tens') as the semantic radical and 白 bái as the phonetic component. As for the character 零, its original meaning is 'light rain' and it is formed by the Semantic-Phonetic method with 雨 yǔ 'rain' as the semantic radical and 令 líng as the phonetic component. Latter, this character is used to mean 'zero.'

Once we learned how these characters were formed, we can put them in sentences describing addresses, as shown in the following.

Characters	Pīnyīn	English Translation
我住Hétáo市。	Wǒ zhù Hétáo Shì.	I live in Walnut City.
Fùlèdùn路	Fùlèdùn Lù	Fullerton Road
Ruólán崗	Luólán Gāng	Rowland Heights
Colima路一百零八號	Colima Lù yìbǎi líng bā hào	(Number) 108 on Colima

From the above examples, we notice that there are three ways of translating foreign names into Chinese. You can translate the meaning such as Hétáo 'Walnut,' or you can also translate the pronunciation when the meaning is not available like Fùlèdùn 'Fullerton.' The third way is that you can have a combination such as Luólán Gāng 'Rowland Heights' where Luólán is a translation of pronunciation and Gāng is a translation of meaning.

In addition, we should also note that the word order for addresses is very different between Chinese and English. While an address in English begins with a house number

followed by a street name such as 108 on Colima, a Chinese address always starts from a larger unit to a smaller unit. As a result, since a street is a larger unit than a house number, a street name always precedes a house number for a Chinese address, for example, Colima Lù yìbǎi líng bā hào (literal translation: Colima road 108). Furthermore, from this example, we may also notice that we simply use English such as Colima and put the character 路 lù to make it a street name in Chinese.

5.2.2 Characters for Conversations about Telephone Numbers

Characters related to conversations regarding telephone numbers are discussed here. They are 片 piàn 'piece,' 話 huà 'talk,' 碼 mǎ 'number; yard,' 辦 bàn 'to do,' 公 gōng 'public,' 室 shì 'room,' 家 jiā 'home,' 可 kě 'may,' 以 yǐ 'in order to,' 打 dǎ 'call,' 行 xíng 'to go,' 動 dòng 'to move,' 手 shǒu 'hand,' 機 jī 'machine.'

The character 片 piàn 'piece' is used in the expression 名片 míngpiàn meaning 'business card.' Its ancient form 片 shows that it represents the right (thin) half of a tree 木, and hence the meaning 'piece' is derived. As for the character 話 huà 'talk,' it is composed of two parts: 舌 shé meaning 'tongue' and 言 yán 'speech,' indicating that the tongue is the basis of speech.

Unlike 話 huà 'talk,' 碼 mǎ 'number; yard' is formed by the Semantic-Phonetic method with 馬 mǎ as the phonetic component. The semantic radical is 石 meaning 'rock' because it relates to things heavy like rocks or numbers written on stone tablets. With 話 huà 'talk' and 碼 mǎ 'number' learned, we can use them to form the expression 電話號碼 diànhuà hàomǎ meaning 'telephone number.'

78

Like 電話號碼 diànhuà hàomǎ 'telephone number,' 辦公室 bàngōngshì 'office' is also commonly used in talking about telephone numbers. The character 辦 bàn is formed by the Semantic-Phonetic method with the radical in the middle of the character 力 lì 'strength' as the semantic radical and 辡 biàn as the phonetic component.

As for the second character 公 gōng in the expression 辦公室 bàngōngshì, its ancient form � clearly shows how its meaning is derived. It is composed of a 口 kǒu 'mouth' and a 八 meaning division or departure. By association, once something departs from the mouth, it becomes 'public.' Finally, the last character 室 shì 'room,' as a character formed by the Associative method, shows that it is a place 宀 where one stops when one arrives 至.

Like the expression 辦公室 bàngōngshì 'office,' the character 家 jiā 'home' is also a popular character for conversations regarding telephone numbers. As shown by its ancient form 家, in the old time Chinese people raised pigs in their houses, so when people saw pigs under the roof, they knew it was a 'house or home.'

In addition to the characters discussed, other characters such as 可 kě 'may,' 以 yǐ 'in order to' and 打 dǎ 'call' are also commonly used characters. The character 可 kě 'may' has the ancient form as 可, which shows a mouth 口 singing in front of a table for placing sacrifices to gods to derive the meaning of 'getting permission or may.'

As for the character 以 yǐ 'in order to,' it is formed by the Semantic-Phonetic method with the right-hand side 人 as the semantic radical and the left-hand side 㠯 yǐ as the phonetic component.

As for the character 打 dǎ, its original meaning 'to hit' can be observed by its ancient form 𣂁 , which shows to nail ↑ something with hand 𠂤, and hence the meaning 'hit.' This character was later extended to mean 'call' probably because of the similarity between action of hitting and that of dialing a number.

Beside, characters like 行 xíng 'to go,' 動 dòng 'to move,' 手 shǒu 'hand' and 機 jī 'machine' are also often used in conversations regarding telephone numbers. The ancient form for the character 行 xíng is 𣅀, which shows a diagram of an intersection of streets, and hence the meaning 'to go.'

As for the character 動 dòng 'to move,' it was created by the Semantic-Phonetic method with the 力 lì 'strength' as the semantic radical and the 重 zhòng as the phonetic component. When 行動 xíngdòng 'mobile' and 電話 diànhuà 'telephone' are combined, the combination refers to one of the most popular device for most people, 'a mobile phone.'

