2018

ROLE-PLAY IN THE CHINESE CLASSROOM

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ROLE-PLAY IN THE CHINESE CLASSROOM

A Thesis Presented

by

MATTHEW WERTH

Submitted to the Graduate School of the University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

May 2018

Asian Languages and Literatures, LLC
ROLE-PLAY IN THE CHINESE CLASSROOM

A Thesis Presented

by

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ABSTRACT

ROLE-PLAY IN THE CHINESE CLASSROOM

MAY 2018

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Directed by: Zhijun Wang

Over the past decade, there has been an increasing push for foreign language teachers to use a communicative approach to language instruction. One area this can be seen is through role-plays, activities where students take on a persona other than themselves to complete a task in the target language. Although there much anecdotal evidence as well as isolated studies showing the benefits of incorporating role-plays into the language learning classroom, few if any studies have looked at the reality of the current situation, especially with regard to less commonly taught languages such as Chinese.

This thesis attempts to look at role-play in Chinese language classrooms from the perspectives of both teachers and students. To obtain the teacher perspective educators throughout Massachusetts were surveyed about their attitudes and approach to using role-play. To better understand student attitudes towards role-play, a wide variety of role-plays were observed and data was collected from the participants. This data was analyzed to determine how different role-plays affect student behavior and learning.

The teacher survey revealed considerable variation in how often use teachers use role-plays in the classroom, their reasons for using role-play, and the way in which they implement role-play. One area of unity, however, was that virtually all teachers only use role-plays in
groups of five or fewer students. These small group role-plays are used to the exclusion of large group role-plays. Observing and interviewing students showed that students have a significant preference for larger group role-plays. These large group role-plays lead to superior student outcomes in terms of student enjoyment and perception of learning. Interestingly, there was no relationship between Chinese level and enjoyment, nor was there a relationship between Chinese level and students’ perception that they had learned from the experience. This indicates that role-plays can be an effective tool for students of all proficiency levels.

One core conclusion of this research is that Chinese teachers may benefit from incorporating more large group role-plays into their curriculum. Large group role-plays have a wide variety of benefits including: increasing student enjoyment, providing more opportunities for peer learning/teaching, and enabling teachers to give more immediate feedback. These implications as well as other suggestions for how to successfully use role-play in the language classroom are explored more fully later in the thesis. In order to make role-play more accessible to foreign language teachers, a series of role-play lesson plans based on the principles discussed are also provided in the appendix.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Foreign language teachers face a near impossible burden as they work to prepare students to communicate and use the target language in the real world while stuck within the limited confines of their classroom. Simply having students memorize rules and vocabulary or complete rote exercises is clearly insufficient, they will be woefully unprepared when faced with the spontaneity and complexity of real world tasks.

As educators have realized the growing importance of providing students with the ability to successfully navigate real-world tasks in the target language, and to use the language communicatively, role-play have become more and more popular. Role-play, as defined by Carol Livingston in her 1983 book *Role-play in Language Learning* is an activity where a language learner has to take on a persona other than him or herself, such as a boss, accountant, doctor or store clerk. Role-play allows the teacher to create a safe learning environment where the student can practice his or her language skills in the same way he or she will have to use those skills outside of the classroom.

Despite the growing popularity of role-play, research on role-play is still in its infancy. There are few, if any, studies informing teachers of the best practices for making role-play safe, pedagogically valuable, and engaging for students. In particular, the role of teachers, group size, student abilities, and teacher feedback have been only perfunctorily explored in the specific context of role-play in the foreign language classroom. Thus far, role-play researchers have relied on more general studies on pair and group work to draw conclusions in all of these areas. By employing a multi-faceted approach that looks at the perspectives of both teachers and students, this thesis hopes to play a small part in combating that deficiency.
Thirty-five teachers were surveyed regarding their attitudes and approaches to incorporating role-play in the classroom. In addition, thirty-four students at an immersion camp were observed a total of fifty-eight times, participating in nine distinct role-plays. After each role-play, students were interviewed about their experience. The data from the teachers shows how role-play is currently used in the classroom and why, while the results from students offers indications of what methods are the most effective. By analyzing and combining these two perspectives, I developed a series of recommendations and guidelines for teachers about how to better use role-play in the classroom, and how to make role-play more accessible to students. In order to facilitate this aim, a series of sample role-play lesson plans are also provided, along with all supporting materials, as both examples of successful role-plays and as ready-made lesson plans (see appendix B).
2.1 Second language acquisition and Communicative Language Teaching

In the past fifty years, a wide variety of theories have been proposed to explain how learners acquire a second language: connectionism, the interaction hypothesis, the sociocultural theory, universal grammar, the input hypothesis, the monitor model, processability theory, the multidimensional model, the procedural model—these are just a handful of the more than forty theories that all seek to explain second language acquisition (Larsen-Freeman, 290). It would be far outside the scope of this thesis to provide a comprehensive overview of all of the many competing theories, but there are several that had a particularly substantial influence over the modern prevailing approaches.

One important milestone in the understanding of second language acquisition was the idea of communicative competence, developed by Dell Hymes. It proposes that knowing a language doesn’t simply involve mastery of the grammar and vocabulary. It requires a learner be able to apply that knowledge accurately and appropriately in a variety of contexts (Hymes, 114). Canale and Swain later divided this idea of linguistic competence into four sub-competences, all of which must be acquired for successful communication: linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence (Canale). Linguistic competence is the ability to make grammatically correct statements; sociolinguistic competence is the ability to make utterances that are appropriate for the social situation at hand; discourse competence is the ability to link ideas through longer utterances and/or sentences; and lastly, strategic competence involves the meta-linguistic ability to resolve communication issues where needed through abilities such as meaning negotiation and circumlocution.
Another crucial step in the understanding of second language acquisition was the development of the input hypothesis model of language learning. This theory by Stephen Krashen is in fact a group of hypotheses that form a model for language learning (Krashen, 1982). The first and most important hypothesis is the eponymous input hypothesis which states that students learn when they understand a language input that is somewhat more advanced than their current level. This is often framed as i + 1, where i is the learner’s current level and +1 represents the material that is slightly more difficult than what they currently know (Krashen, 1985). The acquisition–learning hypothesis states that there is a difference between acquisition and learning. Acquisition is the subconscious mastery of a skill whereas learning is a conscious process of actively being able to explain the rules behind said skill. Krashen believed that language production was entirely a product of acquisition, not learning. The corollary to this hypothesis is the monitor hypothesis which states that consciously learned language is used to monitor the language output that is the result of acquisition. Lastly, the affective filter hypothesis states that learners’ ability to acquire and produce language will be impeded if they are under stress (Krashen, 1988).

