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How Movie Dubbing Can Help Native Chinese Speakers' English Pronunciation

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HOW MOVIE DUBBING CAN HELP NATIVE CHINESE SPEAKERS' ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

English is a compulsory subject in Chinese high schools and universities under the order of the Ministry of Education from the founding of New China in 1949. After the economic reform and opening of China in 1978 and 1979, the learning of English became fashionable in China and by the early 1980s, it had become a compulsory subject in the college entrance exam (He, 2000). In the People's Republic of China, learning English is viewed as a necessary tool to access modern scientific and technological advances, which also promotes commerce and understanding in countries where English is a major language (Cowan, 1979). Learning English means learning the languages of science, commerce, international travel, as well as access to computer software that are primarily written in English (Bowers, 1996). In 2006, a senior education official reported that more than 300 million Chinese people, or nearly a quarter of the country's population, had studied English either as a major course or as an elective subject (*People's Daily Online*). This importance of English is also reflected in Chinese students' increased desires to study and work in English-speaking countries. Their reasons vary but are often related to career, communication and educational pursuits. As a result of China's booming economy, more parents are now able to meet the heavy costs of sending their children to study abroad and many language schools in China have benefited greatly from China's economic boom especially during 2005-2010 (Wagmann, 2013). According to the Chinese Ministry of

Education, the number of Chinese students who studied abroad increased by 17.7% from 2011 to 2012; a total of 399,600 Chinese students went to study abroad in 2012 (*ICEF Monitor*, 2013).

In order to prepare themselves for life in English-speaking environments, many Chinese students enroll in English language classes offered by private language institutions and university courses. To meet the demand in China, English language training centers all over the country, either independent or affiliated with universities or other institutions of learning, are offering a great variety of English courses for people from all walks of life (He Qixin, 2000).The increase in English language courses also makes it necessary for Chinese institutions to hire native English speakers from foreign countries to come to China to teach Chinese students. I am one of these foreign teachers who came from the United States to teach English in China. This study were drawn from my experiences teaching first and second year Chinese college students, ages eighteen to twenty, majoring in English at a university in a major Chinese city.

One area of English acquisition of particular concern for Chinese learners of English is pronunciation (Baker**,** 1992). When asked the part of English they found most difficult to learn, most Chinese students answered English pronunciation. While Chinese students focus on all aspects of English learning, they have the least exposure to English pronunciation. Baker (1992) states that advanced students find that they can improve all aspects of their proficiency in English except their pronunciation, which may have already developed errors impossible to eradicate.

English pronunciation courses (taught by native English speakers) are not always available to Chinese students so they must learn how to pronounce English from Chinese teachers or study on their own by watching English-language TV shows and movies. Oftentimes, there is no one to inform them of their pronunciation errors. One source of input is movies and

TV programs, which provide some degree of authentic language input (Cakir, 2006**;** Katchen, 2002). In fact, many Chinese students participate in an English movie dubbing competition every year (among various types of English language competitions) to display their English-speaking skills by speaking the lines of the original actors. It is a popular event at my school and an effective way to practice authentic English speaking. Although I am often invited to judge these language competitions, I find it difficult to score student performances since there are no specific judging rubrics to use, especially in terms of their pronunciation. I often find that while students' pronunciation of English segmentals (individual phonemes) is correct, their dialogues often lack appropriate prosodic features (sentence stress, rhythm and intonation). Their dialogues sound monotone as they speak with even emphasis on all words rather than on content words, rarely changing intonation to emphasize emotions such as happiness or anger. The lack of intonation in the speech of Chinese students may be both linguistically and culturally influenced. Students' lack of depth and expressed emotion in their dialogues may be related to prosodic differences between English and Mandarin Chinese In order to work with these differences, it is useful for English language teachers to familiarize themselves with the learning and speaking styles of Chinese students. Familiarity with phonological features of the L1, knowing cultural differences in learning strategies, as well as stimulating interest are important elements to help Chinese speakers improve their English pronunciation (Ho, 2001).

Attaining Intelligible Pronunciation

The production of foreign accents in pronunciation when learning a second language is a widely studied topic. Foreign accents are exhibited in features such as vowel/consonant segmental sounds as well as prosodic features (Zhang, 2010). Among them, segmental elements

(such as consonants and vowels) remain the most heavily investigated (Flege, 1993; Munro, Flege & MacKay, 1996). However, relatively little research has been conducted to investigate the second language acquisition of suprasegmental elements, e.g. pitch accent, tone, stress, intonation (Davis & Kelly, 1997; Guion, 2004, 2005), although inaccurate production of L2 suprasegmentals contributes more to foreign accent than inaccurate segmental production (Magen, 1999; Trofimovich & Baker, 2006).

The Focus of this Study

Teaching in Beijing, China these past eight years has been full of interesting and challenging teaching and cultural experiences. I have taught many English language classes and interacted with many different types of students with different interests and personalities. I am always researching new activities and homework assignments that will help students practice their English speaking skills in an engaging and authentic manner. Although they seemed like good ideas at first, there are several faults in the homework activities I have given students in the past. For example, I had students give presentations in front of the class based on the topic of the week. Not only did most of the students read their presentations, they also lacked emotion, which made their presentations incredibly dull. Then I tried role-plays where students read their dialogues from a piece of paper. Some of their classmates could not understand what they were saying because their pronunciation was unintelligible.

The lack of students' use of emotion when speaking may also be culturally related because Chinese and Western communication styles differ in terms of expressing opinions. One possible cultural influence, collectivism, comes from the beliefs and teachings of the Chinese philosopher Confucius. Confucius defines collectivism as a hierarchy of harmonious

relationships where everyone should know their place in society and accept it without any complaint. Therefore, Chinese people may regard the expression of emotions, either positive or negative, as unusual and a possible form of criticism (Fat, 2004). As a result, Chinese speakers may not be willing to express their emotions when speaking English naturally.

The distinctive system of pronunciation and intonation of Chinese as compared to English may also cause Chinese to be perceived as rude and inconsiderate (Yin & Zhang, 2009). For example, I overheard an English conversation between two Chinese middle-school students looking for purple pens in a Japanese stationery store. I tried to help them by telling them which of the purple pens were on sale. Instead of saying "thanks," one of the students just said "whatever." Due to her intonation, I perceived her response as rude and asked her if she was a native speaker. She said "no" and I commented that her tone sounded disrespectful to a native English speaker just trying to be friendly. I was not sure if her response indicated her feelings towards my comment or if she just could not understand what I was saying. After discussing this situation with my college students in class the next day, they told me that "whatever" in Chinese can also mean "Sure, ok." So I began to wonder if this student was really as ill-mannered as I first perceived or was she just using the wrong intonation. After this experience, I began to feel teaching intonation to students is greatly necessary to avoid possible misunderstandings.

I began to wonder what type of language activity would help students with their pronunciation and intonation, especially indentifying and producing stress in sentences. I remembered students' unnatural sounding speech segments in movie dubbing activities and wondered if a lack of suprasegmental feature awareness (word stress, pausing and intonation) was the primary cause. How can movie dubbings affect Chinese students' awareness of English sentence stress? What tools and activities should be involved to determine these results? What

activities and recordings should students and teachers prepare ahead of time? I would like to learn more about structuring movie dubbing activities and what types of linguistic instruction activities will help students prepare well.

Students' desire to improve pronunciation (Baker, 1992) and the popularity of movie-dubbing competitions in China have led me to my research interest, namely, the extent to which instruction using movie scripts affects Chinese students' awareness of English sentence stress. I did the research in three cycles, which included listening discrimination activities, student recordings and an actual movie dubbing performance. I hoped that researching and gathering data for this capstone would help me discover common sentence stress errors and conceptions that could be fodder for future research and would help me devise an effective rubric for judging movie dubbing performances in my classes and in language competitions.

Research Question

Understanding linguistic and phonetic differences between Mandarin Chinese and American English can help English teachers analyze English language and pragmatic errors made by native Chinese speakers. Knowing common mistakes Chinese have when identifying stress in English speech can help teachers devise a lesson plan that can target these problem areas and help Chinese students develop more native speech patterns. Sounding like a native speaker is one of the greatest concerns for Chinese speakers learning English. The type of data to help address these concerns can be collected from research participants through the use of videotape and recorded dialogues (Ho, 2001). Finally, I believe developing an effective judging rubric for movie dubbing activities will help me collect data needed to analyze whether the use of movie dubbings helps Chinese students' use of natural sentences stress when speaking in English.

Using these resources and tools, I would like to explore the following research question: To what extent does instruction using movie dubbing affect college-aged (18-20) Chinese students' awareness of English sentence stress?

Chapter Overviews

Chapter two contains a literature review focusing on linguistic differences between Mandarin Chinese and American English in terms of the different uses of suprasegmentals, including sentence stress and timing of speech; the literature review discusses the benefits of movie dubbing activities and pronunciation concerns for Chinese students. Chapter Three focuses on methodology and data collection, which involves student recordings and movie dubbing activities with college-aged Chinese students in Beijing, China. Chapter Four then presents results gathered during the data collection process and Chapter Five includes an analysis and discussion of the effects this study had on students' use of sentences stress, limitations of the study, and questions for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The professional significance of learning English in China is evident in various aspects of Chinese society: education, career, science and technology. However, many Chinese students feel that their English pronunciation skills need to improve due to the lack of exposure to native English speakers and the opportunity to converse with them outside of the classroom. Some students admit that their non-native English pronunciation is what affects their confidence to speak English and explains why they sometimes refuse to speak (Bian, 2009; Fat, 2004; Wang, 2009). Munro and Derwing (1999) observed that prosodic errors (i.e., errors in stress, intonation, and rhythm) appear to affect intelligibility more than phonetic errors (i.e., errors in single sounds). One major prosodic difference between Chinese and English is that Chinese is a tone language while English is an intonation language. Tone units are defined as the basic unit of intonation in a language, which contain words of one or more syllables with a complete pitch movement. Tone languages have contrasting pitches; the same string of segmental sounds will have different meanings when pronounced with different tones (Roach, 2003; Zhang, 2009). Changing pitch tones (higher and lower sounds) of words also changes the word (lexical) meaning. English is an intonation language where changing the tone changes the lexical meaning (Yin & Zhang, 2009). Chinese and English syllables are produced differently in sentences.

Chinese word syllables are usually spoken with the same amount of time and given equal stress whereas English word syllables are pronounced with different timing depending on the stressed and unstressed syllables (Yin & Zhang, 2009). While a Chinese tone falls on one syllable, an English tone may be spread across any number of syllables (Chen, 1997). When a Chinese student pronounces every syllable of English words with the same amount of time in a sentence, their foreign-sounding accent will easily lead to misunderstanding. Therefore, understanding English sentence stress will help students develop English speech that will be more similar to that of native speakers. In this study, I hope to determine whether movie dubbing activities will help Chinese students improve their pronunciation, specifically, their awareness of sentence stress, one aspect of prosody that can pose difficulties for Chinese speakers (Bian, 2009; Rui, 2007). The literature review discusses how consonant clusters and certain consonant sounds in English pronunciation create difficulty for Chinese speakers. Then the literature review discusses how prosody differs in English and Chinese. The literature review will discuss word and sentence stress in English. Finally, the literature review discusses movie dubbing, using subtitles, other benefits of movie dubbing and pronunciation concerns for Chinese students.

Pronunciation Differences between Mandarin Chinese and American English

Many common errors, both segmental and suprasegmental, have been identified in the speech of Mandarin speaking learners studying English (Ho, 2001; Li, 2003; Qian, 2011). This section begins with pronunciation differences between Mandarin Chinese and American English in terms of consonant sounds. Some research (Bian, 2009; Zhang, 2009) indicates that native language interference creates difficulty in pronunciation in the L2, which may be the case for Mandarin Chinese speakers learning English. Understanding some key phonetic differences

between students' native language (Mandarin Chinese in this study) and target language (American English in this study) is helpful for English language teachers trying to understand the language background of their students (Flege, 1980;Wu, 1993).

