

Support Reading in Chinese for Non-Chinese-Speaking Students at a Primary School in Hong Kong: A Case Study

薛晓嫒 *Xue Xiaolei*¹

This paper is an outcome of the study project *Provision of School-based Support in the learning of Chinese Language for Non-Chinese-Speaking (NCS) Students at Primary Level* which was financially aided by Hong Kong Education Bureau. NCS students in Hong Kong are mainly from South Asia. They speak in English or Guangdonghua at school and use English or their native language at home. They learn the same subjects with native students in the same classroom. The research question of the present study is the following: “How to improve cognizing Chinese character and accumulating Chinese words among primary school students?”

This paper looks into effective experience and models of support reading in Chinese for NCS students at primary level. There are two main support models. Support Model of Self-Read emphasizes accumulating Chinese words through the following steps: 1. Read the text aloud (by the student). 2. Answer questions on the text. 3. Explain the meaning of words from the text. 4. Copy the words. 5. Write a sentence using the copied words. Support Model of Following-Read emphasizes cognizing Chinese character and contains the following steps; 1. Read words aloud imitating the teacher. 2. Identify words from the text. 3. Explain the meanings of words from the text. 4. Match words in the context of a game. 5. Read the sentences aloud imitating the teacher.

The following methods were applied for the research: field study method of classroom observation and reading coach, classroom observation to collect the evidence of reading performance, reading coach to support

NCS students' cognizing Chinese character and accumulating Chinese words. The project team developed a set of Chinese word cards to support cognizing Chinese character. The project team also designed a work paper to support accumulating Chinese words. Four ways to support cognizing Chinese character were identified: write in air to correct pronunciation of Chinese character, match Chinese word cards to identify Chinese character, select Chinese words through listening, and select Chinese words in the context of a game. Four ways were identified to accumulate Chinese words: first read the easy words then read difficult words, first read the words aloud then copy the words, first copy the words then copy the sentence, first read the sentences then copy them down.

All NCS students who received support reading in Chinese (from three primary schools) have improved their ability to read and speak in Chinese. It was discovered that the Self-Reading Model is appropriate for mastery level NCS students reading in Chinese, and the Following-Reading Model is appropriate for lower level NCS students reading in Chinese.

In brief, support reading in Chinese can improve NCS students' learning Chinese at primary level in Hong Kong. Self-Reading model supports NCS students to accumulate Chinese words. Following-Reading model supports NCS students to cognize Chinese character.

Keywords: NCS students in Hong Kong, support reading in Chinese, cognitive Chinese character, accumulate Chinese words

¹*College of Liberal Arts, Chongqing Normal University, China. 1060823146@qq.com*