These theories, among many others, were influential in the development of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), currently one of the foremost approaches to foreign language teaching. As the name suggests, CLT emphasizes communication as both the goal and the means of language learning (Savignon, 264). This communication is more than simple production; it is a collaborative act that requires multiple parties working together to create meaning. CLT views grammar as one aspect of communicative competence, but grammar is by no means sufficient on its own. In fact, research has indicated that exercises emphasizing
meaningful expression are not only better at improving students communicative abilities; they can be just as effective at teaching grammar as are non-communicative drills (Savignon, 1972).

The importance and impact of Communicative Language Teaching and communicative competence can be seen in the widely adopted ACTFL World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages. The standards do not refer to teaching grammar or vocabulary at all, instead they focus on learning the language in context, “Interpersonal Communication: Learners interact and negotiate meaning in spoken, signed, or written conversations to share information, reactions, feelings, and opinions” (The National Standards Collaborative Board).

2.2 The benefits of role-play for language learning

Within the context of communicative language teaching, role-play is an exceptionally useful tool for teachers. Alabsi, Crookall, Hung, Jones, Kuśnierek, Levine, Lin, Long, and Savignon are just a few of the many researchers that describe role-play as an ideal technique for CLT. It is, in many ways, the ultimate exercise in communicative language teaching. Role-play immerses students fully in a context where they are required to use the language in order to succeed. It requires students to work together to create meaning, often in a realistic situation. Instead of passively listening, students are forced to negotiate for meaning and to develop repair strategies for communication breakdowns (Kuśnierek, 2015). Role-play makes language learning task-based and communicative, giving students a chance to implement the skills that they otherwise would be practicing by rote. Instead of just providing students with comprehensible input, role-play forces students to use the language, “Comprehensible input becomes comprehended input through interaction” (García-Carbonel, 2001).

Researchers have written at length about other benefits of role-play. It can be used for teaching vocabulary or grammar (Alabsi, 2016). Role-play also provides learners with a safe and
supportive environment in which to practice their language skills, building their confidence and abilities. It allows them to experiment with the language, while still having the safety net of a guided structure and a teacher who can intervene if necessary. Krashen (1985) showed the importance of lowering the affective filter in order to facilitate language learning. Role-play is an effective method of providing students with a fun and engaging activity that lowers the affective filter while encouraging them to use the target language communicatively (Zheng, 1991).

Yet another benefit of role-play is the potential for students to practice real-world scenarios that they will likely encounter in the future. Role-plays recreate the spontaneity and difficulties that students will face. By giving them an opportunity to confront these issues in the classroom teachers can better prepare them to be effective communicators in the target language in the future (Salies, 2017). By allowing learners to act out a wide variety of roles, they can practice the language in different contexts and registers.

Role-play can play a valuable role in bringing cultural education to the language classroom. ACTFL’s World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages emphasize the importance of using language in order to, “investigate, explain, and reflect on the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the cultures studied” (ACTFL, 1999). Role-plays provide students the opportunity to not only explore other cultures more deeply, but to immerse them, in some small measure, in said culture. They can be used to have students practice acting in a culturally appropriate manner, for example in situations involving as the appropriate forms for presenting and receiving gifts. Moreover, through role-plays teachers can bring up topics and cultural differences sensitively and organically (Salies, 1995). For example, a speed dating role-play could lead to a discussion on different cultural expectations and opinions regarding dating and relationships. Bringing up other cultures while also inviting students to reflect upon their
own culture can help integrate the Connections portion of ACTFLs World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages as it allows students to, “access and evaluate information and diverse perspectives” (ACTFL, 1999).

2.3 Downsides and dangers of role-play

The downsides and challenges to using role-play have been well studied by an array of researchers. Van Ments (1990) offers the following list of the potential drawbacks of the usage of role-play: 1) Teacher loses control over what is learned and the order in which it is learned. 2) Simplifications can mislead. 3) Uses a large amount of time. 4) Sometimes requires other resources—people, space, special items. 5) Can vary tremendously in quality depending on the implementation. 6) Impact may trigger withdrawal or defense symptoms. 7) May be seen as too entertaining or frivolous. 8) May dominate learning to the exclusion of solid theory and facts. 9) May depend too heavily on what students already know (p.16).

Another danger of role-play is the realism; due to the immersive nature of role-plays it is easy for students to get lost and to treat the role-plays as if they were reality (Horner & McGinley, 1990). This is especially a concern for younger students. This can lead them to be over-invested in role-plays and to take the outcomes personally and seriously. A teacher should monitor students closely at all times and be prepared to end a role-play early, if necessary. In addition, they should always consider the individual needs of each student, including their personality, gender, gender identity, socio-economic background, ethnic background, and more.

2.4 Group size and role-play

There has been much research into the advantages and disadvantages of group work. Harmer (2001) discusses how pair-work can increase the amount of time students speak in the target language, keeps students engaged and interested, and lets students work more
independently. A meta-analysis of over 150 studies showed that cooperative learning led to improved student outcomes in a wide variety of areas including, “knowledge acquisition, retention, accuracy and creativity of problem solving, and higher-level reasoning” (Johnson, et al., 2013). Beyond these academic measures, group work also resulted in better interpersonal relationships between students and their peers, as well as between students and teachers.

Despite these advantages, there are many well documented concerns regarding group work. Teachers are often concerned by what feels like chaos in the classroom; they feel that students are rowdy, out of control, or unfocused at times (Harmer, 2001). Other possible concerns, especially in the language classroom, are the difficulty of maintaining target language use and students reinforcing one another’s mistakes. There are also more mundane concerns such as the amount of time group work can consume, and the difficulty in dividing students up into groups.