Chinese speakers have difficulty with the pronunciation of English consonants. The most difficult English phonemes for Chinese students are consonants such as /l/, /r/, / θ/ at the beginning of words and /ŋ/ at the end of words (Hockett, 1972). Li (2003) addresses the differences in the English and Chinese pronunciation of the *r* sound: The Chinese *r* differs from the English *r* in two respects: The [retroflex] initials are pronounced with no lip action (unless followed by a rounded vowel)**;** it is shorter and has more friction. The Chinese *r* is pronounced with less friction than the comparable English fricative. Therefore it is not surprising when the words 'pronunciation,' 'rose' and 'rise' are uncomfortably heard when they are produced by ESL learners (Zhang**,** 2009). Besides learning some key phonetic differences between students' native language and target language, it is also important for English teachers to be aware of sounds and sound clusters that are most difficult for language learners to pronounce in the target language (American English in this study). Most Chinese speakers have difficulty pronouncing consonant clusters because they are not commonly used in Chinese pronunciation. English consonant clusters are groups of consonants within one syllable that occur before or after a pause (Zhang, 2009). Qian (2011) describes common errors in regards to the two parts of a consonant cluster: initial consonant cluster and final consonant cluster. For initial consonant clusters, unnecessary aspiration of plosives after /s/, vowel epenthesis and substitution were found to have been the most salient features of 12 Chinese speakers. In terms of final consonant clusters, insertion of an extra vowel and deletion of plural form /s/ after the fricatives /ð/ and /θ/ are most frequent (Qian, 2011); this is because Chinese morphemes are generally made up of a consonant plus a vowel

with no consonant cluster and usually ending with a vowel (Zhang, 2009). Negatively transferring this character of Chinese phonological rules to English, learners would commonly pronounce words ‘book’ and ‘bed’ as /bukɤ/ and /bedɤ/, and have problems in pronouncing words ‘prompt’ and ‘thousandths’ (Zhang, 2009).

Other research observes that learners utter English phonemes by searching for the corresponding sound in their native language first, and then substituting the target sound with it (Lado 1957). Mandarin Chinese is regarded as the standard of Chinese pronunciation in China and is referred to as *Putonghua* or “Common speech” by Chinese speakers (Hua, 2001). Mandarin Chinese speakers who also speak other regional dialects will have even more difficulty learning English pronunciation because they may use the phonological rules of the dialect to set the phonological system of the English they speak (Wang, Wang, Yuan, & Zhai, 2012). Regional Chinese dialects have even more complex intonation than Mandarin Chinese so they would encounter even more first language interference (Hua, 2001). For example, it is often difficult for a student from Sichuan province to distinguish /n/and /l/ in words like as “life” and “knife,” as these sounds are pronounced the same in Sichuan dialect (Yin & Zhang, 2009). Based on their geographical location, current research (Hua, 2001 ; Zhang, 2009) has found that students might confuse “[k]/[tʃ]” sounds (South), “[s]/[ʃ]” (Northwest) as well as use more rising tones in speech (Shanxi province). Most researchers agree that the learner’s first language influences the pronunciation of the target language and is a significant factor in accounting for foreign accents. Interference from the first language is likely to cause errors in aspiration, stress, and intonation in the target language (Yin & Zhang, 2009).

English and Mandarin Chinese Prosody

Introduction

Prosodic information is conveyed by intonation and by rhythm to express the function of a sentence (interrogative, affirmative, exclamatory or imperative) and to show the speaker's attitude and emotional state (Ploquin, 2009). Stress and timing are used differently in Mandarin and English (Roach, 1982, Zhang, 2009). Described with musical patterns, Chinese speech is staccato with breaks in continuous flow of speech and whereas English is legato as the flow of speech goes smoothly without breaks (Yin & Zhang, 2009). Mandarin is classified as a syllable-timed language with phrase-level stress. In syllable-timed languages, all syllables are nearly equally stressed, vowel reduction does not occur, and all syllables appear to take the same amount of time to utter (Low & Schaetzel, 2009). The basis for Chinese rhythm is the number of syllables in an utterance, and the production of every syllable takes the same amount of time. In syllable-timed languages, it is the number of syllables, not the number of stressed syllables that determines the amount of time to say a sentence (Roach, 2003). As most words in Mandarin only contain one syllable, words in sentences are pronounced with equal timing. Every Chinese word has a fixed tone, thus the intonation of the whole sentence is-greatly constrained (Zhang, 2009). English, on the other hand, is a stress-timed language and the basis for English rhythm is lexical-level stress. English words usually contain several syllables. Because of the varying ʌ stress on syllables of English words in a sentence, each word requires different timing to pronounce. The stressed syllable takes more time to pronounce than the unstressed syllable and the period of time

from each stressed syllable to the next is approximately the same, irrespective of the number of intervening unstressed syllables (Roach, 2003). Bian (2013) illustrates this concept with the sentences *Cats eat fish.* and *The cats have eaten the fish*.

'Cats/'eat/'fish. (3 syllables, 3 stressed syllables, 3 beats)

The 'cats/have'eaten/the'fish. (7 syllables, 3 stressed syllables, 3 beats)

Due to the different timing systems of these two languages, prosody is reflected in the use of tone patterns in Mandarin whereas prosody comes from the use of stress accents in English (Zhang, 2010). Tone in Mandarin is a suprasegmental phoneme that changes meaning and has a fixed pitch pattern, being either level or contoured (Chen, 1997). Chinese speakers use these tones to indicate changes in word meaning. In Chinese, the form *ma* as *mā*, *má*, *mǎ*, m*à*, and *ma* refers to five Chinese characters 妈, 麻, 马, 骂 and 吗 meaning respectively "mum," "hemp," "horse," "scold," and "an interrogative particle" (Bian, 2013). In Chinese, it is the tone that contrasts the meaning of words (Zhao, 2006), not word stress or word structure. While different tones change the word meaning in Mandarin Chinese, different tones change the perceived emotion and sentence meaning in English but not word meaning. In English, *yes* with a rising tone indicates the person responding to a question and *yes* with a fallen tone indicates the person is confirming something. However, the initial meaning of "yes" used to confirm something does not change. While stress does not differentiate the meaning of words in Chinese, stress can differentiate the meaning of words in English (Wei, 2003).

The Elements of English Prosody

English is a stress-timed language, meaning that the intervals between the stressed and unstressed syllables of English words create the rhythm of English (Chen, 1997). As most

English words consist of several syllables, English requires that one syllable in each word be stressed more than others (Zhang, 2009)which usually indicates meaning (Bian, 2013). English contains both word stress and sentence stress.

Word Stress

Word stress is usually described as the "stressed syllables that are longer, louder and higher in pitch" (Brinton, Celce-Murcia& Goodwin, 1996, p. 184). Word stress means a prominent syllable within a word when speaking an English word as shown in these examples.

word	**pattern**
tea.cher	• .
beau.ti.ful	• . .
un.der.**stand**	. . •

The correct placement of stress on a word syllable is important to give meaning and context to listeners. For example, *blackboard* could mean two different things based on which word is stressed. When the modifier (black) is stressed but the noun (board) is unstressed, blackboard means a board used to write on in a classroom. When both the modifier (black) and the noun (board) are stressed, it means a board that is black. It could be argued that *blackboard* today conjures images of a childhood classroom while, in the eighteen hundreds, it would relate to an actual board that was black (Ploquin, 2009).

Sentence Stress

Sentence stress is the music of spoken English (Wanmei, 2008). Sentence stress is what gives English its rhythm or "beat." Stress-based rhythm is achieved through the presence of reduced vowels in unstressed syllables in a sentence (Low & Schaetzel, 2009). When there are

many such syllables, native speakers of English reduce the syllables by uttering words rapidly (Bian, 2013). The time between stressed syllables is fairly regular because unstressed syllables are spoken more quickly when vowel reduction occurs. Low and Schaetzel (2009) illustrate this concept using the sentences "Tom runs fast" and "Meredith can run fast." "Tom runs fast" is made up of three stressed syllables. The sentence "Meredith can run fast" is made up of six syllables, but only three of them are stressed. Vowel reduction occurs when the unstressed syllables -e-, -dith, and can are spoken quickly and both sentences take approximately the same amount of time to say since the time between the stressed syllables tends to be fairly equal (Low & Schaetzel, 2009).

Like word stress, sentence stress promotes understanding of spoken English, especially when spoken fast. Word stress is accent on one syllable within a word whereas sentence stress is accent on certain words within a sentence. The basic rule is that content words (nouns, verbs, adverbs) are stressed while function words (determiners, prepositions, etc.) are not (Ploquin, 2009). Unlike content words, function words have little or no meaning but serve to connect the content words to form a grammatical unit such as a sentence (Bian, 2013). Function words (e.g. articles, helping verbs, prepositions) typically have reduced vowels instead of full ones**;** the reduced vowel version is known as a weak form. For example, in the sentence "Bob can swim," the words Bob and swim have the major stress, and can, which is unstressed, is pronounced [kin]—its weak form (Low & Schaetzel, 2009). Another example, the strong form of the word "but" is pronounced /bʌt/ and the weak form is pronounced /bət/. In the sentence, "I did it in the classroom," the word that is stressed changes the meaning of the entire sentence (Bian, 2013).

I did it in the CLASSROOM. (I did it in the classroom, not in the bedroom.)

I did it IN the classroom. (I did it in the classroom, not outside of it.)

I did it in the classroom. (It is me, not anybody else, who did it here.)

Illustrated in the tables below are the basic rules of sentence stress: (1) content words are stressed and (2) function (structure) words are unstressed (Brinton, Celce-Murcia, & Goodwin, 1996; Ploquin, 2009; Wanmei, 2008).

Table 1

Content words - stressed

Words carrying the meaning	**Example**
main verbs	SELL, GIVE, EMPLOY
nouns	CAR, MUSIC, MARY
adjectives	RED, BIG, INTERESTING
adverbs	QUICKLY, LOUDLY, NEVER
negative auxiliaries	DON'T, AREN'T, CAN'T
conjunctions	THEREFORE, ALTHOUGH, HOWEVER
demonstrative pronouns	THIS, THAT, THOSE, THESE

Table 2

Function words - unstressed

Words for correct grammar	**Example**
pronouns	he, we, they
prepositions	on, at, into

articles	a, an, the
short conjunctions	and, but, because
auxiliary verbs	do, be, have, can, must

Difficulty with Using Stress

Most speakers whose native languages do not focus much on stress seem to have difficulty identifying where to use word and sentence stress. Archibald (1997) did a study with ESL learners whose first languages were Chinese or Japanese and found that the errors in word stress made by the participants were not related to any consistent pattern, which indicated that speakers of a non-stress language were not as aware of the English word stress patterns as native speakers of a stress-timed language (Zhang, 2010). To further illustrate the concept of word stress, Gao (2012) examined the use of stress in polysyllabic words. The study found that the occurrence of misplacement of word stress was always in polysyllabic words and there was a strong tendency to stress shift onto the second syllable. For example, Chinese speakers most likely did this because the second or the latter syllable is always stressed in Chinese double-syllable words (Gao, 2012).

The importance of putting the stress on the right syllable in English words cannot be underestimated; putting the stress on the wrong syllable is more likely to make a word unintelligible than is mispronouncing one of its sounds (Field, 2005; Zhang, 2009).

The same is true for sentence stress; ESL learners tend to misplace sentence stress and by producing every syllable with the same amount of stress in sentences when speaking English. Chinese speakers' pronunciation of English words and sentences may sound staccato-like or

sound distracting to the native speakers' ears, and this particular type of rhythm can adversely affect the comprehensibility of their English to native speakers (Bian, 2013). Gao concludes that (as cited in Wasuntarasophit, 2013) the rhythmic pattern of English, together with the elements mentioned above, all quite unique to English pronunciation, is a potential difficulty for English learners, especially those whose native language has syllable-timed rhythm such as Chinese.