Another term for 行動 電話 xíngdòng diànhuà 'mobile phone' is 手機 shǒujī. The character 手 shǒu means 'hand,' which can be understood better by looking at its ancient form as 𠂇. As shown by its ancient form, it shows the five fingers of a hand.

Unlike 手 shǒu 'hand' as a pictograph, the character 機 ji 'machine' is a creation of the Semantic-Phonetic method with 木 mù 'tree' as the semantic radical and 幾 jī as the phonetic component.

Now let us see how all these characters are used in expressions for conversations about telephone numbers.

Characters	Pīnyīn	English Translation
這是我的名片。	Zhè shì wǒde míngpiàn.	This is my business card.
辦公室的電話號碼	bàngōngshìde diànhuà hàomǎ	office telephone number
家的電話號碼	jiāde diànhuà hàomǎ	home telephone number
你也可以	Nǐ yě kěyǐ	You may also
打我的手機	dǎ wǒde shǒujī	call my mobile phone
行動電話	xíngdòng diànhuà	mobile phone

There are a number of things that one should note about the above expressions. To start with, the literal translation for 名片 míngpiàn is 'name card,' so next time if your Chinese friend asks for a name card, you know sh/e is asking for your business card and you also know such a mistake in English is because of his/her native language in Mandarin Chinese.

In addition, we should also pay attention to the word order difference between Chinese and English in the expression 你也可以 Nǐ yě kěyǐ 'You may also'. In Chinese 也 yě 'also' always comes before 可以 kěyǐ 'may,' while in English it is the opposite.

Furthermore, an interesting history about mobile phones should also be mentioned here. When a mobile phone was first used, it was called 大哥大 dàgēdà with the literal meaning as 'big brother big' because at that time only the rich and powerful people could afford it. Later, another term 行動電話 xíngdòng diànhuà, literally translated as 'mobile phone,' was created for describing the same device. When mobile phones became so popular that almost everyone had it, the term 手機 shǒujī with the literal translation as 'hand machine' became to be used frequently to account for the affordability of this

device. Nowadays, these three terms are used interchangeably in the Chinese communities.

5.3 Characters for Social Life

Characters for social purposes in the context of the Chinese culture such as welcoming guests and talking about families are analyzed here. These characters will be discussed in Section 5.3.1 (Characters for Welcoming Guests) and Section 5.3.2 (Characters for Talking about Families) in terms of how they were created and how they are used in expressions for social life.

5.3.1 Characters for Welcoming Guests

Characters for expressions when guests come to visit are discussed in this section and they are 歡 huān 'happy,' 迎 yíng 'greet,' 進 jìn 'enter,' 坐 zuò 'sit,' 喝 hē 'drink,' 茶 chá 'tea,' 謝 xiè 'thank,' 客 kè 'guest,' 氣 qì 'air,' 喜 xǐ 'glad,' 看 kàn 'watch,' 影 yǐng 'shadow' and 常 cháng 'often.'

The character 歡 huān 'happy' is formed by the Semantic-Phonetic method with 雚 huān as the phonetic component and 欠 'exhale' as the semantic radical to show the joyful mood. The character 歡 huān can be combined with 迎 'greet' as 歡迎 huānyíng meaning 'welcome.' The ancient form for 迎 yíng is 𦳘, which shows that someone is moving toward 𧾷 and looking up 卬 in order to 'greet' someone else.

As for the character 進 jìn 'enter,' it is composed of two parts: 辶 (with the ancient form as 𧾷 meaning 'to step with the foot') and 隹 (with the ancient form as 𠁥

depicting a bird with a short tail). By association, this character becomes an indicator of motion 辶 like a bird 隹, and hence the meaning 'to go ahead; enter.'

While 進 jìn is used to indicate the meaning of 'enter,' the character 坐 has the ancient form as 坐, depicting two persons sitting on earth facing each other and hence the meaning of 'sit' is derived. The characters 坐 zuò and 進 jìn can be combined with another character 請 qǐng 'please' that we discussed before to become the following two expressions: 請進 qǐng jìn 'Please come in' and 請坐 qǐng zuò 'Please sit.'

Like 請進 qǐng jìn and 請坐 qǐng zuò, 喝茶 hē chá 'drink tea' is also a commonly used expression for welcoming guests, especially in the context of the Chinese culture. The character 喝 hē 'drink' is created by the Semantic-Phonetic method with 口 kǒu 'mouth' as the semantic radical and 曷 hé as the phonetic component. The character 喝 hē 'drink' can be used with other beverages to form other useful expressions such as 喝水 hē shuǐ 'drink water' and 喝咖啡 hē kāfēi 'drink coffee.'

In addition to 喝 hē 'drink,' 茶 chá 'tea' definitely is interesting to study, not only as a character, but also as a story about how it was first discovered. Its ancient form as 茶 shows that this character is composed of the top 艹 as the plant radical because a tea tree is a plant and the rest of the character depicts the shape of a tea tree as a little bush.

What is even more interesting lies in the pronunciation of the character 茶 as chá. According to Chinese legend, tea was discovered by Shénnóng nearly 5,000 years ago. Shénnóng had a transparent stomach and used this physical uniqueness to find features of many herbs so that people could use those herbs as the correction medication for their diseases. Chinese people called him the god of herbs for his contributions.