Virtually all the research on group work pertains to small groups, in particular pair work or groups of 3-5 students (Nunan, 1999). In most cases it is simply assumed that this is the correct size for group work. In the few cases where this choice is explicitly addressed, the justification is empirical, lacking in empirical research. For example, Cuseo’s 2001 Guidelines for Group Work states, without any evidence, that group work should be done in small groups of more than four students. At present, the possibility of large groups being used for group work is simply not seriously entertained.

The question of group size as it relates to role-play in the language learning classroom is even murkier. Despite the plethora of research regarding group work and the effects of group size on classroom dynamics, there has been virtually no research which focuses specially on group size as it pertains to role-play. None of the research specifically mentions role-play, it far
more often is concerned with other subject matters, or other forms of group work such as think-pair-share activities, peer teaching, or group projects. Even papers which look at the benefits of role-play such as Anna Kuśnierek’s *Developing students’ speaking skills through role-play* simply cite papers on the benefits of group work, and fail to delve into a deeper discussion of ideal group size.

In David Horner and Kevin McGinley’s book *Running simulation/games A step-by-step guide*, discussion of group size is limited to a superficial comment about the logistics of a role-play, mentioning that the group size depends on the nature of the simulation. They do not discuss the advantages and disadvantages of different sized role-plays, or how group size can affect student behavior. That they even acknowledge the possibility of different group sizes for role-play is somewhat unusual; most researchers simply assume the role-play will be conducted in pairs or small groups, without even considering the possibility of forming larger groups.

In short, although there is a consensus among researchers regarding the benefits of role-play and group-work in the classroom, there has been no research to date regarding the ideal size for said role-plays. The numerous guides for teachers that provide models and suggestions for designing effective role-plays all ignore this vitally important question of group size.

2.5 Other aspects of role-play

When designing effective role-plays, there are many other important considerations aside from group size. These considerations include homogeneous versus heterogeneous groups, how roles are assigned, the role of the teacher, pre-teaching, and error correction, to name a few (Horner, 1990). As with the question of group size, the majority of the research on these topics were not specifically conducted with role-play in mind, but there are exceptions, along with
some useful ideas that still apply. When these factors are mentioned in role-play literature, it is simply in passing, and without reference to any concrete experiments.

The role of the teacher during role-play is important to consider when designing role-plays. The main options are 1) for the teacher to be a spectator, roaming and possibly providing feedback or help to students as needed 2) for the teacher to actively participate in the role-play, taking on a role for himself or herself to play, or 3) some combination of the previous two options (Harmer, 2001).

Related to the question of the teacher’s role is that of feedback. Feedback can be provided during the role-play or afterwards, individually or with the entire class; the teacher must decide the most effective way to correct students if indeed they decide corrections are necessary. Porter-Ladousse (1987) suggests that since the goal of role-plays is to develop fluency, the most important consideration is that correction should not interrupt or detract from the activity itself. Instead he suggests that teachers observe and take notes, and that at the end of the activity they should discuss important elements with the class as a whole. Outside the realm of role-play, there is no consensus on the optimal time for error correction. Some studies suggest that delayed feedback is more effective as it can lower student anxiety and consequently help lower students’ affective filter. Others support the theory that immediate feedback is more effective than delayed feedback for grammar acquisition (Shabani, et al. 2016 and Opitz, et al., 2017).

Yet another understudied area is the importance of considering students’ language abilities when designing role-play. It appears that there are no published studies regarding the effectiveness of role-play as it relates to students’ language skills. Communicative Language Teaching argues that all students should be taught through communicative tasks, regardless of
their level, but it makes no claims regarding what type of task is optimal based on the abilities of students.

2.6 The current state of role-play in the Chinese classroom

Thus far, there has only been one study specifically looking at role-play in the Chinese language classroom. *Role-playing in Foreign Language Teaching: An Application in an Elementary Chinese Class* by Binyao Zhen, followed a group of students at Memphis State University. The curriculum was revised to incorporate role-play in the class on a daily basis. Although the methods section is somewhat lacking, it appears that after the day’s new content was introduced, students would be divided into groups and given roughly ten minutes in which to prepare a presentation that they then performed in front of the class.

It is important to note that since students had time to prepare for the presentations there was no spontaneous language use; all of these role-plays were scripted. This way of working makes the task less communicative in nature though Zhen claims that it was still very beneficial for students. In his paper Zhen claims that having the curriculum revolve around role-plays led to numerous benefits including:

1. More active student participation in class
2. Increased time spent practicing out of class
3. Students made more progress learning the language with regard to vocabulary, grammar, and phonetics
4. More students enrolled in Chinese class for the second semester
5. Increased student creativity
6. Improved relationships between students

Although all of these outcomes are plausible, aside from the question of student enrollment Zhen does not provide any evidence or explanation as to how these outcomes were measured. It is unclear how students’ language skills were evaluated in order to demonstrate the superior learning relative to other semesters. Other measures, such as creativity, are not defined
in the paper, nor does he describe how they were measured. Without a clear description of how he measured and evaluated students, it is impossible to evaluate the validity of his claims. Overall, it is an intriguing paper but lacks the rigor necessary in order to draw solid conclusions.

2.7 Types of role-play

It is worth noting that there is some disagreement about the distinctions between role-play, simulations, and games as they relate to foreign language instruction. Often role-plays are defined as situations where the participants simply act out a scene without a larger goal, while in simulations the participants act out a scenario using their own skills, abilities and attitudes (García-Carbonell, 483). For example, an activity where a student pretends to be a doctor would be a role-play, whereas an activity where participants have to find the best way to escape from a desert island would be a simulation.

In practice the distinction between the two categories can be blurry. For example, in a restaurant activity, is the student who is ordering food participating in a role-play or a simulation? They are not assuming a persona other than the generic one of “someone ordering food”, but it seems odd to say that the activity is a simulation for the customer but a role-play for the waiter.