Chinese Speakers' use of Prominence in English

Many factors affect Chinese speakers' use of prosody in English. These factors include: too many stresses in the utterances; applying pitch movements indiscriminately to syllables; pronouncing every word in a sentence with equal stress; failure to reduce unstressed syllables; failure to stress the right words in the sentences (Brazil, 1985,1997; Rui, 2007; Zhang, 2009). Rui (2007) found some errors of prominence among her Chinese students in comparison to native speakers. In this study, five Chinese students were asked to read and determine which parts of the sentence "It isn't the title of a novel" are more prominent. Three native speakers were also asked to read the lines. Native speakers placed prominence on "ISn't" and "NOvel." Chinese speakers placed prominence on the word "TITle" and sometimes did not use any prominence on "isn't" or "novel." This indicates that the Chinese speakers are not able to recognize neutral English sentence stress the way native speakers do. Emphasizing *title* would indicate contrastive stress (not the title, but a character in the novel, for example).

The other finding was that of indiscriminate use of stress on multiple syllables or words within tone units (a sentence in this case), as observed in this example. Rui (2007) asked both native English speakers and Chinese speakers to read the sentence, "How much luggage do you

have?" Several native speakers used prominence on the word 'how' and placed more stress on the first syllable of the word 'luggage.' Chinese speakers, however, added stress on words such as 'much', 'you' and 'have,' which would typically be unstressed as they do not carry the essential information in the sentence. They did not commonly place stress within a word containing two syllables.

Chinese learners of English often clearly articulate every English syllable and word in speeches. This results in a foreign-sounding accent and possible misunderstanding (Zhang, 2009). From the examples above, stress misplaced on English words in a sentence greatly affects comprehension and intelligibility. Furthermore, apart from being misunderstood, the misplacement of intonation (due to interference from Chinese tonal patterns) may cause Chinese speakers to be perceived as rude and inconsiderate (Zhang, 2009).

Improving Chinese Learners' Speech

Movie Dubbing

Based on the prosody issues Chinese English learners face, could movie dubbing be an effective technique for introducing English prosody? Oral techniques advocated in pedagogical materials to enhance learners' use of prosodic features include mirroring, tracking, and shadowing that involve imitating native speaker discourse models (Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Goodwin, 1996). A fourth imitative technique, imitative conversation (Goodwin, 2004), has English learners select, analyze, and then replicate a brief one-to two-minute clip of dialogic speech from a movie or television show. The method of film or movie dubbing offers a unique opportunity for the imitation of English pronunciation and intonation within a contextualized scenario. The word dubbing has two meanings: in a broad sense it means to replace an existing

soundtrack and in a narrow sense it means to do a type of lip-syncing to match the voices and lip movements of the existing source (Yu, 2013). In this study, dubbing refers to the narrow sense of matching the original voices and lip movements. Chiu (2012) did a movie dubbing activity with her native Chinese speaking freshmen students majoring in English in Taiwan. In that study, Chiu had two intact classes of 83 freshmen in an EFL conversation class at an urban college. One group was the experimental group who did movie dubbings and one was the control group who did not do dubbings. For the experimental group, the goal of the film-dubbing task was to perform a synchronized presentation in front of the entire class as a form of final exam. Students formed a group between two to four members to dub (do voice-overs of characters) a muted clip of an English-language movie or television episode ten minutes in length. Students practiced speaking their lines during the semester. Afterwards, students filled out a questionnaire based on their opinions about the effectiveness of movie dubbing. After this activity, Chiu's students in the experimental group reported that through the use of movie dubbings their pronunciation improved in five positive aspects: reducing mispronunciation, improved fluency, awareness of intonation, language authenticity and meeting learners' perceptions about language. Students claimed that listening to native speakers speak the dialogues they previously read aloud themselves helped them reduce mispronunciation. Students also claimed that they improved their fluency by learning how to keep pace with the speed of talking in the video. Most importantly, movie dubbings helped students become more aware of the use of intonation. Although expressing emotions is the most difficult aspect of movie dubbing for Chinese students in Chiu's (2012) class, these students claimed that the movie dubbing activities helped them become aware of expressing rising and falling intonations, stress and linkage. One student claimed that he

understood the character he was dubbing so he was able to express more emotion. Students also expressed their interest in hearing authentic pronunciation of native speakers.

Making the link between the foreign languages as it is presented in a textbook and what it sounds like in actual usage requires considerable practice (Burston, 2005). When students rehearse dialogues for their movie dubbings, they take on the English-speaker roles even though these students are in a Chinese-speaking environment. In contrast with more traditional approaches to pronunciation instruction, film dubbing is a promising method through which EFL learners can acquire English prominence (Chiu 2012). Burston (2005) discusses the linguistic requirements needed for movie dubbing activities. Video dubbing can take two basic forms. At its simplest, it need only involve substituting student voices for an existing soundtrack. More linguistically advanced students, and those with some prior video-dubbing experience can take a muted video clip and create from scratch their own storyline and accompanying script (Burston 2005). The second form requires students to apply their knowledge of English lexicon and grammar when creating a dialogue to match the scenario.

Phonetic accuracy, stress placement, intonation, rhythm, timing as well as paralinguistic voice features (such as intonation, pace, volume, pitch) need to be well practiced in order to have an effective movie dubbing project (Burston 2005). Katchen (2002) and Burston (2005) discuss how paralinguistic and nonverbal behaviors reveal meanings rather different from the meaning denoted by the words alone. Paralinguistic voice features may indicate a change in emotion (surprise, sadness, joy, impatience, frustration) even though the original word meaning remains the same. Extralinguistic features such as facial expressions, eye contact, stance, gestures need to be taken into account when dubbing as misinterpretation could occur if the voice does not match these visual movements (Yu, 2013).

Al Moubayed, Beskow, Granstrom, and House (2011) did an experiment to investigate whether visual links to prominence can increase speech intelligibility with animated talking heads. The audio-visual speech intelligibility test experiment shows that perceiving prominence visually as gestures, synchronized with the auditory prominence, significantly increases speech intelligibility compared to when these gestures are randomly added to speech. Recognizing certain facial features and gestures can help non-native English speakers identify prominence when listening to native English speakers' conversation and improve language intelligibility. Matching the facial features and gestures of speakers during movie dubbing activities can also improve language learning intelligibility in a non-verbal manner. It was found that head-nods and eyebrow raising gestures significantly increased when prominent syllables of words were spoken (Miranda, 2013). Depending on the audiovisual intelligibility of the speakers in movies, the dubbed video may provide higher intelligibility results than the original video for listeners, particularly when listening to the speech in the original video presented low intelligibility results (Miranda, 2013).

Besides learning pronunciation by listening to the speech of native speakers, reading movie subtitles can also help students improve their language comprehension. The use of subtitles in movies is not distracting but beneficial in spoken language activities (Zanon, 2006). Simultaneous viewing of the subtitles and listening to the soundtrack may be a factor in language acquisition (d'Ydewalle, 2002). Zanon (2006) describes the various linguistic focuses of various activities related to language performing: role-plays mainly focus on communicative strategies and vocabulary while pronunciation activities require imitating the prosody on the clip by acting out the dialogues of the clips. In both role-plays and movie dubbing activities, the goal should be

to come as close to a native speaker proficiency as possible in terms of prosodic speech (Hawkins, 2011) including accurate use of sentence stress and rhythm.

Chinese Students' Attitudes about Native-like English Pronunciation

Chinese students have often stated that while learning pronunciation is the most difficult aspect of learning English, mastering a near native-English pronunciation is a great language achievement. The ability of speaking English embodies native-like pronunciation and intonation, which directly affects effective communication in conversation (Zhang, 2009). Bian (2009) did a pronunciation project in which 43 students wrote in journals to express what they considered to be a "good" English pronunciation standard and what their English pronunciation goals were. Of the 43 students, 42 (97%) stated or implied that good English pronunciation was near native and was their desired pronunciation level. Among those 43 students, 7 students (16.3%) also said intelligible pronunciation was important and 1 (2.3%) regarded intelligibility as their only standard of English pronunciation accents. Students also commented that their level of English pronunciation also affected their confidence. 27 (63%) admitted that their "good or bad" (when comparing their accent to a standard native English speaker accent) English pronunciation/ accents affected their confidence. According to Bian (2009), most Chinese students would not claim that their English pronunciation is good unless they sound like native speakers. Students reported initiating their own ways to practice pronunciation, reporting that they read aloud to practice pronunciation and intonation specifically, that they mimic native speakers on television and radio, and that they often look up the pronunciation of words in the dictionary. One participant even noted that he records his own voice to listen for pronunciation inconsistencies and inaccuracies (Bian, 2009). Based on these examples, it is clear that having a near-native

English accent is important to Bian's students who were all Chinese speakers. Students' awareness of their pronunciation errors from listening to the accents of native English speakers and listening to recordings of their own pronunciation may be useful method for improving their awareness of pronunciation.

Research Gap

The topics of this literature review focused on the prosodic differences between American English and Mandarin Chinese, various pronunciation problems Chinese speakers have when speaking English, the role of using movie dubbing as a teaching tool, learning from reading subtitles, and pronunciation concerns of Chinese students. The review detailed the prosodic differences of American English and Mandarin Chinese, focusing mainly on the different uses of sentence stress and intonation. Discussion about the difficulty for Chinese speakers to pronounce consonant clusters was also included. Chiu (2012) used movie dubbings in her classes to help students with their use of English intonation, prominence and word stress. Her students even stated that they improved their pronunciation by listening and mimicking the speech of native English speakers. They were able to reduce mispronunciations and become more familiar with the speed of talking and English intonation. Based on the prosody issues learners face, could movie dubbing be an effective technique for introducing English prosody to Chinese speakers? Although the use of movie dubbing in Chiu's (2012) classes appear to help students' improve their pronunciation, how can the teacher measure the students' actual

awareness of the use of stress in English speech? This study aims to provide insights into students' ability to notice sentence stress in English, and to see whether movie dubbing improves their ability to recognize sentence stress in English with the ultimate goal of improving their use of appropriate sentence stress. This study focused on the following research question: To what extent does instruction using movie scripts affect Chinese students' awareness of English sentence stress?

Summary

This review of the literature analyzed some linguistic differences between Mandarin Chinese and American English as well as common English pronunciation concerns among Chinese speakers. The different prosodic systems of English and Chinese are most likely the main cause of English errors in sentence stress and rhythm for native Chinese speakers. In Chinese, changes in tone indicate change in word meaning rather than change in stress. English, with its multiple weak-form words and its heavily reduced unstressed vowels, is a stress-timed language. The ability to deal receptively with weak forms and other connected speech modifications is helpful when communicating with native English speakers (Walker, 2001). Movie dubbing activities are a good way for students to practice their English pronunciation by mimicking native speakers' speech in various contexts, an activity research has shown to be of importance when teaching prosodic features (Bian, 2013; Celik, 2007; May, 2011; Yoshida, 2007). Chapter Three provides details of the research paradigm, participants, data collection tools, language treatment plan (language instruction, classroom activities and homework presentations) as well as ethical considerations related to this study.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The objective of this study was to investigate how the use of English movie scripts and movie dubbing activities can help Chinese speakers improve their awareness of prosodic features in English, specifically, their awareness of sentence stress. The study included three cycles of listening activities based on spoken dialogues after receiving a brief language lesson about word and sentence stress, thought groupings, and intonation. Students were also asked to record themselves answering pronunciation questions and perform a final movie dubbing. This qualitative study documents the results from seven students in a classroom setting of 28 second-year college students in Beijing, China. This study focused on the following research question: To what extent does instruction using movie scripts affect Chinese students' awareness of English sentence stress?

This chapter will first discuss the research paradigm that was used in this study. The language treatment to be used in this case study is also described in detail. The chapter also includes a description of data collection tools used, the procedures, a discussion of verification of data and ethics, and a description of how data were analyzed.

Research Paradigm

A research paradigm is a perspective about research held by a community of researchers that is based on a set of shared assumptions, concepts, values, and practices (Christensen & Johnson, 2010). Qualitative research is used when little is known about a topic or phenomenon and when one wants to discover or learn more about the topic, people's experiences and their perspectives. Quantitative researchers consider it to be of primary importance to state one's hypotheses and then test those hypotheses with empirical data to see if they are supported. The main research paradigm that will be used in this study will be qualitative.