One day he discovered tea by chance and saw that the tea had cleaned his stomach of a lot of poisonous herbs he had just consumed. He wrote down the character 查 chá meaning 'to look up' with an intention to look it up later on. Unfortunately, Shennong died before he had time to rename this plant. To commemorate his discovery of this wonderful drink, Chinese people still use the same pronunciation chá for the character 茶 'tea.'

When your Chinese friends offer you 茶 chá 'tea,' the expression 謝謝 xiéxie 'thanks' becomes useful to show your gratitude. The expression is composed of a character 謝 xiè and its repetition. The second character 謝 is pronounced as a neutral tone instead of its original fourth tone.

The character 謝 xiè meaning 'thank' is formed by the Semantic-Phonetic method with 言 yán 'word' as the semantic radical and 射 shè as the phonetic component, although the phonetic part may bear little resemblance to the modern pronunciation of the character 謝 xiè.

Another version of explaining this character is also interesting. This character can also be explained as a word 言 when people say it they will shrink 寸 their body 身 as in bowing to show their gratitude. The reason that two 謝 xiè are required is simply to show the sincerity of saying thanks. Repeating characters or words is a common practice for Chinese people to show that they mean what they say. Another good example is 歡迎! 歡迎! Huānyíng! Huānyíng! 'Welcome! Welcome!' The expression 歡迎 huānyíng is generally repeated to show the sincerity of welcoming guests.

When someone says 謝謝 xièxie 'thanks,' you can respond by saying 不謝 búxiè meaning 'you are welcome.' Another way to respond is 不客氣 búkèqì 'you are welcome.' As we already learned that 不 bù means 'no; not,' the character 客 kè meaning 'guest' is formed by the Semantic-Phonetic method with 宀 'house; roof' as the semantic radical and 各 gè as the phonetic component.

Like 客 kè 'guest,' the character 氣 qì 'air' is also created by the Semantic-Phonetic method with 米 mǐ 'rice' as the semantic radical and 气 qì as the phonetic component.

After learning characters to greet guests, we can continue to analyze the following characters for topics to discuss with guests. They are 喜 xǐ 'glad,' 看 kàn 'watch,' 影 yǐng 'shadow' and 常 cháng 'often.' The character 喜 xǐ is used to mean 'glad,' which can be observed from its ancient form 䇏 because it depicts a happy occasion by showing a drum 壴 with a mouth 凵 indicating singing. The character can be combined with another character 歡 huān as the 歡 huān in 歡迎 huānyíng 'welcome' to form a useful expression 喜歡 xǐhuān meaning 'like.'

Once we know the vocabulary 喜歡 xǐhuān 'like,' we can use it in a question like 你喜歡什麼？ Nǐ xǐhuān shénme? 'What do you like?' To answer the question, the character 看 kàn 'see; watch' becomes useful because we can use it to combine with another character 書 shū that was discussed earlier to become the expression 看書 kànshū 'to read books.'

The character 看 kàn is also an interesting one to analyze. Its ancient form as 𥄂 shows that it is composed of a hand 𠂋 and an eye 目. By associating the two components, we derive the meaning of 'see; watch' because generally one will use one's hand to protect the eye from the sunshine when one wants to 'see' something clearly.

After learning 看 kàn 'see; watch,' we can add another character 影 yǐng 'shadow' and combine them with still another character 電 diàn 'electronic' that we analyzed before to form another useful expression as 看電影 kàn diànyǐng 'watch movies.' The character 影 yǐng 'shadow' is created by the Semantic-Phonetic method with 彡 'shadow' as the semantic radical and 景 jǐng as the phonetic component.

To end the discussion of characters for welcoming guests, we will analyze one last character 常 cháng meaning 'often.' As shown by its ancient form as 常, this character is composed of two elements: 尚 shàng or cháng as its phonetic component and 巾 jīng 'banner' as its semantic radical. The character 常 cháng was first used to mean 'banner' and later it was changed to function as an adverb meaning 'often.'

Now, let us put all the characters for welcoming guests to practical expressions, as shown in the following.

Characters	Pīnyīn	English Translation
歡迎！歡迎！	Huānyíng! Huānyíng!	Welcome! Welcome!
請進。	Qǐngjìn.	Please, come in.
請坐。	Qǐngzuò.	Please, have a seat.
請喝茶。	Qǐng hēchá.	Please, drink some tea.
謝謝。	Xièxie.	Thank you.
不客氣。	Búkèqì.	You are welcome.
你喜歡做什麼？	Nǐ xǐhuān zuò shénme?	What do you like to do?
我喜歡看書。	Wǒ xǐhuān kànshū.	I like to read.
我喜歡看電影。	Wǒ xǐhuān kàn diànyǐng.	I like to watch movies.

你常去哪兒看電影？Nǐ chǎng qù nǎr kàn diànyǐng?　Where do you often go to watch movies?

歡迎常來。　　　　Huānyíng cháng lái.　　　You are welcome to come often.

As you can see from the above expressions, we can use these 13 characters that we just analyzed to combine with other characters we discussed before to create many useful sentences for talking with a Chinese guest or friend. Again, two grammatical points should be emphasized to reinforce the acquisition of these sentences.

The first one is the word order of Wh-questions in Chinese. As mentioned previously, a Chinese Wh-question is usually placed in the same place as its answer, unlike English. This difference can be illustrated by the following word order comparison between the two languages.