Another distinction is between scripted and unscripted role-plays. Both types of role-play involve students acting out a scene, but in a scripted role-play the students will have time in advance to plan and possibly write out the dialogue. In an unscripted role-play, the interactions are all spontaneous and unrehearsed. Both types have their own advantages and disadvantages for language learners; scripted role-plays are likely to feature more accurate language use and give learners time to reflect, correct, and receive corrections. In addition, they may be more appropriate for lower level language learners who are still unable to produce longer spontaneous
conversations. In contrast, unscripted role-plays are much more authentic and reflective of the way in which students will use the language outside of the classroom. For higher level students who are capable of sustained discourse, this fact makes them an absolutely essential component of classroom practice.

Another crucial distinction between types of role-play that has not been addressed thus far in the literature, is group size. In almost all studies on role-play found, the authors described role-plays with relatively small groups of students, typically two to five. When larger groups of students were described in papers, the authors made no attempt to comment on how these larger groups were fundamentally different from smaller role-plays. As a result, it has become clear that not only is the impact of size on role-play rarely examined by researchers, but there is not even a clear definition that distinguishes between groups of different sizes.

This paper proposes that there are two fundamentally different types of role-plays, “large group” and “small group”. Small group role-plays are performed in groups of two to five students, while large group role-plays are typically conducted with the entire class acting out a scene together. Although the delineation may appear to be arbitrary, this definition is based largely on a survey of Chinese language teachers’ current use of role-play in the classroom, as well as on a thorough review of the literature. Chinese language teachers virtually never use role-plays with more than five students at a time in the classroom, and the activities referred to in papers by role-play researchers overwhelmingly involve role-plays done with groups of five or fewer students. Those studies that do not pertain to small group role-plays typically look at role-plays involving the entire class working together as a whole. As a result, this definition of small group vs large group role-play successfully differentiates between two types of fundamentally different activities used in language learning classrooms.
CHAPTER 3
STUDY DESIGN- METHODS AND INSTRUMENTS

3.1 - Survey of foreign language teachers

To obtain the teacher perspective, this study surveyed a variety of Chinese language teachers from around New England. They were asked about their use of role-play in the classroom, the reasons behind those choices, and their opinions on role-play.

3.1.1 - The Participants

For this study, data was collected from foreign language teachers in New England. Of the thirty-five respondents, sixteen teach Chinese at Umass Amherst, and nineteen were contacted at a meeting of the New England Chinese Language Teachers Association (NECLTA). Of the nineteen teachers who are members of NECLTA two teach in elementary schools, four teach in middle schools, and thirteen teach in high schools. The teachers have a wide range of teaching experience, ranging from less than one year to more than thirty years. The vast majority of the teachers surveyed are native Chinese speakers, and only two speak Chinese as a second language.

3.1.2 Teacher Survey (see appendix for a full copy of the teacher survey and cover letter)

Using a combination of multiple choice, open response, and yes/no questions, teachers were asked how often they use role-play, how they give feedback during or after role-plays, what the role of the teacher is during role-plays, group size during role-plays, the types of role-plays they use, what challenges they face when running role-plays, and what benefits role-plays have for students. They were also asked to share any other thoughts they may have had regarding role-play. Altogether, the goal is to have a comprehensive view of how Chinese teachers use role-play in the classroom and to understand the reasons behind that usage.
In order to account for the different backgrounds teachers come from and the varied settings they work in, teachers were also asked about their teaching experience, their native language, and what type of school they teach in. To facilitate ease and accuracy the survey was distributed in both English and Chinese, and teachers were instructed to complete the survey in whichever language they felt more comfortable with.

3.1.3 Methods of Analysis

This portion of the study is concerned with analyzing the current state of role-play in classrooms, and so descriptive statistics were calculated for the data set. College students are expected to learn much more independently and at a faster rate, consequently it is possible that their teachers use role-play differently from k-12 teachers. Therefore, descriptive statistics were also calculated separately for teachers who work in a college settings as opposed to those who work in elementary/middle/high school.

3.2 Observations of role-plays

This paper attempts to explore role-play from not only the teacher perspective, but also from the student perspective. The following sections describe efforts to look at role-play through the experiences of a group of students at a language immersion summer camp.

3.2.1 The participants

This study followed thirty-four students at Sen Lin Hu, a Chinese immersion summer camp. Altogether, they were observed fifty-eight times in nine unique role-plays. All of the students and their parents filled out consent forms prior to the start of the study (For a copy of the consent form, see appendix B). Students at Sen Lin Hu are divided into two groups, based on how long they stay at the camp, two-week students and four-week students. Both groups participate in two hours of Chinese classes a day; within these groups students are placed into
classes according to their proficiency level in Chinese. At the end of the session, four-week students receive a year of high school credit, provided they successfully complete the requirements; consequently, their classes are more rigorous and the course expectations are higher for them. Of the thirty-four students who consented to the study, eight were four-week students, and twenty-six were two-week students.

Upon arrival at camp students completed a language assessment interview and were placed into a language class based on their abilities and their experience learning Chinese. During the first several days, teachers continued to evaluate students, and to suggest their transfer to another class if the one they were in didn’t suit their needs. The majority of the students ranged from complete beginners to intermediate-mid on the ACTFL scale. There were, however, a group of students who had attended Chinese immersion schools and had a much higher proficiency level than the others. They were all placed in the highest level class. This summer there were five separate classes for four-week students and for two-week students. The classes were as follows:

- Level 1- students with no prior exposure to Chinese
- Level 2- students with limited Chinese knowledge. They knew some isolated words and phrases but were unable participate in a meaningful conversation (novice low)
- Level 3- students with a more extensive vocabulary and knowledge of Chinese, but who still struggled to apply that knowledge in complete sentences (novice mid-high)
- Level 4- students who could form complete sentences and successfully complete a variety of communicative tasks but usually with grammar mistakes. They struggled to form longer sentences or link ideas (intermediate low-mid)
- Level 5 - students with extensive experience learning Chinese. They could communicate easily and confidently. Many of them had gone to Chinese immersion schools.

3.2.2 The size of role-plays
The number of participants in each role-play ranged from two to ninety-one. In the role-plays observed, the small bank and small store role-plays consistently had only two participants, as such they are categorized as small role-plays. The rest of the role-plays are all classified as large group role-plays; they ranged considerably in size, from eight in the restaurant role-play to ninety-one in one the market role-play. Altogether, thirty-one sets of responses were collected from small group role-plays and twenty-six sets of responses were collected from large group role-plays.