The qualitative research paradigm suits my study because the goal of the study is to explore if moving dubbing activities will be an effective teaching tool to develop awareness of sentence stress among college-level Chinese students. The study is based on the hypothesis that students will have more exposure to native English speakers' use of speech by hearing and mimicking the natural speech patterns of native speakers. The movie dubbing activity will hopefully help students become more aware of correct use of English sentence stress, which may improve their use of intonation and intelligibility when speaking English.

My study can be considered qualitative research because it will consist of classroom-based action research of students in a natural classroom setting. The study of students' progress is situational, social, contextual, personal, and unpredictable (Christensen & Johnson, 2010). The focus of my research is to determine whether using three stages of language instruction along with language discrimination activities, recordings and movie dubbing activities will help

students become more aware of accurate sentence stress. In this study, I acted as a researcher who developed and tested my hypothesis based on data collected from students.

Method

Although twenty-eight students received the same language instruction, data was collected from seven students who were chosen for a case study. Case studies tell a unique story about individuals, organizations, processes, programs, neighborhoods, institutions, and events. These studies usually highlight or collect special data for their stories (Boyce, Neale & Thapa, 2006). Case studies typically describe a program or intervention put in place to address a particular problem and provide context for other data (such as outcome data), offering a more complete picture of what happened in the program and why (Boyce, Neale & Thapa, 2006).This case study focused on students' awareness of sentence stress. In this case study, seven students were chosen for data collection to evaluate their progress during three cycles of language instruction related to sentence stress. The study was done to determine if their awareness of sentence stress improved over the course of a semester and if their use of sentence stress improved in movie dubbings. Their responses from activities and questionnaires were collected and analyzed to determine if their awareness of sentence stress improved after three cycles of language instruction.

Data Collection

Setting

The study took place in an Oral English class I teach at a university in Beijing, China. The campus primarily focuses on logistics and economics. The majority of the recordings,

language instruction, and language activities took place in the classroom. The class met once a week for 100 minutes for one semester (16 weeks). The class contained around 28 students.

Participants

The majority of the students in this class come from Beijing, China, while ten or so students come from other provinces in China. The standard language of China, Mandarin, is the common dialect spoken in Beijing. However, some students may speak a different dialect of Chinese besides Mandarin. Many regions outside of China have their own dialects with specialized vocabularies and pronunciations. There are many dialects in China, and different local accents may cause trouble in learning English (Yin & Zhang, 2009). These students are English majors and take various English courses besides Oral English such as writing, listening and reading. The majority of their courses (listening, reading and writing) are taught by local Chinese teachers. Only their Oral English classes are taught by teachers who are native speakers of English.

Data Collection Tool Cycle 1: Listening Discrimination Activity (pre- and during)

Students were given a listening discrimination activity (Appendix A) based on a dialogue from the movie *Finding Nemo.* They first marked up the script based on where they believed word stress and pauses should be before watching the actual movie clip. The scripts from seven students were chosen for analysis and data from the same seven students were used for all data collection processes.

Data Collection Tool Cycle 2: Listening Discrimination Activity (pre- and during)

Students were given a listening discrimination activity (Appendix B) based on a dialogue from the movie *Family Man.* They first marked up the script based on where they believe word stress and pauses should be before watching the actual movie clip. The scripts from the same seven students as cycle 1 were chosen for analysis.

Data Collection Tool Cycle 3: Listening Discrimination Activity (pre- and during)

Students were given a listening discrimination activity (Appendix C) based on a dialogue from the poem "Annabel Lee" by Edgar Allen Poe. A poem was chosen as the use of poetry can make repetitive practice of rhythm and sound more natural and meaningful (Bian, 2013). They first marked up the script based on where they believe word stress and pauses should be before listening to the recorded poem. The scripts from the same seven students from cycles 1 and 2 were chosen for analysis.

Data Collection tool #4: Final Performance and Grading Rubric

For the final performance (movie dubbings), grading rubrics were used to collect data about students' ability to use sentence stress. Rubrics are performance-based assessments that evaluate performance based on certain tasks and expectations. Establishing the criteria to be used to score the performance is the first important step of creating a rubric. When people are aware of the criteria they will be scored on, they focus on achieving these specific objectives, which then leads to the learning of these objectives as well (Stevens & Wolf, 2007). A clear objective not only helps students understand their required tasks but also helps the grading process become less subjective for teachers. A rubric with clear grading criteria eliminates subjectivity as

teachers' use a set standard to grade from which helps teachers show how students received their scores in an analytical way (Stevens & Wolf, 2007).

In my grading rubric (Appendix D), students were graded on their use of intonation, sentence stress and overall intelligibility. They were scored individually for each part, which totaled 100 points. The average of these three parts was their final score. The teacher's familiarity with the sentence stress, pauses, word stress and intonations used by the speakers in the original dialogue also helped with the grading process. Students had three activities (movie introduction, recordings of individual lines and role-play) prior to the final movie dubbing to help me become familiar with the lines from their movie dubbing. Students' performance scores were compared to their listening discrimination activity scores. Their theoretical knowledge as well as actual ability to hear English sentence stress was compared to their actual spoken performance scores. I believed the rubric I used was an effective tool to gather authentic data related to the success rates of the movie dubbing activity in terms of students' awareness and use of stress when speaking in English after three cycles of pronunciation teaching instruction and listening discrimination activities within a 16 week semester. I believed this method was the most effective way to gather authentic data from native Chinese speakers. This rubric was used to score the movie dubbing activities taken from the same seven students as cycles one-three.

Data Collection Tool #5: Student Responses to Questionnaire

At the end of the semester, students recorded themselves answering four questions (Appendix E) related to the three instructional cycles and the final movie dubbing performance. The questions were related to prominence, intonation, thought groups and their overall feelings towards movie dubbing. The recordings from the same seven students as cycles 1-3 were used.

Procedure

Participants

The participants in this study were college aged students (aged 19-22) who are native Mandarin Chinese speakers majoring in English at a large university in Beijing, China. They were students in my Oral English class. Students varied in terms of how much exposure they had to the English language prior to my classes. Some students began English language training at five years old and some started studying later at ten years old. As some students were not from Beijing, they also spoke another dialect of Chinese which could have impacted their English pronunciation. The goal was to choose six to ten students for a case study. From these students, seven students were selected to use in the data collection process. They were chosen based on completion of all activities needed for data collection and their language levels, a mixture of advanced to intermediate proficiency. Table 3 provides details on the seven participants.

Table 3:

Case Study Participants

Participants	Hometown	Age	Age started English	Speaker of Chinese dialect other than Mandarin
Isla	Beijing	20	8	None
Janet	Chongqing	20	10	Chongqing dialect[1]
Katie	Beijing	19	6	None
Kiera	Beijing	20	7	None
Ralph	Kaifeng (Henan	20	5	Henan Dialect[2]

	Province)			
Sammy	Henan Province	21	10	Henan Dialect[3]
Stella	Anhui Province	22	9	Hefei Dialect[4]

[1] studied Mandarin at a young age so it doesn't affect her English pronunciation
[2] He believes his dialect affects his English pronunciation
[3] He believes his dialect affects his English pronunciation
[4] He believes his dialect affects his English pronunciation

Description of Language Instruction Cycles

Table 4 (below) details the three instructional cycles that took place during one teaching semester (16 weeks). During the first cycle, students were introduced to thought groups. They received language instruction and did a pre-listening and during listening discrimination activity. This cycle took place during weeks 3-5. This cycle used 30 minutes of class time every week. In the second cycle, students were introduced to prominence, word and sentence stress. They first received language instruction and did a pre-listening and during listening discrimination activity. This cycle took place during weeks 6-8 and took about 30 minutes each class. In the third cycle, students were introduced to intonation. They first received language instruction and did a pre-listening and during listening discrimination activity. This cycle took place during weeks 9-11 and took up about 30 minutes each class. In the fourth cycle, students began preparation work for the final movie-dubbing project. They did a role-play activity as a rehearsal and the movie dubbing activity was the final project. This cycle took about 5 weeks due to the time needed for student groups to perform both role-plays and movie dubbings during class time. During weeks 12-14, students performed role-plays in the first 50 minutes of class. The full class time was used for the final movie dubbing activity during weeks 15-16.

Table 4

Instructional Cycles

Topic	Steps	activities/data collection
Cycle I Introduction to Thought Groups	Listening discrimination Focus on thought groups	Data collection: "Finding Nemo" movie script listening discrimination
Cycle II Introduction Prominence in Thought groups	Listening discrimination Focus on prominence, word stress and sentence stress	Data collection: "Family Man" movie script listening discrimination
Cycle III Introduction of Intonation contours in thoughts groups	Listening discrimination Focus on intonation	Data collection: "Annabel Lee" poem listening discrimination
Cycle IV Preparation for Final Movie dubbing Performance	Final performance Recordings of themselves answering pronunciation related questions	Data collection: Grading rubrics scores, answers to questionnaires

Description and Process of Three Language Activities

To serve as a tool to measure students' awareness of sentence stress during the three teaching cycles movie dubbing was introduced as a semester-long project for students while also providing language instruction about prominence and word stress. Students formed groups of two to three members and chose a dialogue from a movie of their choice. Students did three language activities based on this movie: presentation, role-play and movie dubbing.

Listening and speaking samples were also needed for this research. For the first, second and third cycles, students were given a listening discrimination activity. This data collection process was used to determine the level of awareness students had about sentence stress in English speech after three instruction cycles. For cycles one and two, students received a script from a movie dialogue and were asked to mark where they believed words would be stressed and where they believed pauses should be placed. Afterwards, they watched and listened to the authentic movie scene and marked up the same script again. Afterwards, they compared both

movie scripts. For cycle three, the same process was used but a script from a poem was used instead of a movie dialogue. This poem was chosen because it contained sentences that were longer in speech and provided the participants the opportunity to identify stressed words in longer utterances. I felt it would be a good way to evaluate students' current awareness of sentence stress after the first two cycles. The same seven study participants' answers were used for research data for each cycle.

The fourth stage of the data collection process was to determine the level of awareness students had about sentence stress in English speech after three cycles. Students were required to do a movie dubbing as their final project. Students were graded based on accurate use of sentence stress, intonation and pronunciation. They were also asked to record themselves answering questions related to their knowledge and use of prominence, thought groups and intonation.

Data Analysis

Data collected determined whether Chinese students' awareness of sentence stress in English speech improved over the course of the semester. This study collected data from the same seven students over the semester. The data was gathered from listening discrimination worksheets where students marked-up the places they believed contains sentence stress, language recordings and the grading rubric scores. Information collected during each data collection technique was used to measure students' theoretical and actual awareness of sentence stress in English speech. The words identified as stressed that were accurate were counted, not erroneously marked words. The results were put in a table to compare the progress of each student as well as class averages. At the end of the semester, their scores from the movie dubbing

grading performance were used to measure their actual abilities to accurately use sentence stress when speaking English dialogues. Lastly, the recorded answers to questions about pronunciation were used to determine students' overall knowledge about prominence, thought groups and intonation and if they share any common attitudes or beliefs. Information collected from each data collection set will be presented in Chapter four in the form of tables and graphs with analysis.

Verification of Data

Data was gathered from language activities during regular classroom instruction and the participants were native Chinese speakers in Beijing, China. There might be subjectivity in analysis and grading as native speakers' views of prominence and stress in English differ. I tried to make the study as objective as possible by asking other English native speakers to mark up the stress in the movie dialogues as well. My primary advisor marked the stressed words in the movie scripts and poem for comparison to ensure accuracy. My primary advisor also graded a sample movie dubbing with the same grading rubric (used as a data collection tool) to ensure accuracy of the final movie dubbing scores. In comparison with my given score, my advisor gave these students lower scores for stress accuracy but a higher score for intelligibility. Although our scores varied in terms of sentence stress and intelligibility, our overall scores were within the same grade band (i.e. 80 to 90 percentile). To ensure triangulation, three collection tools were used: listening discrimination activities, movie dubbings and self recordings.

