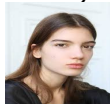


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Knowledge and Perception of Stroke Order among Chinese-as-a-Foreign Language Students in a Malaysian University

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ABSTRACT

This research presents the knowledge and perception of the Chinese language stroke order among undergraduates of Chinese-as-a-Foreign Language (CFL) course in a Malaysian university. A total of 73 participants from four levels of minor and option courses participated in this mixed-method study. The data was obtained via questionnaire, teaching intervention and interviews with respondents. The results showed that the overall respondents have a good knowledge of the Chinese language stroke order and perceived it useful in producing accurate Chinese writing, hastening the writing tasks and providing the accurate spelling of words. The data also showed that the respondents at the beginner levels showed a higher score of interest in acquiring the stroke system compared to the advance learners who were keener in enhancing their proficiency in other aspects of the Chinese language writing process. Findings from this study recommend that the teaching of stroke order needs to be implemented at the elementary level for more accurate and effective teaching, learning and retention of writing in a Chinese-as-a-Foreign Language course. The results have clear implications for effective language acquisition as well as the teaching and learning of second language.

Keywords:
Chinese-as-a-foreign language (CFL), stroke order, perception, language accuracy, writing speed

1. INTRODUCTION

Unlike most writing systems which are phonogram, Chinese character is an ideogram. The Chinese character has the combination of three elements namely shape or outlook, pronunciation and meaning. Every character symbolises a meaning and also a particular sound. In other words, different characters have different meanings. Therefore, the basics to learning Chinese characters or Chinese vocabulary rely on learning how to recognise and to identify the Chinese character.

To begin with, the shape or the outlook of a Chinese character is comparatively different from other characters in other ideogram type of languages because of the two-dimensional structure that is

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