3.2.3 Observations of role-plays

For each role-play I took note of the number of participants, the type of role-play, and the age and Chinese level of the participants (as determined by their class placement). While each role-play was occurring I also took note of errors, any error correction, peer teaching/learning, signs of distress or nervousness, and other important behavior on the part of the participants. Some of the role-plays involved large numbers of participants and so I attempted to follow as many participants as possible, each for a few minutes.

After each role-play I conducted short debriefings with the participants and asked them three questions: 1) On a scale of 1-5 how hard was the role-play? 2) On a scale of 1-5 how much fun was the role-play? 3) What, if anything, did you learn? Many participants offered other unprompted feedback about the role-plays which I recorded in my notes.

3.2.4 Methods of analysis

Due to the relatively small sample size, the data collected from students was analyzed using Fisher’s exact test to determine correlation between variables. A confidence interval of 95% was used, thus if the p-value was greater than .05 the results were found to be non-significant. In addition, descriptive statistics were generated for the entire dataset.
The Kruskal Wallis H test was used to analyze data collected from teachers to see if teacher use of role-play varies according to experience. Once again, a confidence internal of 95% was used.

3.2.5 Types of role-plays

At Sen Lin Hu, there are many role-plays that occur throughout the day. Altogether, they can be divided into three types: role-plays that are a part of daily life at the village, role-plays that are part of classes, and village wide role-plays.

Role-plays that are a part of daily life at the village occur organically and are an incidental part of living in an immersion environment. For example, withdrawing money at the village bank would constitute a role-play that is part of the daily village life. These role-plays blur the line between role-play and authentic experience. One example is that of a restaurant activity where villagers use Chinese money to purchase candy at the village store. Is this a role-play or is the experience so authentic that it transcends role-play? I believe that even the most authentic village experiences qualify as role-plays because, unlike in real life, villagers are being supported by counselors and have the ability to stop if they feel the need.

Role-plays that are part of classes were somewhat less common, but still prevalent. All students are in class for two hours a day, and at times their teachers conduct role-play activities with the class. The two role-plays observed during classes were that of a fruit market and a restaurant.

Lastly, at times there were village-wide role-plays. These were large activities run by the camp. Altogether there were three village-wide role-plays run during the month-long session: a crime investigation, a travel role-play, and a street market activity.
During the four weeks at Sen Lin Hu nine distinct role-plays were observed: a travel role-play, a small bank, a large bank, a small store, a large store, a crime investigation, a street market, a restaurant, and a fruit market. Many of these role-plays were run multiple times. For example, the camp bank was open every day and so the bank role-play was observed thirteen times. What follows is a more detailed description of each individual role-play observed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role-play</th>
<th>Large vs Small Group</th>
<th>Number of participants</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Type of role-play</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bank</td>
<td>Small</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Indoors</td>
<td>~3 minutes</td>
<td>Daily life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large bank</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Indoors</td>
<td>5 minutes</td>
<td>Daily life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Store</td>
<td>Small</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Camp store</td>
<td>3 minutes</td>
<td>Daily life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large store</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Camp store</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
<td>Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit Market</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Indoors</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
<td>Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Outside</td>
<td>25 minutes</td>
<td>Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street Market</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>Camp dining hall</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
<td>Village-wide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Camp dining hall</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
<td>Village-wide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime Scene</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>Camp dining hall</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
<td>Village-wide</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.2.5.1 Bank role-play

At Sen Lin Hu students were able to withdraw money from a village bank, this money could then be used to purchase items at the village store. In order to withdraw money, students had to present their “passport” (a document which listed how much money they had deposited) to the banker. They then had to tell the banker how much money they wanted to withdraw. The entire role-play had to be conducted entirely in Chinese or the student would not receive any money. Often while processing their request, the banker would ask additional questions such as “What do you want to buy at the store?” or “How are you doing today?”

### 3.2.5.2 Large bank role-play

This role-play is a subset of the bank role-play. In this case, there were multiple bankers who all interacted with the student. This occurred when the student in question was struggling to
communicate and was becoming frustrated. Upon seeing his growing frustration, three other bankers spontaneously joined the simulation to support them.

3.2.5.3 Store role-play

After withdrawing money from the bank, students were able to proceed to the village store where they could purchase a wide array of items. The most popular were Chinese snacks and candies, though they could also buy apparel, Chinese yoyos, stuffed animals, and so forth.

At the store, students had to tell the clerk what they wanted to buy and then ask how much said item(s) cost. The entire interaction had to be conducted entirely in Chinese. If students struggled, they could refer to prominently displayed posters that provided the necessary phrases in both characters and pinyin.

我想买____／Wǒ xiǎng mǎi____
请问，____多少钱？／Qǐngwèn,____duōshǎo qián？

3.2.5.4 Large store role-play

This role-play is a subset of the store role-play. It was conducted with the lowest level Chinese class. After learning the structures for buying and selling items, the entire class went to the village store and took turns acting out the roles of customer and store-owner. Altogether, eight students participated. They purchased items in pairs and repeated each interaction multiple times.

3.2.5.5 Fruit Market role-play

This role-play was run by a counselor supervising the two lowest-level Chinese classes. Altogether twenty-one students participated, all of them two-weekers. The one-hour lesson started with the teacher reviewing vocabulary for different types of fruit and practicing structures for buying, selling, and bargaining.
Next, students were divided into teams of 3-4. Each team was given paper money and an assortment of fruit. The students then were told they were in a fruit market and they could go buy and sell fruit. No specific goals were given to the groups. For the next thirty minutes, teams bought, sold, and haggled with one another. Many groups spontaneously developed their own goals (for example, one team decided to buy all of the bananas and form a banana monopoly).

3.2.5.6 Restaurant role-play

This role-play was conducted during the second-lowest level Chinese class. The ten students were assigned one of three roles: waiter, customer, or cook. There were six customers, three waiters, and one cook. Waiters distributed menus and took orders from customers. They then took said orders to the cook who had pictures of all the foods on the menu. The cook would give the food to the waiter who then served it to the customer.

After all the customers had eaten, the students switched roles. Altogether the simulation was run three times.