Chinese Word Order

你　喜歡　做　什麼？
You like do what

你　常　去　哪兒　看　電影？
You often go where watch movie

English Word Order

What do you like to do?

Where do you often go to watch movies?

The second item that we will discuss is the expression 歡迎常來 huānyíng cháng lái 'You are welcome to come often.' The literal translation for the sentence is 'welcome often come.' There are two significant differences between the word order of the Chinese sentence and its English translation as 'You are welcome to come often.' The first difference is that the Chinese sentence has no subject like its English counterpart. The second difference is that an adverb like 常 cháng 'often' always comes before the verb that it modifies, and in this case it is the verb 來 lái 'come.' By comparison, an adverb like 'often' in English generally follows the verb it modifies.

5.3.2 Characters for Talking about Families

This section is devoted to the analysis of characters for talking about families. They are 有 yǒu 'to have,' 没 méi 'have not,' 兩 liǎng 'two (used before a measure word),' 個 ge 'a measure word,' 孩 hái 'child,' 子 zi 'a noun suffix,' 太 tài 'used in the expression 太太 tàitai 'wife,' 爸 bà 'father,' 媽 mā 'mother,' 哥 gē 'older brother,' 弟 dì 'younger brother,' 姐 jiě 'older sister,' 妹 mèi 'younger sister' and 兄 xiōng 'older brother.'

The character 有 yǒu meaning 'to have' is an interesting example of the Associative method. As shown by its ancient form 𠂇, this character is composed of two parts: a hand 彐 and a piece of meat 肉. In the old time, meat was rare and valuable. Therefore, a hand holding a piece of meat really makes the concept of 'to have' clearer.

The opposite meaning of 有 yǒu 'to have' is 没 méi 'have not.' By associating the meanings of its two components (immerse 𠬒 into water 氵), the meaning of 'disappear or have not' is derived, so this character is another example of the Associative method. The character 没 méi, however, usually does not stand alone as a word in modern Chinese.

To functions as the negation of 有 yǒu, 没 méi generally is combined with 有 yǒu as the expression 没有 méiyǒu meaning 'have not.' In addition, the A-not-A question type functioning as a unique Yes-no question in the Chinese language for 有 yǒu 'have' is also different from other A-not-A questions. Take the character 好 hǎo 'good' as an example, generally 不 bù 'not' is used in its A-not-A question such as 好不好 hǎo bùhǎo

meaning 'good or not?' The A-not-A question for 有 yǒu, however, is 有没有 yǒu méiyǒu where 没 méi instead of 不 bù is used.

Beside 有 yǒu and 没 méi, the expression 兩個 liǎngge 'two + a measure word' is also a useful expression. To start with, 個 ge is the most commonly used measure word in Chinese. In English, a measure is used when a noun is uncountable, for instance, two <u>pieces</u> of paper. In Chinese, however, a measure word is used regardless if the noun following it is countable or uncountable. Therefore, in the expression 'two children' in English, no measure words are required between <u>two</u> and <u>children</u>, but in Chinese a measure like 個 ge must be present to make the expression grammatical.

The character 個 ge has the original meaning as 'individual' and it is formed by the Semantic-Phonetic method with 亻'person' as the semantic radical and 固 gù as the phonetic component. Later this character was extended to function as a measure word used with basically any nouns that can exist individually.

Like 個 ge, the character 兩 liǎng is also unique. As its ancient form 兩 shows, this character depicts a scale with two sides with a bar 一 added indicating balance and it was originally used as a teal, a unit of weight in ancient China. Later this character was extended to function as 'two' when used with a measure word.

In addition to 兩個 liǎngge 'two + measure word,' the expression 孩子 háizi is another useful expression when talking about families. The ancient form for 孩 hái 'child' is 孩, which is a creation of the Semantic-Phonetic method. Its semantic radical is 子 zǐ meaning 'child' and its phonetic component is 亥 hài. As for the character 子 zǐ, its ancient form 子 shows that it is formed by the Pictographic method. It depicts a child with

head and arms visible and its legs are swaddled. The character 子 zi in the expression 孩子 háizi 'child,' however, does not mean 'child.' Instead, it functions as a commonly used noun suffix in a number of other expressions such as 鞋子 xiézi 'shoe,' 桌子 zhuōzi 'table' and 椅子 yǐzi 'chair.' Furthermore, when 子 zi functions as a noun suffix, its pronunciation carries a neutral tone instead of a regular third tone as zǐ when it means 'child.'

Beside 孩子 háizi 'child,' a character like 太 tài used in the expression 太太 tàitai 'wife' is another good character to study. This character is formed by the Associative method because its meaning 'too (much)' is derived from associating big 大 with a dot 丶 for emphasis. When the character 太 tài is repeated and the second character carries a neutral tone as tai, the expression 太太 tàitai refers to 'wife.'

Some other kinship terms like 爸 bà 'father' and 媽 mā 'mother' are also commonly used characters when one talks about one's family. The character 爸 bà 'father' is created by the Semantic-Phonetic method. The radical 父 fù is the semantic part meaning 'father' and its ancient form 𠂤 shows a hand 𠂤 holding a stick 丨 because a father is generally the one with authority in a traditional Chinese family. While 父 fù 'father' is the semantic part of the character 爸 bà 'father,' the component 巴 bā is the phonetic part of the character.