Ethics

Students were asked ahead of time if their recordings could be used for my studies. Since they are college students older than eighteen, parental consent was not needed, although a signed consent from each student has been collected. Furthermore, the study was conducted in Beijing, China where teachers have permission to use their students' homework and classroom activities for research related materials. Although this study is intended to help Chinese students, using the data collected from only seven students cannot represent the majority of Chinese students or their language needs and backgrounds. An ethical consideration of this study is that the study may be biased due to my familiarity with the students and collecting data from such a focused group of participants, college-aged Chinese students, cannot represent that the activity will produce the same results with other native Chinese speakers learning English.

Conclusion

This study involves qualitative research to determine if movie dubbing activities will help Chinese students in Beijing, China be aware of sentence stress in English speech patterns. In this study, listening discrimination activities and self-recordings served as the tools to measure students' awareness and use of English sentence stress when listening and speaking. In the pre-listening analysis, students read a script from a movie dialogue and marked where they believed sentence stress should be used. During each cycle, the listening discrimination and speech samples were taken from the same seven students for the pre-treatment. The pre/during listening samples were comparatively analyzed to determine if these seven students' awareness of sentence stress in English speech improved after three cycles of language instruction while

preparing for movie dubbing projects. Afterwards, a grading rubric created for this study was used to measure the accurate use of sentence stress of these seven students during their final movie dubbing performances. Lastly, their recorded answers to several pronunciation questions were analyzed to get a general consensus of their attitudes and knowledge about the use of prominence, intonation, thought groups and doing movie dubbings. Chapter Four will report the results of these four cycles and present the themes emerged from the research.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

In this chapter, I present my results and explain how they answer my research question: To what extent does instruction using movie scripts affect Chinese students' awareness of English sentence stress? This semester consisted of three teaching cycles that included various activities to measure students' ability to identify and use stress in the sentences of native English speech. During the 16-week semester, each teaching cycle was approximately three weeks and the remaining weeks were spent focusing on finishing their final movie dubbing projects. Each cycle consisted of (1) a brief teaching instruction related to some aspect of sentence stress, (2) pre-listening activity to underline stress while reading a short dialogue from a movie or poem, and (3) a listening activity where they listened to the same dialogue spoken by native speakers in the movie and underlined where they hear sentence stress. For the purposes of research, seven students were chosen and their responses from each activity were analyzed.

Results

Listening Discrimination Activities: Pre-listening and During Listening

Cycle 1. During the first cycle, students were given instruction about the use of thought groups and sentence stress in English speech. They learned that certain words were stressed more than others in sentences to emphasize importance or change in status. To determine their theoretical awareness of sentence stress, students were asked to read a brief dialogue from the animated movie *Finding Nemo* and underline where they believed sentence stress should be used. Afterwards, students were asked to underline an unmarked copy of the same dialogue while

listening to the ~~actual~~ dialogue spoken in the movie to evaluate their ability to recognize sentence stress. Correct answers were collected based on answer keys for the scripts where the stressed words were highlighted. The script for *Finding Nemo* contained 42 stressed words. The total amount of stressed words is then compared to the number of stressed words students identified correctly.

Table 4

Cycle One Scores

Participant	First Trial Finding Nemo (42 words)	
	Pre	During
Isla	10/42 (23.8%)	16/42 (38%)
Janet	7/ 42 (16.6%)	10/42 (23.8%)
Katie	18/42 (42%)	16/42 (38%)
Kiera	16/42 (38%)	20/42 (47%)
Ralph	23/42 (54%)	18/42 (43%)
Sammy	7/42 (16%)	19/42 (45%)
Stella	19/42 (45%)	20/42 (47%)
Average	100/294 (34% accuracy)	119/294 (40% accuracy)

As portrayed in Table 4 for the *Finding Nemo* dialogue, students had, on average, a 34% accuracy identifying stressed words during their pre-listening activity and 40% accuracy while listening to the actual dialogue. Only two out of seven students' accuracy decreased while listening to the actual script. This suggests that the majority of the students' practical ability to

listen to sentence stress was better than their theoretical understanding of the rules of sentence stress. The dialogue had some slang words, which may have caused some difficulty for students.

Cycle 2 During the second cycle, students received teaching instruction about prominence and did a listening activity related to *Family Man*. They were given a short dialogue from a scene from the movie and asked to mark up the words they believed should be stressed. Afterwards, they used a new dialogue with the same script to underline words they heard stressed in the speech of the actors. Correct answers were collected based on answer keys of the scripts where the stressed words were highlighted. The script for *Family Man* contained 34 stressed words. The total amount of stressed words is then compared to the amount of stressed words students identified correctly.

Table 5

Cycle Two Scores

Participant	Time 2 Family Man (34 words)	
	Pre	During
Student 1: Isla	3/34 (8.8%)	21/34 (61.7%)
Student 2: Janet	6/34 (17.6%)	5/34 (14.7%)
Student 3: Katie	9/34 (26%)	14/34 (41%)
Student 4: Kiera	3/34 (8%)	11/34 (32%)
Student 5: Ralph	21/34 (61%)	21/34 (61%)
Student 6: Sammy	7/34 (20%)	13/34 (38%)
Student 7: Stella	9/34 (26%)	9/34 (26%)
Average	58/238 (24% accuracy)	94/238 (39% Accuracy)

As shown in Table 5, students averaged 24% accuracy during the pre-listening activity while students' had an average accuracy of 39% listening to the actual speakers. These results seem to indicate that students' ability to identify stressed words while listening improved, however, the ability to predict stressed words decreased.

Cycle 3 The last teaching cycle consisted of a lesson related to word stress, rhythm and intonation. Students learned the importance of placing stress in English words as well as the different connotations rising and falling intonations may convey. They also learned about thought groups in prominence. The final listening activity is a poem, "Annabel Lee," by Edgar Allen Poe. This poem was chosen because it contained sentences that were longer in speech and provided the participants the opportunity to identify stressed words in longer utterances. The previous dialogues did not have many long sentences. Students listened to a verbal reading of this poem, which contained 78 stressed elements.

According to Table 6, students' results for the "Annabel Lee" activity indicate a slight improvement in marking word stress while listening to the poem read aloud. The percentages, however, did not increase by much and some students even did better during the pre-listening activity. The average for the total group was 38% accuracy during the pre-listening and 39% for the during-listening. The closeness in percentage suggests that both the theoretical awareness and ability to hear sentence stress in poetry may be difficult for these students.

Table 6

Cycle Three Scores

Participant	Trial 3 Annabelle Lee (78 words)	
	Pre	During
Isla	24/78 (30%)	29/78 (37%)

Janet	25/78 (32%)	26/78 (33%)
Katie	34/78 (43%)	36/78 (46%)
Kiera	15/78* (19%)	11/78 (14%)
Ralph	54/78 (69%)	47/78 (60%)
Sammy	27/78 (34%)	36/78 (46%)
Stella	30/78 (38%)	31/78 (39%)
Average	209/546 (38% accuracy)	216/546 (39% accuracy)

Individual Performances

This section provides an overview of the class results as a whole. This table includes the results of all seven students during all three cycles to use for comparison. According to table 7, the results show that most students had better accuracy while listening to the dialogue. As for any major improvements, the results seem to indicate similar accuracy percentages during each activity. The results indicate as a whole that most students' theoretical awareness of sentence stress is not as accurate as their ability to recognize it when spoken. The results for Janet and Katie will be analyzed as examples. Janet and Katie were chosen to compare and contrast the results of a speaker who speakers a regional dialect besides Mandarin (Janet) and one who does not (Katie)

Table 7

Individual Scores for All Cycles

Participant	Trial 1	Trial 2	Trial 3

	Finding Nemo (42)		Family Man (34)		Annabelle Lee (78)	
	Pre	During	Pre	During	Pre	During
Isla	10/42 (23.8%)	16/42 (38%)	3/34 (8.8%)	21/34 (61.7%)	24/78 (30%)	29/78 (37%)
	Had better accuracy while listening		Had better accuracy while listening		Listening had better accuracy.	
Janet	7/ 42 (16.6%)	10/42 (23.8%)	6/34 (17.6%)	5/34 (14.7%)	25/78 (32%)	26/78 (33%)
	Had better accuracy while actually listening		Had better theoretical accuracy		About the same	
Katie	18/42 (42%)	16/42 (38%)	9/34 (26%)	14/34 (41%)	34/78 (43%)	36/78 (46%)
	Had better theoretical accuracy		Had better accuracy while actually listening		Had better accuracy while actually listening	
Kiera	16/42 (38%)	20/42 (47%)	3/34 (8%)	11/34 (32%)	15/78* (19%)	11/78 (14%)
	Had better accuracy while actually listening		Had better accuracy while actually listening		Had better theoretical accuracy	
Ralph	23/42 (54%)	18/42 (43%)	21/34 (61%)	21/34 (61%)	54/78 (69%)	47/78 (60%)
	Had better theoretical accuracy		About the same		Had better theoretical accuracy	
Sammy	7/42 (16%)	19/42 (45%)	7/34 (20%)	13/34 (38%)	27/78 (34%)	36/78 (46%)
	Had better accuracy while actually listening		Had better accuracy while actually listening		Had better accuracy while actually listening	
Stella	19/42 (45%)	20/42 (47%)	9/34 (26%)	9/34 (26%)	30/78 (38%)	31/78 (39%)
	Had better accuracy while actually listening		About the same		Had better accuracy while actually listening	
Average	100/294 (34% accuracy)	119/294 (40% accuracy)	58/238 (24% accuracy)	94/238 (39% Accuracy)	209/546 (38% accuracy)	216/546 (39% accuracy)

Janet's performance. For the *Finding Nemo* pre-listening activity, Janet performed with 16.6% accuracy. While listening to the actual dialogue, she performed with 23.8% accuracy. There was a 7% difference. For this activity, Janet's ability to hear stressed words was better than her theoretical awareness. For the *Family Man* pre-listening, her answers were 17.6%

accurate and 14.7% accurate while listening to the dialogue. There was a 3% difference. In this activity, her theoretical understanding of sentence stress was higher. For the last activity, Janet scored with 32% for the pre-listening and 33% for the during listening of the poem "Annabelle Lee." The 1% difference shows that her ability to predict and hear sentence stress is about the same for this poem. Throughout the three cycles, the gaps between the accuracy for pre-listening and during listening became smaller for Janet. The results indicate that her theoretical awareness and ability to hear sentence stress have become equally balanced, however, since the differences were not analyzed statistically, this may indicate no difference at all; they may fall into the realm of chance..

Katie's performance. For the *Finding Nemo* pre-listening activity, Katie's response was 42% accurate and 38% accurate for the during-listening task. Katie's theoretical awareness was 4% better than her actual ability to hear sentence stress. For the *Family Man* pre-listening activity, Katie marked 26% of the stressed words accurately but 41% accurately when she listened to the actual dialogue. The difference was 15% higher for her listening ability. For the last activity, Katie answered with 43% accuracy during the "Annabel Lee" pre-listening activity and 46% accurate for the actual listening task. The difference was 3% higher for listening. Her results show than her pre-listening activity and ability to listen to sentence stress accuracy becomes closer after three cycles.

Data collected from their final movie dubbing performances will help determine if they can accurately use sentence stress in their own speech production.

Results from Rubrics

In assessing the final performances, the rubric (Appendix D) was used and Table 8 provides an overview of their scores and their errors.