3.2.5.7 Street Market role-play

This street-market role-play took the place of lunch for the entire camp. Seventy-four students and over a dozen cooks and counselors participated. Students were given 10 tickets to purchase food. There were seven different food stations: scallion pancakes, meat/vegetable filled buns, ice-cream, noodles, and fried dough, and water/tea. At each station students could bargain with the vendors to lower the price, and they could also receive discounts for singing songs and reciting poems in Chinese.

Students could circulate freely, visiting the stations in any order and as often as they wanted. There was an area to sit and eat food, but most students preferred to eat while wandering around. The street market lasted for over an hour. When students ran out of tickets, they could
receive more tickets by going to a specified counselor and singing songs or reciting poems in Chinese.

3.2.5.8 Crime Investigation Role-play

This role-play started with the introduction of a crime scene (in this case, someone had stolen the camp’s ceremonial canoe paddle). Students were shown a variety of clues found at the crime scene, such as a pair of sneakers, a water bottle, a pair of scissors, and several Renminbi. Altogether ninety-one students and nine counselors participated in the role-play.

Counselors were given the role of suspects, and each one was provided with an identity that included an alibi, where they were the night before, what they were doing, and other basic information about their character. Students played the role of police officers; they were all given a sheet with suggested questions, and were told to interrogate all of the suspects. They circulated freely for forty-five minutes, asking questions of as many suspects as possible. Afterwards, students voted in an attempt to identify the guilty person. Copies of the worksheets and all other materials used in the crime investigation role-play can be found in section B1 of the appendix.

3.2.5.8 - Travel Role-play

In this activity, thirty-seven students were assigned to be either travel agents or travelers. The travelers’ goal was to buy a series of plane tickets which would allow them to travel all the way around the world, starting and ending in Japan. For example, participants could buy a ticket from Tokyo to LA, LA to Paris, Paris to Madagascar, and finally from Madagascar back to Tokyo. The task was complicated however by the information gap. They had to buy the plane tickets from three separate travel agencies, 青年旅行社, 顺风旅行社, and 一路旅行社, each of which only were able to offer some of the flights that were needed to circumnavigate the globe.
Travelers were unable to get the full list of all available flights at each travel agency, and so they had to visit them and ask for the specific information they needed. For example, if a traveler had already bought a flight from Tokyo to Boston, he or she would have to go to all the travel agencies and ask if there were any available flights from Boston to another city that would bring them closer to their final destination. Altogether, travelers had to find a series of 4-5 flights that would bring them around the entire world.

The task was complicated in that travelers only had $2200 to spend. If their planned itinerary exceeded this cost, they had to find a cheaper route. In addition, the times and dates of the flights had to be plausible, for example if they flew into Cairo on September 1st at 7am, their next flight couldn’t leave before that time. These difficulties meant that travelers often had to go and cancel the tickets that they had bought earlier in an attempt to find a superior route.

Altogether, this activity was very popular. It lasted roughly two hours and all but one of the travelers were able to successfully purchase tickets to travel around the world. Many of the students even expressed a desire to do the simulation again, believing that they could do a better job if they had the chance to repeat the simulation.

Copies of all the worksheets and other materials used in the travel role-play can be found in section B4 of the appendix.
4.1 Observations of students in role-plays

Observations of more than fifty-eight role-play events were analyzed to see if there was a link between group-size and students’ enjoyment of role-plays or of their perception of learning. Whether student proficiency levels can impact their role-play experience was also examined. Lastly, patterns of peer learning and correction were also examined in detail.

4.2 Group size and role-play

![Student enjoyment of small vs large group role-plays](image)

Figure 1. Student enjoyment of small vs large group role-plays

Large group role-plays tended to be more enjoyable for students than small group role-plays (Figure 1). When students were asked to rate their experience on a scale of one to five, five being very enjoyable and one being no fun at all, 88% of students in large group role-plays evaluated the experience as a four or five, compared to 55% of students in small group role-plays. Equally importantly, 20% of students in small group role-plays gave the activity a one or two, indicating a negative experience compared to only 4% of students in large group role-plays.
These results were also verified using Fisher’s exact test which had a P-value of .058. A P-value this low indicates that the difference in enjoyment between large group compared to small group role-plays is statistically significant.

Large group role-plays tend to be longer and provide students an opportunity to become more immersed in their character. In addition, they have the opportunity to repeat interactions multiple times, thus lowering the stakes of any single exchange. It is likely that both of these factors play a role in making large group role-plays more enjoyable for students on average.

Table 1. Student perception of learning in large vs small group role-plays

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of students who felt they learned something from the role-play</th>
<th>Small group role-play</th>
<th>Large group role-play</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fisher’s exact = .022</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-sided Fisher’s exact = .016</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Group size correlated strongly with whether students felt that they had learned during the role-play. In small group role-plays 54.8% of the students said they had learned something, whereas 84.6% of students in large group role-plays said they had learned something. Although the exact reason for this phenomenon is unknown, one possibility is that the peer teaching and correction in large group role-plays provides students with more opportunities for reflection, leading them to be more aware of their progress and learning during a role-play.
Another possibility is that large group role-plays provide students with more repetition. It is unlikely that any one exchange provides sufficient opportunity for students to master new vocabulary or structures, but the repetitive nature of large group role-plays may provide them with a superior experience that leads to more significant progress in learning.

4.3 Student language proficiency and role-play

Table 2. Student language proficiency and role-play enjoyment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese Level</th>
<th>Enjoyment</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fisher's exact = 0.054

Student ability correlated with enjoyment of role-play (Table 2). Lower level students tended to enjoy role-plays more than higher level students. Of the 25 role-plays run with level one and level two students, only two were ranked below a 4 in terms of enjoyment. This can be compared to the highest level students. Of the eleven role-plays in which the highest level students participated, four were negative, four were positive, and three were neutral. These results were verified by Fisher’s exact test which gave a P-value of .054.