Like the character 爸 bà 'father,' the character 媽 mā 'mother' is also a creation of the Semantic-Phonetic method with 女 nǚ 'female' as the semantic radical and 馬 mǎ

as the phonetic component. Like 太太 tàitai 'wife,' the characters 爸 bà and 媽 mā need to be repeated as 爸爸 bàba and 媽媽 māma to mean 'father' and 'mother' respectively.

In addition to 爸 bà 'father' and 媽 mā 'mother,' other characters such as 哥 gē 'older brother,' 弟 dì 'younger brother,' 姐 jiě 'older sister,' 妹 mèi 'younger sister' and 兄 xiōng 'older brother' are also commonly employed. The character 哥 gē 'older brother' is formed by the Associative method, and its meaning is derived from associating two 可 kě, emphasizing happiness. As a result, the character 哥 gē was originally used to mean 'song,' which has a modern form as 歌 gē 'song.' Later, 哥 gē is used to mean 'older brother.'

In contrast to 哥 gē 'older brother,' 弟 dì is used to refer to 'younger brother.' Its ancient form as 弟 shows a spindle with string wrapped around it, indicating 'succession' or 'order.' By extension, this character is used to mean 'younger brother.' The characters 哥 gē and 弟 dì, however, cannot be used alone and must be repeated as 哥哥 gēge and 弟弟 dìdi to mean 'older brother' and 'younger brother' respectively. Furthermore, the second repeated character like 哥 ge and 弟 di carries a neutral tone instead of its original tone.

In addition to 哥 gē 'older brother' and 弟 dì 'younger brother,' another pair of characters, 姐 jiě 'older sister' and 妹 mèi 'younger sister,' is also interesting to know how they are formed. The character 姐 jiě is formed by the Semantic-Phonetic method with 女 nǚ 'female' as the semantic radical and 且 qiě as the phonetic component.

Unlike 姐 jiě 'older sister,' the character 妹 mèi 'younger sister' is created by the Associative method. Its meaning 'younger sister' is derived from associating meanings of its components: a woman 女 not yet grown 未. Like all the other kinship terms, 姐 jiě and 妹 mèi need to be repeated as 姐姐 jiějie and 妹妹 mèimei to function as expressions meaning 'older sister' and 'younger sister' respectively. Furthermore, like all the other kinship terms, the second repeated character like 姐 jie and 妹 mei also carries a neutral tone instead of its original tone.

Although the character 哥 gē is used in the expression 哥哥 gēge 'older brother,' 哥 gē cannot be used to indicate the meaning 'siblings' as in the expression 兄弟姐妹 xiōngdìjiěmèi. As shown, the character 兄 xiōng must be used in such an expression in that 兄 xiōng is a classical Chinese character, while 哥 gē is a modern form for 'older brother.' As shown by its ancient form 兄, 'older brother' is the one who speaks with authority 口 because an older brother in a traditional Chinese family usually has authority over his younger brothers, older sisters and younger sisters. This character, therefore, is formed by the Associative method.

To sum up what have been discussed, we will put the characters into the following commonly used expressions in talking about families.

Characters	Pīnyīn	English Translation
你有没有兄弟姐妹？	Yǒu yǒuméiyou xiōngdìjiěmèi?	Do you have siblings?
你有幾個兄弟姐妹？	Yǒu yǒu jǐge xiōngdìjiěmèi?	How many siblings do you have?
我有兩個哥哥。	Wǒ yǒu liǎngge gēge.	I have two older brothers.
你太太好嗎?	Nǐ tàitai hǎo ma?	How is your wife?
我有兩個孩子。	Wǒ yǒu liǎngge háizi.	I have two children.

As shown above, the difference between the first two expressions lies only in the use of 有没有 yǒuméiyǒu 'Do you have?' versus 有幾個 yǒu jǐge 'How many?' Since these two expressions are very similar in terms of form and meaning, they should be clearly distinguished.

6. Conclusion

Three components are included in this study. They are the Pīnyīn system, the methods of forming Chinese characters and the analysis of Chinese characters. The summary of these three components are presented in the following to show how this study is different from previous works on these three components. In a word, this study is pedagogically oriented and makes every effort to make the learning of these three aspects of studying the Chinese language more efficient and fun.

Section 6.1 will be devoted to the Pīnyīn system, summarizing important points for using Pīnyīn accurately. In Section 6.2, important concepts for creating Chinese characters such as Radicals and methods of creating Chinese characters will be revisited to show the advantages of simplifying the previous studies from a pedagogical point of view. Section 6.3 will be used to categorize the Chinese characters analyzed in terms of their semantic radicals.

For pedagogical purposes, the Pīnyīn system, the concept of Chinese radicals, the methods of creating Chinese characters and the Chinese characters analyzed in this study will also be reorganized and presented in the format of PowerPoint so that they can be used in a classroom. The PowerPoint files will be saved as a CD and included as part of this project.

6.1 Highlights of the Pīnyīn System

Unlike the traditional way of presenting the four tones individually without comparisons, this study shows the first tone and the third tone should be presented as a contrast in that the former is a high tone, while the latter is a low tone. Likewise, the

second and the fourth tones should also be contrasted because the second is a rising tone, while the fourth is a falling tone. Teaching tones by showing their distinguished contrasts or comparisons should benefit learners to master this important aspect of learning the Chinese language more efficiently.