Table 8

Scores for Final Performances

Participants	Score	Errors
Isla	86/100	Some intonation and word stress are not used enough which makes overall dubbing sounds a little monotone; some pronunciation errors (princess)
Janet	89.5/100	Pronunciation errors: prison Word stress error: Accident
Katie	86/100	Other issues to address: some pronunciation errors (dead/died; late/light; sunset/sun sight), some intonation and pauses in thought groups are used inaccurately (propose) and sounds monotone
Kiera	87/100	Other issues to address: Good use of word stress and rhythm but some instances are inaccurate, good pauses, some pronunciation errors (goodness, exquisite)
Ralph	90.5/100	Other issues to address: Great job with intonation and thought groups. Student has done a lot of preparation.
Sammy	91/100	Other issues to address: Some pronunciation errors (son, dead) but excellent word stress and use of intonation and pauses
Stella	88/100	Other issues to address: the character chosen to dub is a fast talker which makes it hard to score for pauses in thought groups, good intonation and word stress

As shown in Table 8, all seven participants' scores ranged in the high 80s to low 90s. Most of their scores reflected their appropriate use of sentence stress, pausing and highly intelligible pronunciation. Most errors are segmental such as the mispronunciation of vowel sounds making them sound like other words. For example, Katie mispronounced the word "late" and it sounded like "light." Some students' incorrect use of stress affected their pronunciation. For example, Janet incorrectly placed the stress on the second syllable of the word accident when

it should have been on the first syllable. There is a strong tendency for Chinese students to stress shift onto the second syllable as the second or the latter syllable is always stressed in Chinese double-syllable words (Gao, 2012). Other students' (Isla, Katie, Kiera) lack of sentence stress made their movie dubbing sound monotone. Because Chinese words are pronounced with the same amount of time, Chinese speakers may pronounce English words in the same manner. Pronunciation of English words and sentences may sound staccato-like or sound distracting to the native speakers' ears, and this particular type of rhythm can adversely affect the comprehensibility of their English to native speakers (Bian, 2013). Stella chose to dub the voice of a fast talker, which, if the listener had no prior knowledge of the movie character, might have been misinterpreted as incorrect use of prominence and pausing. The teacher's familiarity with the script before the final movie dubbing is important as it can help factor in these details when determining a final score on the grading rubric.

Student Responses to Questionnaire

For the last activity, students were asked to record themselves answering four questions related to the activities they did during the three teaching cycles. They were asked to record themselves answering these questions orally (Appendix E). The questions covered their knowledge of intonation, sentence stress and prominence, thought groups and their overall feelings about doing movie dubbings. These questions were used in order to get a good understanding of students' awareness and knowledge of intonation, sentence stress and prominence, and thought groups at the end of the semester. Data was collected from the same seven students as above. Their responses were analyzed to evaluate overall understanding and attitudes and to see if any common themes emerged from their responses. The table is organized

to analyze students' answers to determine accurate and inaccurate interpretations of pronunciation, assessing their ability to use it as well as their general feelings about movie dubbings.

Question 1: Intonation. The first question consisted of three parts. The first part asked how the use of rising and falling English intonation affects listener understanding in English speech. The second and third part of the question asked if they could hear changes in intonation easily and if they were able to use rising and falling intonation correctly

Table 9

Intonation Understanding and Awareness

Student	Responses
Isla	• understand the speaker's emotion better • easy for me to hear the differences; practice intonation from movie dubbings
Janet	• Very important for understanding, for example "I beg your pardon" with rising means "please say it again" but "I beg your pardon" with falling intonation means "Sorry". • easy to hear the differences but hard to use rising and falling intonations correctly now because I am not familiar to oral English and I don't know when I should rise or fall
Katie	• can help the listener understand the feeling and emotion of the speaker • Yes, it is easy, Yes, I can because in the movie dubbing I practiced it for a long time
Kiera	• make us focus on the message the speaker wants to convey • yes, I can hear the difference easily but I can't use rising and falling intonations totally
Ralph	• rising for question or suggestion and we use falling tone to state a fact or give an order • (2) its not so easy for me to hear the differences • (3) most of the time I can use the right intonation because I know the settled rules
Sammy	• rising for question or suggestion and we use falling tone to state a fact or give an order • although I can identify the intonation correctly most of the time, it is difficult for me to use rising and falling intonation correctly

Stella	• Intonations indicate changes in emotions • it is not difficult to hear the differences but I am not sure I can hear it at any time to use it correctly;

For table 9, student responses are listed by the levels of understanding and whether or not they feel comfortable using intonation. The first part asked how the use of rising and falling English intonation affects listener understanding in English speech. Based on table 9, all seven students noted that intonation helped the listener understand the message and emotions of the speakers. Katie commented that intonation can help the listener understand the meaning and emotion of the speaker. Janet gave an example by saying "I beg your pardon" with rising intonation means "please say it again" but "I beg your pardon" with falling intonation means "Sorry." Ralph and Sammy both gave the same rules, which came from their language instruction sheet. They said, "rising intonation is used for question or suggestion and we use falling tone to state a fact or give an order." Sammy also commented that "intonations keep the speech from being monotonous." This is especially true when it comes to giving some type of performance speech to an audience such as a play or movie.

The second and third part of the question asked if they could hear changes in intonation easily and if they were able to use rising and falling intonation correctly. Six out of seven students claimed that it was easy for them to hear the changes in intonation. Ralph said he had difficulty hearing the differences as his understanding of intonation tends to focus on settled language rules. Six out of seven students stated that it was still difficult for them to use intonations correctly. Katie said it was easy for her to use intonations correctly because of practice with movie dubbings.

Question 2: Prominence. For the second question, students were asked to define prominence and identify the role it has on English speech. This time they were asked about their comfort level.

Table 10

Prominence Understanding and Use

Student	Accuracy
Isla	Prominence means stress; cause attention of the audience and deepen the impression of the words
Janet	Prominence means a word where the intonation is totally different from other words in a sentence; it plays an important role in a sentence as it controls the whole meaning of the sentence
Katie	Prominence means stress and it plays an important role on English speech, it can express what we want to emphasize in our speech,
Kiera	Clear in the speech, main idea and important message
Ralph	It means to stress something in speech, it has two advantages: (1) it makes your words more powerful (2) it can cause people's attention Using it correctly is beneficial to strengthen the atmosphere of our speech
Sammy	Prominence means to emphasize the special word or syllable in English speech; it has an important to emphasize the important words and stress syllables to make the language be more vivid and fluent; it can convey the points to the listener that the speaker wants to focus on; makes the talk become more easy to understand
Stella	Prominence means the part that is larger or higher than what is around which will make listener give attention to the important part in the sentence or paragraph;

Based on Table 10, most students defined prominence as speaking certain syllables of words or certain words in a sentence with more stress to emphasize something important to the audience. Students also commented that prominence helps add emotion and deepen the impression of words. Ralph said that "prominence is used to make words sound more powerful to get more attention and strengthen the atmosphere of the speech." Sammy said "Prominence has an important role to emphasize the important words and stress syllables to make the language be more vivid and fluent; convey the points to the listener that the speaker

wants to focus on which makes the talk become more easy to understand." Janet might have confused intonation with prominence as she said, "prominence is when the intonation is totally different from other words in a sentence." Most students identified prominence as using more stress on certain syllables or words to emphasize the important details to the audience.

Question 3: Thought groups understanding and ability. Question 3 has two parts. The first park asked why grouping long sentences into chunks of thought groups was important. Part two of the question asks students if they have begun breaking their sentences into chunks of thought groups when they speak in English

Table 11

Understanding Thought Groups

Student	Accuracy
Isla	• When speaking long and complicated sentences, grouping words makes it easier to understand
Janet	• recognize the feeling and meaning by the different chunks of grouped words, • I have begun [using] that when I speak, people will have a clear understanding about my words if I do that
Katie	• Grouping words is exceedingly important; I have began to do it because it can make a long and complicated sentence become clear to hear and easy to understand; with grouping words we can speak English better,
Kiera	• Understand main idea easily; I have begun to use it because it is a useful way to communicate
Ralph	• Grouping words can help us (non-native speakers) understand the structure of long and complicated sentences • In senior high school, I did it to better understand structure
Sammy	• When we speak we need to divide our speech into small chunks to help the listener understand the messages; these chunks or thought groups are words which go together to express an idea or thought; • I have began to do this and cut sentences into different thought groups; can tell individual idea, sentences are more comfortable to listen
Stella	• Easier to make my speech be accepted by the listener; give your listener more time to follow and understand you; • I have done it when I speak English because it gives me more time to think so I can avoid making too many mistakes and make my speech more

	attractive

Question 3 has two parts. The first park asked why grouping long sentences into chunks of thought groups was important. Based on Table 11, all seven students' answers were similar in the fact that they believed breaking down long sentences into thought groups helped the listener understand the main ideas of the speaker. Sammy said, "When we speak we need to divide our speech into small chunks to help the listener understand the messages." Some, however, shared ideas that were especially useful for non-native English speakers. Stella said, "They make speech be easily accepted by the listener and gives the listener more time to follow and understand you." The student suggests giving the listener more time to understand the speaker is helpful for English learners who need more time to process English speech and think about how to respond. Ralph said, "Grouping words can help us (non-native English speakers) understand the structure of long and complicated sentences." This comment reflects this student's idea that thought groups help non-native English speakers improve their grammatical knowledge.

Part two of the question asks students if they have begun breaking their sentences into chunks of thought groups when they speak in English. All seven students said they have begun to break their ideas into chunks of thoughts in order to make their speech easier to understand by others. Katie said, "I have began to do it because it can make a long and complicated sentence become clear to hear and easy to understand." Just like the first part of the question, some answers seem to benefit non-native English speakers. Sammy said it makes her speech more comfortable to listen to. If the speaker has a foreign accent or speaks too quickly, thought groups can help the listener understand. Stella said, "I have done it when I speak English because it gives me more time to think so I can avoid making too many mistakes and make my speech more

attractive." Just like her comment for part 1, giving the listener and speaker more time to process thoughts is beneficial for intelligibility.

Question 4: Movie Dubbing. For the last question, students were asked what they learned from doing movie dubbings and their overall feelings about doing them.

Table 12

Feelings about Movie Dubbing

Student	What you learned from movie dubbings
Student 1: Isla	Pay attention to speaker's emotion, I learned new words and idioms
Student 2: Janet	Heard funny intonations, attract our attention to speak English, good way to improve our oral English
Student 3: Katie	I have learned many things such as new words and words, and new songs
Student 4: Kiera	Pronunciation, intonation and team work I love movie dubbing it is very, very interesting.
Student 5: Ralph	You must have real emotions to do the movie dubbings or you can't do it well. And like in every role in life, if you want to achieve something you must put yourselves into it. Now I have a better pronunciation of English.
Student 6: Sammy	The emotion we put into movies, different intonations conveys different feelings of us; angry – speak quickly, happy – relaxed; the speed of our language is very important too, knowing the correct stress can help movie dubbing go smoothly.
Student 7: Stella	I have many other acquisitions: the stress of English speaking and native speaking

The last question asked students what they have learned from doing movie dubbing activities this semester. Based on Table 12, their answers ranged from learning new vocabulary, idioms to the importance of using intonation and emotions." Isla said movie dubbings helped her "Pay attention to speaker's emotion, I learned new words and idioms." Janet said, "Heard funny intonations, attract our attention to speak English, good way to improve our oral English." Janet seems to have a strong interest in improving her intonation. Katie said, "I have learned many things such as new words and words, and new songs." I think learning new songs from doing movie dubbings is an interesting comment. Maybe this student sang a song during her movie dubbing, which is not the usual outcome of a movie-dubbing project. Kiera said "Pronunciation, intonation and team work. I love movie dubbing it is very, very interesting." Teamwork is very important for a movie dubbing activity among 2-4 students. Ralph said "You must have real emotions to do the movie dubbings or you can't do it well and like in every role in life, if you want to achieve something you must put yourselves into it. Now I have a better pronunciation of English." Ralph seems to have been greatly inspired by the importance of putting emotions into doing any task. Sammy said "The emotion we put into movies, different intonations conveys different feelings of us; angry – speak quickly, happy – relaxed; the speed of our language is very important too, knowing the correct stress can help movie dubbing go smoothly." Sammy seems interested in expressing emotions correctly. Stella said "the stress of English speaking and native speaking." Stella focuses on the use of stress. However, I am not sure what this student means by English speaking and native speaking. Perhaps she means how non-native English speakers can learn how to use word stress from native English speakers.

