

A study on the understanding of modern Chinese approximate numbers of Chinese major students in the University of Kelaniya

Sugandika, H. A. S.¹ - Department of modern languages

Abstract

As Chinese is the most spoken language in the world, there is a tendency to learn Chinese. Correctly using modern Chinese approximate numbers is a recurrent problem among Chinese learners. Approximate numbers are used when the speaker does not know the exact number. Every language has its ways to express approximate numbers, for example, "more than" and "around" in English. The Chinese language has different ways of expressing approximate numbers. Therefore, students who are learning Chinese as a foreign language find it difficult to use the approximate number correctly as they compare that with their mother tongue. There is a conflict among Chinese scholars whether approximate numbers are a part of grammar or it is a type of numbers. Non-native Chinese scholars have also researched the difficulties faced by foreign students when using approximate numbers. Most foreign researchers confirm that teaching approximate numbers are often being neglected. When studying the Chinese learning and teaching situation in Sri Lanka, that phenomenon can also be seen in Sri Lanka. Yet, approximate numbers are significant when speaking. Therefore, understanding Chinese approximate numbers is essential for learners. The objective of this study is to investigate whether Sri Lankan Chinese major students are familiar with Chinese approximate numbers, if positive how did they get familiar. If negative give them a solution. The methods used in this research are the methods of research analysis and questionnaire analysis. The information and data were taken from the research done by Chinese and foreign scholars. Many Chinese major students get the opportunity to study in China, for that they have to pass the Chinese proficiency exams (HSK). HSK syllabus requires students to study Chinese approximate numbers. Therefore, the students who have studied in China and passed HSK exams have proper knowledge about Chinese approximate numbers than the students who do not. By mandating to pass the HSK exam can improve the students' understanding of modern Chinese approximate numbers.

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¹ sshivanisugandika@gmail.com