Again, unlike traditional way of presenting all 23 Initials (consonants in English) one after another, this study identifies 11 important Initials by highlighting them with their equivalences in English, as shown in the parentheses below.

Initials

b	p	m	f
d	t	n	l
g	k	h	
j (G)	q (ch)	x (between c and sh)	
z (ds)	zh (dsr)		
c (ts)	ch (tsr)		
s	sh (sr)	r (the <u>R</u> in <u>R</u>un)	
y (i)	w (u)		

By a simple association of what learners already know in their native language (English in this case), learners can master Initials in the Chinese language much more efficiently.

Likewise, this study points out that only 13 Finals should be given a more detailed explanation so that learners can focus on these more difficult ones instead of working on all the 32 Finals, like traditional ways would do. In addition, the project also points out that these 13 focused Finals can be further simplified as 6 important Finals, as shown in the following.

Final	Explanation
o	It should be pronounced as the /o/ in English, which is pronounced as 'ou without the 'u.'
e	This symbol in Pin1yin1 has two pronunciations: (1) /ɛ/ as in the example of yě and (2) /ə/ as in the example of hé.
ü	The key of pronouncing **ü** correctly is to say the Initial **y** and the Final **u** as **yu** at the same time. Another trick is to say the Initial **y** while rounding one's lips.

g	It represents a nasal sound, which makes the following four distinctive pairs: **an** vs. **ang**, **en** vs. **eng**, **in** vs. **ing**, **ian** vs. **iang**.
iu	The symbol **iu** in reality should be pronounced as 'iou,' but in the Pinyin system the **o** in the middle of iou must be omitted in writing.
ui	The symbol **ui** should be pronounced as 'uei,' but in the Pinyin system the **e** in the middle of uei must be omitted and therefore it should be spelled as **ui**.

As for important rules for putting Initials, Finals and Tones together, again the nine rules mentioned previously in Section 2.3 can be further simplified and refocused as the following four important rules.

Rule #1: When there are no other Initials and /i/ or /u/ starts the syllable, the /i/ or /u/ must be changed to their Initial counterpart /y/ or /w/, e.g. *yi, ya, yao, ye, wu, wa, wo* and *wai*.

Rule #2: Always put the tone mark on the first vowel of a syllable with more than one vowel; if the first vowel is /i/ or /u/, then put the tone marker on the second vowel, e.g., *xiān* and *huā*

Rule #3: When *zh, ch, sh, r, z, c, s* are pronounced alone, an -i should be added to fulfill the *Initial+Final* requirement, e.g., *zhi, chi, shi, ri, zi, ci* and *si*.

Rule #4: When an expression with two consecutive third tones such as *nǐ hǎo* 'hi,' the first third-tone *nǐ* may sound like the second tone, it should still be marked as a third tone.

As shown above, Rule number 1 is a combination of the first three rules mentioned in Section 2.3, which deals with the uniqueness of /i/ and /u/ as semivowels. Rule number 2 is a summary of the fourth rules mentioned in Section 2.3, with the emphasis on putting tones on the second vowel when the first one is a semivowel (/i/ or /u/).

Rule number 3 is a repetition of the sixth rule mentioned in Section 2.3, as an important requirement in the Pīnyīn system to use a dummy /i/ as the vowel for the seven

Initials /z/, /c/, /s/, /zh/, /ch/, /sh/ and /r/ when they are pronounced alone without involving other vowels.

Likewise, Rule number 4, as the most important tone change rule in Mandarin Chinese, is a restatement from the seventh rule discussed in Section 2.3. By contrast, the eighth and the ninth rules mentioned in Section 2.3 are excluded as a more important rule in this summary in that they only apply to two specific characters — yī 'one' and 不 bù 'not' and are much easier to handle, as analyzed in Section 2.3. By the same token, the fifth rule mentioned in Section 2.3 is also excluded in this summary because it functions simply as a reminder to spell /iou/ as *iu* and /uei/ as *ui* in the Pīnyīn system, which was already emphasized in Section 2.2 for Finals.

6.2 The Formation of Chinese Characters

Two essential aspects about the formation of Chinese characters are analyzed in Section 3: Radicals and methods of forming Chinese characters. A number of aspects of Radicals are discussed. First of all, as basic elements of characters, Chinese Radicals generally function to provide meaning or pronunciation of the character in which they are a constituent. Secondly, a radical can be a character by itself. When a radical is not a character by itself, it must be combined with other radicals to form a character. In addition, some radicals such as 人 (rén 'people') and 心 (xīn 'heart') have shortened forms as 亻 and 忄 to make their combination with other radicals easier. Furthermore, though Chinese radicals are in some way similar to the 26 alphabets used in English, there are a lot more radicals (214 most commonly used ones) to study.

97

In addition to radicals, methods of forming Chinese characters are also analyzed. In this study, the traditional way of analyzing the formation of Chinese characters is challenged. The six methods based on the most famous book *Shuō Wén Jiě Zì* by Xǔ Shèn are simplified as the following three methods. The Pictographic method is the same as *xiàngxíng* 'Pictographs' in *Shuō Wén Jiě Zì*, which accounts for characters depicting objects using only one picture. The Associative method is a combination of *zhǐshì* 'Ideographs' and *huìyì* 'Composite ideographs' because of the similarity of these two methods. The *xíngshēng* 'Phonetic compounds' is renamed as the Semantic-Phonetic method to emphasize the essence of this method for categorizing a character formed by two components, one for pronunciation and the other for meaning. As for the remaining two methods, *zhuǎnzhù* 'Transferred characters' and *jiǎjiè* 'Borrowed characters,' they are briefly introduced as supplementary because the characters employing these two methods are existing characters, not to mention that the examples applying these two methods are extremely few.