Connections to the Literature

Issues affecting Chinese speakers' use of prosody in English include first language interference, too many stresses in the utterances, pronouncing every word in a sentence with equal stress, failure to reduce unstressed syllables, failure to stress the right words in the sentences (Brazil, 1985,1997; Rui, 2007; Yin & Zhang, 2009; Zhang, 2009). Speakers of a non-stress language were not so much aware of the English word stress patterns as native speakers of a stress-timed language (Zhang, 2010). Based on the results from this study, all seven students underlined fewer stressed words than the actual number for each of the three pre-listening and during-listening script activities. However, students did not assign relatively more syllables or words prominence within the units as Brazil (1985,1997) originally hypothesized. Most speakers whose native languages are not stress-timed seem to have difficulty identifying where to use word and sentence stress. For example, Chinese speakers have difficulty placing stress because the second or the latter syllable is always stressed in Chinese double-syllable words (Gao, 2012). On her final project, Janet from Chongqing Province misplaced the stress on the word "accident" on the third syllable.

Regional Chinese dialects have even more complex intonation than Mandarin so speakers of these dialects would encounter even more first language interference when learning English pronunciation (Hua, 2001). While Janet, Ralph, Sammy and Stella admitted that speaking a regional dialect besides Mandarin affected their English pronunciation, Beijing natives Isla and Katie had more problems with intonation and sounded more monotonic on their final dubbing performances. However, based on their responses, all seven students seem to have a good understanding of what prominence is and all claimed to use it when speaking in English. It may be the case, then, English pronunciation varies individually and may not necessarily be influenced by regional dialects.

The students who participated in Chiu's (2012) movie dubbing project claimed that their pronunciation improved in five positive aspects: reducing mispronunciation; improved fluency; awareness of intonation; language authenticity; meeting learners' perceptions about language. All seven students in this study were asked to answer questions about their opinions of movie dubbings and whether or not they helped some aspect of their English speaking skills. Most of their responses were positive and indicated that their ability to use intonation and fluency improved. One of Chiu's students claimed that he understood the character he was dubbing so he was able to express more emotion. Ralph commented that, "You must have real emotions to do a movie dubbing or you can't do it well." Sammy also said that "The emotion we put into movies, different intonations conveys different feelings of us; angry – speak quickly, happy – relaxed; the speed of our language is very important too." Janet said it "attracted her attention" which meant she was motivated to speak English. Stella said that it helped her learn about native speaker's English. Besides learning pronunciation by listening to the speech of native speakers, reading movie subtitles can be beneficial in spoken language activities and help students improve their language comprehension (Zanon, 2006). Isla and Katie said that they learned many things such as words, songs and slang.

The incorrect use of word stress and pauses tends to make speech sound monotonic and uncomfortable for listeners. As a judge of English movie dubbing speaking competitions for Chinese students, I found that their dialogues lacked apparent emotion and, as a result, were boring. While their pronunciation was intelligible, their use of prosody was not comfortable to listen to. I was confused how the standards of the scoring rubric focused only on pronunciation because prosody is just as crucial for communicating in English speech. I began to wonder how I could use movie dubbings to help students become more aware of the use of sentence stress

when speaking in English. I was inspired by Chiu (2012)'s movie dubbing experiment in her classes. Chiu's students reported that the use of movie dubbings helped them reduce mispronunciation and improved their fluency by learning how to keep pace with the speed of talking in the video. Most importantly, movie dubbings helped students become more aware of the use of intonation.

In the course of a sixteen-week semester, there were three teaching cycles that focused on the teaching of a prosodic language feature (such as prominence, intonation) and listening discrimination activities. The same seven students' results were chosen for each cycle. In my classes, I felt that the awareness of sentence stress would help the overall intelligibility of the English speech of Chinese students.

The purpose of this study was to use movie scripts to help students become more aware of sentence stress used in English speech. The results indicate that most students' actual ability to hear sentence stress is greater than their theoretical awareness of sentence stress rules. In their movie dubbing finals, I created a grading rubric to score their performance. Most of them received high scores. Based on the results, there were more segmental pronunciation errors and fewer suprasegmental errors. Finally, students turned in a recording of themselves answering four questions related to prosody. Most students seem to have a good awareness of the use of intonation, prominence and thought groups. The majority also commented that they had a good awareness of sentence stress but could not use it properly themselves. Finally, they said that movie dubbing helped them learn a lot about expressing emotions, team work, vocabulary, idioms and sentence stress.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the results and findings of the study. These findings include results from pre- and during-listening discrimination activities using movie scripts, movie dubbing performance scores, student answers to questionnaires, notable results, and discussion of the researcher's findings in relation to literature review. Chapter Five concludes with a summary of the study, limitations, suggestions for final research, and some final comments on the relevance of the study and some of the ways that the findings might influence the researcher's future classroom instruction.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

This inquiry explored the question "To what extent does instruction using movie scripts affect Chinese students' awareness of English sentence stress?" Through this study, I hoped to research if students' awareness of English sentence stress improved during a period of sixteen weeks of instruction and practice with identifying sentence stress from movie scripts. To answer the research questions, I had students do three different sets of listening activities as well as a final movie dubbing activity. Additional data sources included a grading rubric and student responses to questions. Chapter Five concludes this study with a summary and discussion of the major findings and their implications. The limitations of the study are also discussed, and suggestions for further research are offered. The capstone ends with some final comments.

Study Summary

This study took place at a university in Beijing, China. The aim of this study was to determine if the use of listening activities based on movie scripts could improve students' awareness of English sentence stress. This study employed qualitative methods within a classroom research model including a case study of seven students. The qualitative research paradigm suited my study because the goal of the study was to explore if moving dubbing activities were effective as teaching tools to develop recognition of sentence stress among college-level Chinese students. The study is based on the hypothesis that students will be more

engaged in learning because they will be exposed to native English speakers' use of speech by hearing and mimicking the natural speech patterns of native speakers. Results from the study were based on a variety of data collection methods, including findings from pre- and post-activities. Also included were responses to questions related to awareness of prominence, word stress and opinions about movie dubbings.

Major Findings

The results from this study were presented in Chapter Four. Based on the results from this study, all seven students underlined fewer stressed words than the actual number stressed for each of the three pre-listening and during-listening script activities. However, students did not assign relatively more syllables or words prominence within the units as Brazil (1985, 1997) hypothesized. Not all listening activities were marked and students who completed all tasks were the basis of the seven chosen students for the case study. The results suggest that students' ability to hear sentence stress is better than their theoretical awareness of it. This result may suggest that listening to movie dialogue spoken by native speakers and dubbing it themselves can help students develop a better awareness of sentence stress.

Most speakers whose native languages are syllable-timed seem to have difficulty identifying where to use word and sentence stress. Speakers of a non-stress-timed language were not so much aware of the English word stress patterns as native speakers of a stress-timed language (Zhang, 2010). The occurrences of misplacement of word stress are always in polysyllabic words and there is a strong tendency to shift stress onto the second syllable. For example, Chinese speakers do this because the second or the latter syllable is always stressed in Chinese double-syllable words (Gao, 2012). On her final project, Janet from Chongqing

Province misplaced the stress on the word "accident" and placed the stress on the third syllable. Mandarin Chinese speakers who also speak other regional dialects will have even more difficulty learning English pronunciation. Regional Chinese dialects have even more complex intonation than Mandarin so their speakers would encounter even more first language interference when speaking stress timed languages (Hua, 2001). While Janet, Ralph, Sammy and Stella admitted that speaking another regional dialect besides Mandarin affected their English pronunciation, Beijing natives Isla and Katie exhibited more problems with intonation and sounded more monotonic on their final dubbing performance. Among the four students who spoke other dialects, only Sammy had some pronunciation problems related to vowel sounds (son, dead). However, based on their responses, all seven students seem to have a good understanding of what prominence is and all claim to use it when speaking in English.

While the data from the listening tasks may not portray the levels of improvement expected, comments from students do support the use of movie-dubbing tasks. Most of their responses were positive and indicated that their ability to use intonation and fluency improved. One of the students who participated in Chiu (2012)'s movie dubbing project claimed that the project gave him a greater awareness of intonation. He said he understood the character he was dubbing so he was able to express more emotion. Ralph commented that "You must have real emotions to do a movie dubbing or you can't do it well." Sammy also said that "The emotion we put into movies, different intonations conveys different feelings of us; angry – speak quickly, happy – relaxed; the speed of our language is very important too." Janet said it "attracted her" to speak English. Stella said that it helped her learn about native speaker's English.

There were a number of issues and related outcomes that arose from the chosen movies. Besides learning pronunciation by listening to the speech of native speakers, reading movie

subtitles can be beneficial in spoken language activities and help students improve their language comprehension. (Zanon, 2006). Isla and Katie said that they learned many things such as words, songs and slang. However, there were also some negative influences from students' attempts to keep up with the movie subtitles. Instead of trying to speak movie dialogues with correct prosody and pronunciation, students focused more on matching their spoken dialogues with the speed of the subtitles. Students read subtitles while watching the movie to practice instead of using a script to listen and take note of the prosody in the movie dialogue. Students seemed to focus more on reading the subtitles rather than on speaking dialogues with the prosody of native English speakers. This made their speech sound unnatural. Some students also chose to dub characters who spoke English with foreign accents or those who spoke faster than most native English speakers.

A successful movie project also depends on how much time students have to rehearse, prior knowledge about movie dubbing software, and the chosen movie itself. In China, students only have access to movies that already have subtitles that cannot be turned off. It would be helpful to have access to movies without any subtitles. Students may primarily focus on reading subtitles rather than focus on the prosody of the script. Movie scenes that do not contain a lot of music or sound effects would also be effective for movie dubbing. It is important for students to choose appropriate characters and dialogues to dub. Choosing to dub characters who are native English-speakers that speak at a normal rate will help students improve their awareness and use of sentence stress used by native-English speakers.

Implications of this Study

Movie dubbing activities are useful tools to help students learn and improve language skills (Burston, 2005). They can help language learners practice various aspects of pronunciation such as prosody. The completion of dubbed movies, however, requires much more than just the creative efforts of language instructors and students. Dubbing movies involves the use of different languages to communicate ideas and emotions using the same scenes and facial expressions. A successfully dubbed movie includes well-translated voice-overs that match facial expressions and carry over the proper emotions. The use of sound effects and music is also something that needs to be considered. As this is all a process that takes much experience and practice in the movie industry, it is impossible for students to reach this caliber of movie dubbing in such a short time. However, practicing movie dubbing may lead to more natural speech patterns, which could help Chinese graduates in a variety of work settings. Participants scored well on the final dubbing and their answers to the questions indicate a heightened awareness of prosodic features in English. We as educators should keep practices like this up as the need for focused instruction in prosodic features of English is important. There are a variety of ways for learners to demonstrate their understanding by marking scripts, language performances, and reflections.

Limitations

There were many limitations in this study that included location, difficulty in accessing educational resources abroad, student and teacher confusion, various interferences that came from chosen movies and limited technological knowledge about movie dubbings. The first and biggest limitation was location. Working on my capstone for an American university in Minnesota while working and living in Beijing, China has definitely been challenging. The lack

of access to educational and teaching resources in English has limited me to research on the internet. Not being in Minnesota meant that I could only communicate with my instructors and peers with internet-related communication software and email that weren't always stable or reliable.

The second limitation was student and teacher confusion. Instruction before each cycle could have focused more specifically on sentence stress and more modeling of marking scripts was needed. Student behavior and attitude was also a factor; not all listening activities tasks were completed by all students. The reasons could be due to laziness or perhaps students with lower proficiency levels found it overwhelming and could not understand the task. Although I think we all need to be more familiar with prosodic aspects of English, results from just three listening activities were not enough to give me any answers. More language treatments and activities are needed.

The instructional cycles and language treatments also contained several limitations in terms of teaching sentence stress with movie scripts. The instructional cycles covered a range of topics, such as thought groups, prominence (word stress), intonation and rhythm. Perhaps, a clear and consistent focus on sentence stress only for the language treatment would have led to higher levels of both theoretical knowledge and ability to hear stressed words. Another limitation is that the actual instruction of the features did not use movie scripts. Using portions of scripts in the future as the content for language instruction of prosodic features could help students prepare for movie dubbing activities. Students should also have more practice using their scripts and marking the prosody in their chosen dialogue. Teachers could provide the movie dialogue choices and familiarize themselves with the prosody and language of these scripts. However, this

would limit students' freedom to choose their own movies as they would in a movie dubbing competition.