Higher level students complained at times that the role-plays were too childish and easy for them. This underscores the importance of designing role-plays that are appropriate for students’ level. For example, a Model UN role-play could be very stimulating and engaging for advanced students, while being completely inaccessible for beginners. Teachers must carefully design their role-play so that it is sufficiently challenging for students, while not being so difficult that they are unable to meaningfully participate.
Table 3. Student language proficiency and perception of role-play difficulty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese Level</th>
<th>Hard 1</th>
<th>Hard 2</th>
<th>Hard 3</th>
<th>Hard 4</th>
<th>Hard 5</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fisher's exact = 0.782

After each role-play students were asked to evaluate how hard the role-play was, with 1 being very easy and 5 being very difficult. Student’s Chinese language proficiency did not correlate with students’ perceptions of a role-play’s difficulty. 74% of the students rated the role-plays as a 1 or 2, and this percentage did not vary significantly by Chinese ability (Table 3).

These results were very surprising, as one would suppose that more advanced students would rate role-plays as easier. One possible explanation lies in the fact that lower level students consistently rated the role-plays as very enjoyable. Since the role-plays were engaging and entertaining, it is logical they were less likely to perceive them as difficult. The enjoyment of the experience may have superseded any feelings of discomfort or difficulty, leading them to not register those negative emotions. This discovery can be seen as yet more evidence for the usefulness of role-play in the classroom.

Table 4. Student language proficiency and perception of learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese Level</th>
<th>Learned 0</th>
<th>Learned 1</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fisher's exact = 0.113
Surprisingly, there was no correlation between Chinese proficiency and how likely a student was to respond that they had learned something from the role-play (Table 4). The majority of the time students felt that they had learned something from the role-play. Students responded that they had learned something in 68% of the role-plays observed.

This question of learning was presented to students in a binary manner. It is entirely possible that lower learner students felt they had learned more than higher level students. Without more data it is simply not possible to know. Regardless, the fact that most students felt they learned something from role-plays is a positive indication that students perceive role-plays to be valuable learning activities. Ideally, if this study were to be repeated for verification, this question should be presented on a spectrum as were the other questions.

4.4 Peer teaching and correction

At Sen Lin Hu peer teaching was commonly observed during role-plays. None of the peer teaching was encouraged or prompted by teachers. It emerged spontaneously as students attempted to support one another. Peer teaching generally took one of three forms: prompted explicit, unprompted explicit, and modeling. Prompted explicit error correction occurred when one participant asked another how to say something, such as in the exchange below which was observed during the fruit market role-play:

A: 这个多少钱？ *How much is this*
B: 这个...how do you say twenty? *this is...*
A: 二十 *20*
B: 这个二十块钱(This is 20 dollars)

Unprompted explicit peer teaching, as the name suggests, involved one participant spontaneously helping or correcting another participant of his or her own initiative. An example of unprompted explicit peer teaching was observed during the large store role-play:
In this case, student B noticed that student A mispronounced shǎo, instead saying shù. Afterwards, student B responded with the correct pronunciation. Student A recognized the correction and immediately repeated the question, this time with the correct pronunciation. The entire interaction was entirely unprompted by a teacher or outside observer.

Lastly, modeling occurred when one student, usually of higher language proficiency, modeled the required language for another student. Often during role-plays, students who were less confident would pair up with a more confident student. The less confident student would shadow their partner and observe, later jumping in to participate fully once he or she felt comfortable with the required language.

All three forms of peer teaching were observed very frequently during large group role-plays. Prompted explicit and unprompted explicit peer teaching were less common but still present during small group role-plays. Modeling was only observed in two instances during small group role-plays.

4.5 Student perceptions of learning

After each role-play students were asked, “Did you learn anything from the role-play?” Although 68% of the time students responded that they had learned something, when asked, “What did you learn?”, they often struggled to mention anything more specific. When they did respond, the vast majority of students mentioned specific vocabulary words. For example, during the fruit market role-play Líměihuá, a student who usually lacked motivation and had a very low level of Chinese, went from pointing to the object she wanted to using the phrase, “请给我(#)个
(fruit).” She also sought help from another student as well as a teacher; the first time to ask how to say “avocado”, the second time to confirm that 四十 meant 40. Despite this progress, when asked what she had learned at the end of the role-play she simply responded, “Nothing really. Maybe how to say banana?”

This pattern was observed time and time again. Students who acquired or solidified grammar structures during role-plays appeared completely unaware of the process. Instead, they focused exclusively on random vocabulary words that were specific to the role-play. Even the few students who noticed higher level learning still tended to focus on vocabulary. For example, after the travel role-play, one student who had acted as a travel agent said, “I learned how to say Tibet, and how to sell things. Also, it is challenging my Chinese to be quicker.”

This disconnect between what students were observed learning and their perception of learning is not abnormal. Metacognition is a separate skill form language learning. Learning something new does not guarantee that the student is aware of what she has learned. It is very important, however, for teachers to address this deficit since increased metacognition skills are associated with superior educational outcomes for students ((Raoofi, 2013). The fact that students were so unaware of what they had learned through these role-plays shows how important it is for teachers to explicitly tell students the reasons for using role-play in the classroom, and highlighting specific skills, vocabulary, and structures students were observed learning or improving upon during role-plays. This improved understanding on the part of students can be very beneficial, and help motivate them to participate more fully in role-plays.
CHAPTER 5

RESULTS AND ANALYSES- THE TEACHER PERSPECTIVE

5.1 How teachers use role-play in the classroom

In addition to looking at role-play from the student perspective, it is important to examine teacher attitudes towards role-play since they are the ones who chose when, how, and if role-play is implemented in the classroom. This section analyzes the results of the teacher survey, in particular looking at how teacher attitudes shape their use of role-play in their classrooms.

One possible issue with this survey was role-play was not explicitly defined in the survey, it was assumed teachers were familiar with the concept. Teachers may have different ideas and definitions of role-play; follow-up would be needed to determine if they were including activities such as scripted role-plays or whole class simulations in their answers.

5.2 How often teachers use role-play

![Figure 2. How often teachers use role-play](image)

A survey of thirty-four Chinese teachers revealed that roughly 30% of them use role-play once a month or less in the classroom. The majority of teachers use role-plays at least a few
times a month. The most common category was 1-2x a week, comprising of 32% of the respondents.