6.3 Summary of Analyzed Characters

A total of 149 characters are analyzed in this study. The following is a summary of these characters organized in terms of their semantic radicals. Each character is also accompanied by the method it was formed.

One Stroke

Radical	Meaning	Character
1 一 *yī*	one; a horizontal stroke	一 (yī 'one' Associative)
		七 (qī 'seven' Associative)
		三 (sān 'three' Associative)

			上 (shàng 'up' Associative)
			不 (bù 'not; no' Pictographic)
			世 (shì 'world' Associative)
2	丨 gǔn	a vertical stroke; line	中 (zhōng 'center' Associative)
3	乙 yǐ	a bend stroke; slash	九 (jiǔ 'nine' Associative)
			也 (yě 'also' Associative)

Two Strokes

4	二 èr	two; two horizontal strokes	二 (èr 'two' Associative)
			五 (wǔ 'five' Associative)
			亞 (yǎ 'inferior' Pictographic)
5	亠 tóu	head, above	京 (jīng 'capital' Pictographic)
6	人 rén	man, a person	人 (rén 'person' Pictographic)
			什 (shé 'what' Semantic-Phonetic)
			他 (tā 'he/she' Associative)
			以 (yǐ 'in order to' Semantic-Phonetic)
			你 (nǐ 'you' Associative)
			住 (zhù 'live' Semantic-Phonetic)
			作 (zuò 'job' Associative)
			來 (lái 'come' Pictographic)
			個 (ge 'a Measure Word' Semantic-Phonetic)
			們 (men 'plural mark' Semantic-Phonetic)
			做 (zuò 'to do' Semantic-Phonetic)
			偉 (wěi 'great' Semantic-Phonetic)
7	儿 rén	man, a person (at the bottom of a character)	兄 (xiōng 'older brother' Associative)
			先 (xiān 'first' Associative)
			兒 (ér 'baby' Associative)
8	入 rù	entering, starting	兩 (liǎng 'two' Associative)
9	八 bā	eight; to part, to divide	八 (bā 'eight' Associative)
			六 (liù 'six' Associative)
			公 (gōng 'public' Associative)
10	冂 jiǒng	wilderness	再 (zài 'again' Associative)

11 力 *lì*	strength, force	動 (dòng 'move' Semantic-Phonetic)
12 匕 *bǐ*	spoon, ladle	北 (běi 'north' Associative)
13 十 *shí*	ten; two crossed strokes	十 (shí 'ten' Associative)
		午 (wǔ 'noon' Associative)
		南 (nán 'south' Associative)
14 厶 *sī*	self, private	去 (qù 'go' Associative)

Three Strokes

15 口 *kǒu*	mouth, opening, sounding	叫 (jiào 'call' Semantic-Phonetic)
		可 (kě 'may' Associative)
		台 (tái 'Taiwan' Associative)
		名 (míng 'name' Associative)
		呢 (ne 'echo question' Semantic-Phonetic)
		和 (hé 'and' Semantic-Phonetic)
		哥 (gē 'older brother' Associative)
		問 (wèn 'ask' Associative)
		哪 (nǎ 'which' Semantic-Phonetic)
		喝 (hē 'drink' Semantic-Phonetic)
		喜 (xǐ 'happy' Associative)
		嗎 (ma 'yes-no question' Semantic-Phonetic)
16 囗 *wéi*	enclosure	四 (sì 'four' Associative)
		國 (guó 'country' Associative)
		圖 (tú 'map' Associative)
17 土 *tǔ*	earth, soil	在 (zài 'be at or in' Semantic-Phonetic)
		地 (dì 'ground' Associative)
		坐 (zuò 'sit' Associative)
		城 (chéng 'wall; city' Semantic-Phonetic)
18 夕 *xì*	evening	多 (duō 'many' Associative)
19 大 *dà*	big, large	大 (dà 'big' Associative)
		太 (tài 'too; wife' Associative)
20 女 *nǚ*	woman	好 (hǎo 'good' Associative)
		妹 (mèi 'younger sister' Associative)

姐 (jiě 'older sister' Semantic-Phonetic)
姓 (xìng 'surname' Associative)
媽 (mā 'mother' Semantic-Phonetic)

21 子 *zǐ*	child, son	子 (zǐ 'son; noun suffix' Pictographic)
		字 (zì 'character' Semantic-Phonetic)
		孩 (hái 'child' Semantic-Phonetic)
		學 (xué 'study' Associative)
22 宀 *miǎn*	roof, cover	安 (ān 'peace' Associative)
		客 (kè 'guest' Semantic-Phonetic)
		室 (shì 'room' Associative)
		家 (jiā 'home; house' Associative)
23 小 *xiǎo*	small	小 (xiǎo 'small' Associative)
		少 (shǎo 'few; little' Associative)
24 山 *shān*	mountain, cliff	崗 (gǎng 'hill' Associative)
25 工 *gōng*	work	工 (gōng 'job' Pictographic)
26 巾 *jīn*	towel, napkin	市 (shì 'city' Associative)
		師 (shī 'teacher; master' Associative)
		常 (cháng 'often' Pictographic; Borrowed)
27 幺 *yāo*	small, young	幾 (jǐ 'how many' Associative)
28 弓 *gōng*	crossbow	弟 (dì 'younger brother' Associative)
		張 (zhāng 'a surname; open' Associative)
29 彳 *chì*	walking slowly	很 (hěn 'very' Semantic-Phonetic)
		從 (cóng 'follow; from' Associative)
30 彡 *shān*	hair, feather	影 (yǐng 'shadow' Semantic-Phonetic)