There are also a number of linguistic and extra-linguistic limitations that arose from unfamiliarity with chosen movies and the movie dubbing project format. Heavy use of slang and idioms in the movies could have detracted from the learners' ability to focus specifically on sentences stress. Movie characters that spoke abnormally fast English or pronounced words with foreign accents (non-native English speakers) also diverted students from focusing on sentence stress. Extra-linguistic factors such as music, emotions (such as laughter or crying scenes) and sound effects could have affected students practice with sentence stress in terms of long gaps of silence between dialogues. Finally, the format of the movie dubbing project also posed some problems. As students turned in movie dubbing video projects to me instead of doing a live performance in class, knowledge of movie dubbing software and techniques were required. Sometimes the audio file was hard to hear or the movie clip did not match the actual dialogue.

Suggestions for Future Research

While this study answered many questions for my own personal teaching, it also opened the door to many additional questions that could be explored through further research. While researching individual students for a case study, I discovered many students commented that speaking another dialogue of Chinese besides Mandarin affected their English pronunciation. I think it would be interesting to do individual studies of different Chinese dialects and their effects on English pronunciation. I would also like to do further investigation into common word stress errors for Chinese students such as the misplacement of word stress in polysyllabic words and the strong tendency to stress shift onto the second syllable (Gao, 2012). Another interesting

aspect would be doing translation related to movies. I think it would be enlightening for students to see what kind of translation skills are needed to dub English movies into Chinese and other languages. Many speaking activities could also stem from doing movie translations. Students could also create various dialogues for the same scene without subtitles.

I would also like to explore the role of subtitles as a teaching tool. Subtitles could be used to help students build their vocabulary, learn about collocations and improve their reading skills. Finally, I think it would be useful to consider extra-linguistic factors needed for movie dubbings such as the ability to read facial expressions and gestures. Certain facial features, such as raised eyebrows, indicate prominence in speaking. Not only would this help with movie dubbing projects but it would also help Chinese students converse with native speakers. If Chinese students have some difficulty understanding native English speakers, they could use facial recognition to try to determine meaning.

The knowledge of movie-making technology is another area to research. Language teachers could use movie making technology to create various language activities with movie scenes. They could focus on various aspects of language such as vocabulary and pronunciation or even use a movie scene as the topic of a discussion. If learning movie-dubbing technology is a problem, I would like to consider possible alternatives such as role-plays or radio broadcasts. Research from the ideas mentioned above could lead to developments in language-teaching technology, advancements in the translation field as well as new ways to use movies as an educational tool. This knowledge could also open doors to language careers within the movie industry.

Final Comments

In this study, I sought to answer questions related to improving students' spoken performance in movie dubbing activities. Students tended to speak in a monotone manner rather than speak with prosodic features typical of English, for example, emphasis on key words in a sentence. Students may have difficulty hearing and recognizing English prosody used in the dialogues while preparing movie dubbings on their own. I decided that one way to help them improve was to help them become more aware of where sentence stress is used in spoken dialogues. I wanted to see if having a better theoretical awareness or listening ability really impacted their overall ability to dub a movie. I wanted to see if students had better theoretical awareness of where to use sentence stress or had better awareness identifying sentence stress by listening. Based on the listening activities results from the seven students in my case study, Chinese students do not have a strong theoretical awareness of sentence stress but have a stronger ability to detect sentence stress used when listening to spoken dialogues. This indicates that listening to dialogues may help students become more aware of sentence stress. Although these students' accuracy in correctly identifying words spoken with sentence stress (by predicting and during listening) was not high, their accuracy levels increased each cycle. This suggests that instructional cycles related to prosody along with the use of listening activities using movie scripts and dialogues help students improve their ability to identify stressed words in sentences. Students' final movie dubbing projects in my classes were enjoyable but many students still had pronunciation errors related to certain vowel sounds and the lack of intonation. Perhaps, more practice with their scripts would have helped. However, students' responses to a questionnaire showed that their awareness of prominence and sentence stress had increased at the end of the semester. As students turned in movie dubbing video projects to me instead of doing a live performance in class, proper knowledge of movie dubbing software and techniques were

required. In comparison to the students who participated in movie dubbing competitions, students benefited more from doing movie dubbings as a semester long project. They had a better awareness of sentence stress and focused more on language learning objectives rather than the strategies to win a competition. Students commented that movie dubbings helped them learn new vocabulary, the importance of intonation and the role of thought-groups. In the end, I realize that movie dubbing activities are more valuable as a teaching tool than as a basis of competition. Without proper language instruction and the ability to identify prosodic features using movie scripts, movie dubbing performances will produce dialogues that lack English prosody. Instead of being a judge at a movie dubbing competition, I find the role of a teacher using movie dubbing projects to help students improve their English pronunciation far more rewarding.

APPENDIX A

Sentence Stress Awareness Listening Activity #1

"Finding Nemo" Dialogue – Pre-listening

Underline the words you believe use sentence stress

CRUSH: Dude.

MARLIN: Ooh...

CRUSH: Dude. Focus, dude. Dude.

MARLIN: Ooooh...

CRUSH: Oh, he lives! Hey, dude!

MARLIN: Ooooh..what happened?

CRUSH: Oh, saw the whole thing, dude. First you were like, 'whoa'! And then we were all like, 'whoa'! And then you were like, 'whoa'.

MARLIN: What're you talking about?

CRUSH: You, mini-man. Takin' on the jellies. You got serious thrill issues, dude.

MARLIN: Ooh.

CRUSH: Awesome.

MARLIN: Ooh..ooh, my stomach. Ooooh..

CRUSH: Oh, man. No hurlin' on the shell, dude, okay, just waxed it.

MARLIN: So Mr. Turtle...

CRUSH: Whoa, dude. Mr. Turtle is my father. Name's Crush.

MARLIN: Crush? Really? Okay Crush, listen I need to get to the East Australian Current. EAC?

CRUSH: Ha ha ha, dude, ha ha, you're ridin' it, dude! Check it out!

CRUSH: Okay, grab shell, dude!

http://www.scifiscripts.com/cartoon/finding_nemo_transcript.pdf

"Finding Nemo" Dialogue– During Listening Activity

Underline the words where you heard sentence stress (42 words)

CRUSH: **DU**de.

MARLIN: Ooh...

CRUSH: **DU**de. **FO**cus, dude. **DU**de.

MARLIN: Ooooh...

CRUSH: Oh, he **LI**ves! Hey, **DU**de!

MARLIN: Ooooh..what **HAP**pened?

CRUSH: Oh, saw the whole thing, dude. First you were like, 'whoa'! /And then/ we were all like, 'whoa'! /And then/ you were like,/ 'wh**OA**'.

MARLIN: What'**RE** you/ **TALK**ing about?

CRUSH: You, mini-man./ **TAK**in' on the jellies./ You got **SER**ious/ thrill issues, dude.

MARLIN: Ooh.

CRUSH: **AWE**some.

MARLIN: Ooh..ooh,/ my stomach. Ooooh..

CRUSH: Oh, man. /No hurlin' on the shell, /dude, o**KAY**, /just waxed it.

MARLIN: So/ Mr. T**UR**tle...

CRUSH: Wh**OA**, dude. /Mr. Turtle is my father. /Name's Crush.

MARLIN: Crush?/ Really? /Okay Crush,/ list**EN** /I need to get to the/ East Australian Current. /EAC?

CRUSH: Ha ha ha, DU**de**,/ ha ha, **YOU**'re ridin' it, **DU**de!/ Check it **OU**t!

CRUSH: Okay, /grab shell, /**Du**des!

APPENDIX B

Sentence Stress Listening Activity #2

Family Man Dialogue – Pre-Listening

Underline the words you believe uses sentence stress.

- Do you have any idea what you put us through today?
- You walk out of here at 7:30 in the morning.
- You don't tell me where you're going or even that you're going.
- And I don't see you till hours later.
- I called all of our friends. I had the state troopers looking for you.
- I was on the phone with the hospital for God's sakes.
- What kind of man leaves his family on Christmas morning without a word about where he's going?
- What kind of man does that Jack?
- I don't know.
- Could you stop yelling at me?

Family Man Dialogue – During-Listening (34 words)

Underline the words where you actually hear sentence stress.

1. Do you have any idea what you put us through today?
2. You walk out of here at 7:30 in the morning.
3. You don't tell me where you're going or even that you're going.
4. And I don't see you till hours later.
5. I called all of our friends. I had the state troopers looking for you.
6. I was on the phone with the hospital for God's sakes.
7. What kind of man leaves his family on Christmas morning without a word about where he's going?
8. What kind of man does that Jack?
9. I don't know.
10. Could you please stop yelling at me?

APPENDIX C

Sentence Stress Listening Activity #3

"Annabel Lee" by Edgar Allen Poe - Pre-Listening activity:

Underline the parts of the words that you think should be spoken with more word stress

---

It was many and many a year ago,

In a kingdom by the sea,

That a maiden there lived whom you may know

By the name of Annabel Lee;

And this maiden she lived with no other thought

Than to love and be loved by me.I was a child and she was a child,

In this kingdom by the sea;

But we loved with a love that was more than love-

I and my Annabel Lee;

With a love that the winged seraphs of heaven

Coveted her and me.

But our love it was stronger by far than the love

Of those who were older than we-

Of many far wiser than we-

And neither the angels in heaven above,

Nor the demons down under the sea,

Can ever dissever my soul from the soul

Of the beautiful Annabel Lee.

For the moon never beams without bringing me dreams

Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;

And the stars never rise but I feel the bright eyes

Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;

"Annabelle Lee" During Listening – 74 stressed words

It was MANY and MANY a year ago,

In a KINGdom by the SEA,

That a MAIden THERE lived WHOM you may KNOW

By the NAME of ANnabelle LEE;

And this maiden SHE lived with NO Other thought

Than to LOVE and BE loved by ME.

I was a CHILD and she was a CHILD,

In this KINGdom by the SEA;

But we LOVED with a LOVE that was MORE than love -

I and my ANnabelle Lee;

With a LOVE that the WINged SEraphs of HEAven

COveted HER and ME.

But our love was STRONger by FAR than the LOVE

Of THOSE who were OLder than we

Of many FAR WIser than we

And NEIther the ANgels in HEAven aBOVE,

Nor the DEmons down UNDER the SEA,

Can EVER disSEver my SOUL from the SOUL

Of the BEAUtiful Annabelle Lee.

For the moon NEver beams without bringing me DREAMS

Of the BEAUtiful Annabelle Lee;

And the stars NEVER rise but I FEEL the BRIGHT EYES

Of the BEAUtiful Annabelle Lee.

APPENDIX D

Movie Dubbing Grading Rubric

Student name: Title of Movie:

Area of focus	4 (90-100%) Correct and confident and correct	3 (80-89%) Usually correct	2 (70-79%) Occasionally correct but often hesitant and inaccurate	1 (60-69%) Completely unintelligible
1. Use of pauses				
2. Places stress on a word correctly within a thought group				
3. overall intelligibility				

Average score:____

Other issues to address:

Pronunciation questions:

- Uses correct instances of intonation to express intended meanings. Y / N
- Did pronunciation errors make the speech unintelligible? Y / N
- Did it sound realistic? Y / N

Preparation questions:

- Student has given the teacher a printed copy of their script (to mark-up) and is attached to this paper. Y / N
- Student has done good preparation and memorized lines of dialogue. Y / N

APPENDIX E

Questions for students to answer in their recordings

Questions to answer during your final voice recordings (please also give me a written copy of your answers):

1. How does the use of rising and falling English intonation affect listener understanding in English speech? Is it easy for you to hear the differences? Do you think you can use rising and falling English intonations correctly now? Why or why not?

2. What does **prominence** mean? What role does it have on English speech?

3. What's the importance of "grouping" words in sentences into different chunks of thought groups when speaking in English? Have you begun to do that when you speak in English? Why or why not?

4. What else have you learned from doing movie dubbing activities this semester?

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