Four Strokes

31 心 (忄) *xīn*	heart, feeling	忙 (máng 'busy' Semantic-Phonetic)
		怎 (zěn 'how' Associative)
		您 (nín 'you, polite' Semantic-Phonetic)
32 戈 *gē*	axe, halberd	我 (wǒ 'I' Associative)

101

33 手 (扌) *shǒu* hand, actions

手 (shǒu 'hand' Pictographic)
打 (dǎ 'hit; call' Associative)

34 日 *rì* sun, clear

早 (zǎo 'morning' Associative)
是 (shì 'verb to be' Associative)
晚 (wǎn 'evening; late' Associative)

35 文 *wén* word, literature

文 (wén 'word' Associative)

36 曰 *yuē* speaking

書 (shū 'book' Associative)
會 (huì 'can' Associative)

37 木 *mù* tree, wood

李 (Lǐ 'a surname' Associative)
東 (dōng 'east' Associative)
機 (jī 'machine' Semantic-Phonetic)

38 欠 *qiàn* missing, gap

歡 (huān 'happiness' Semantic-Phonetic)
歐 (ōu 'Europe' Semantic-Phonetic)

39 气 *qì* air, breath

氣 (qì 'air' Semantic-Phonetic)

40 水 (氵) *shuǐ* water

江 (jiāng 'river' Semantic-Phonetic)
沒 (méi 'without' Associative)
河 (hé 'river' Semantic-Phonetic)
洲 (zhōu 'continent' Semantic-Phonetic)
海 (hǎi 'sea' Associative)

41 父 *fù* father

爸 (bà 'father' Semantic-Phonetic)

42 片 *piàn* slice, piece

片 (piàn 'piece' Associative)

Five Strokes

43 生 *shēng* give birth, life

生 (shēng 'give birth; life' Associative)

44 田 tián field

界 (jiè 'boundary' Semantic-Phonetic)

45 白 *bái* white

百 (bǎi 'hundred' Semantic-Phonetic)
的 (de 'possessive' Semantic-Phonetic)

46 目 *mù* eye

看 (kàn 'look; see' Associative)

47 石 *shí*	stone, rock	碼 (mǎ 'number' Semantic-Phonetic)

Six Strokes

48 羊 *yáng*	sheep, goat	美 (měi 'beautiful' Associative)
49 老 *lǎo*	old	老 (lǎo 'old' Associative)
50 肉(月) *ròu*	meat, organs of the body	有 (yǒu 'have' Associative) 腦 (nǎo 'brain' Associative)
51 艸(艹) *cǎo*	grass, herb, plant	茶 (chá 'tea' Associative) 英 (yīng 'flower' Semantic-Phonetic)
52 虍 *hǔ*	tiger	號 (hào 'number' Semantic-phonetic)
53 行 *xíng*	walk, row, line	行 (xíng 'walk' Associative)
54 襾(覀) *yà*	cover	西 (xī 'west' Associative)

Seven Strokes

55 見 *jiàn*	seeing	見 (jiàn 'see' Associative)
56 言 *yán*	speaking	言 (yán 'speaking' Associative) 話 (huà 'talk' Associative) 説 (shuō 'speak' Associative) 語 (yǔ 'language' Semantic-Phonetic) 請 (qǐng 'please' Semantic-Phonetic) 誰 (shéi 'who' Semantic-Phonetic) 謝 (xiè 'thank' Semantic-Phonetic)
57 貝 *bèi*	cowry snail	貴 (guì 'precious' Associative)
58 足 *zú*	foot, leg, walking	路 (lù 'road' Associative)
59 辛 *xīn*	bitter	辦 (bàn 'do' Semantic-Phonetic)
60 辵(辶) *chuò*	stamping on the earth	這 (zhè 'this' Associative) 迎 (yíng 'welcome' Associative) 進 (jìn 'enter' Associative)
61 阝 *yì*	village	那 (nà 'that' Semantic-Phonetic)

62 *cháng*   long   長 (cháng 'long' Associative)

63 雨 *yǔ*   rain   電 (diàn 'electronic' Associative)
                                   零 (líng 'zero' Semantic-Phonetic)

64 非 *fēi*   wings; not   非 (fēi 'Africa' Associative)

Eleven Strokes

65 麻 *má*   hemp   麼 (me 'what' Semantic-Phonetic)

Twelve Strokes

66 黃 *huáng*   yellow   黃 (huáng 'yellow' Semantic-Phonetic)

From the above summary of characters analyzed in this study, the 149 character discussed are reorganized into 66 semantic radicals. By doing so, the 214 commonly used semantic radicals are simplified by associating them with the analyzed characters in this study. Furthermore, characters with the same semantic radicals are also grouped together to make learning of these characters more efficient.

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