![Diagram showing how often teachers use role-play, broken down by setting](image)

**Figure 3. How often teachers use role-play, broken down by setting**

College teachers use role-play fairly similarly to primary and secondary school teachers. In both groups roughly 30% of the teachers use role-play once a month or less. The largest variation comes from the middle categories; 37% use role-play a few times a month, while college teachers are much more likely to use role-play one to two times a week. Given that college classes typically meet three times a week, while middle school and high school Chinese classes often meet daily, this discovery is not unusual.
5.3 Group size and role-play

As can be seen above, role-plays with three or four participants are by far the most common category, accounting for 76% of all role-plays. A mere 3% of role-plays meet the definition of large group role-plays.

When asked why they tended to use groups of this size, almost half of the teachers said it was because it gave students more opportunities to speak. The next most common answer was that it was easier to control students and maintain classroom discipline with smaller groups.

Other reasons cited were:

- It is easier to divide students into groups when said groups are smaller
- It is easier to assess students and provide grades fairly in small groups
- It makes the activity more interesting
- It prevents the role-play from taking too much time
- It allows the teacher to pair stronger and weaker students
- It helps make all the students participate actively

The one teacher who in the survey said that she uses large group role-play in the classroom simply said that she does so because, “Everyone has chances.” Unfortunately, surveys
were conducted anonymously so it was not possible to follow up with the teacher to ask additional questions about her use of large group role-play.

5.4 Role of the teacher

Table 5. Role of the teacher during role-plays according to teacher survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observe</th>
<th>Participate</th>
<th>Observe and Participate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>62%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teachers were far more likely to say they observe rather than participate during role-plays. They were almost twice as likely to believe that teachers should only observe role-plays instead of participate or observe and participate.

For teachers who only observe role-plays there were two most common explanations for this choice. The first is that they use role-plays to assess and grade students, “因这是他们考试的一部分 (performance-based assessment).” The clear implication is that these teachers believe that participating in the role-plays would prevent them from carrying out this task. The second rationale these teachers stated for observing role-plays is they want to keep the focus on students and maximize their speaking opportunities, “Students are the major ones who need to practice. There are too many students in one class. Their practice time is very limited. I will participate if it is a demo.”

There were only three teachers who always participate in student role-plays. Interestingly, these teachers do not teach in the same setting. One is a middle school teacher, one is a high school teacher, and the third teaches at a college. All three teachers commented on students’ need for guidance and structure during role-plays, “students need guidance to practice in a role other than themselves.”
Lastly, there was a group of teachers that sometimes observe and sometimes participate during role-plays. This group was far more likely to use role-plays with a high frequency, 50% of them use role-plays three times a week or more, compared to 18% of teachers overall. When describing their reasons for sometimes observing and sometimes participating these teachers mentioned many of the points brought up by the other two groups. They valued both the benefits of modeling when participating as well as the potential for assessment and evaluation when observing. Their own role changed as needed based on the circumstances,

“参与帮助学生进入情景，减少英文说明，同时给学生一个范例。在观察主要为了监控学生的语言质量。” (Participating helps students enter the scene, reduces the amount of English used for explanation, and gives the students an example. The main reason for observing is to monitor students’ language quality)

![Frequency of role-play use based on teacher role](image)

Figure 5. Frequency of role-play use based on teacher role

Interestingly, teachers who usually participate in role-plays, in fact, use role-plays less often in the classroom than their counterparts. However, given that only three teachers fall into this group it is difficult to draw a strong conclusion.

It does appear that teachers who alternate between observing and participating in role-plays based on the needs of the students, use role-play more frequently than teachers who only
observe role-plays. A full 50% of the teachers who both observe and participate in role-plays use role-plays three times a week or more, compared to a mere 11% of teachers who only observe.

Alternating between observing and participating provides teachers with the opportunity to both demonstrate for students and monitor students from the outside, giving teachers more options with managing the classroom. As such, it is likely that teachers who do alternate between observing and participating find role-plays to be more beneficial for their students and consequently use role-play more frequently in their classrooms.

5.5 Student feedback

Table 6. When teachers give feedback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>During role-plays</th>
<th>After role-plays</th>
<th>Both</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teachers were divided into three categories: those who give feedback during role-plays, those who give feedback after role-plays, and those who give both types of feedback. Teachers who gave feedback afterwards were more likely to use role-plays as an assessment, having students perform them one group at a time in front of the whole class. Afterwards, they provide feedback to the entire class about the errors they had heard most commonly. The teachers who give feedback during role-plays commented on the importance of providing individualized and immediate feedback.

Teachers who provide both immediate feedback and feedback after the role-play talked about the use of immediate feedback for one-on-one discussions with students, whereas afterwards, they prefer to address the entire class as a whole, “当时是一对一，以后就是全班一起.”
5.6 Obstacles to role-play

By far the most commonly cited obstacles to using role-plays in the classroom were: 1) the large amount of time role-plays take and 2) a lack of student enthusiasm for role-plays. This second obstacle is very surprising, particularly given the numerous studies showing that role-plays are a valuable tool for increasing student motivation and making language learning come to life in the classroom. This conclusion may indicate that teachers could benefit from additional training in best practices for incorporating role-play into their classrooms.

Many other obstacles were mentioned in addition to the two aforementioned ones. These included:

- during role-plays students want to express things beyond their capabilities, thus requiring lots of help from the teachers (this was brought up by six teachers)
- some students are introverted and get nervous during role-plays
- some topics are too abstract to incorporate successfully into a role-play
- classroom management
- difficulties in dividing students into groups
- students tend to be very repetitive in vocabulary and content

It is important to note that most of the obstacles mentioned by teachers were logistical issues rather than a belief that role-plays are not an effective way to teach a language. This observation suggests that the best way to encourage teachers to use more role-plays in the classroom is to teach techniques and tips for making role-plays easier to organize and more efficient, rather than focusing on the pedagogical benefits.

In addition to these objections, there was also a group of comments that were specific to scripted role-plays. These included comments about the amount of time it takes for students to prepare outside of class, how to keep students who observe the performances on task and productive, and, students using dictionaries too much.

5.7 Types of Role-play Used by Teachers
As mentioned in the section above, two common challenges teachers face when using role-plays are the amount of time it takes students to prepare outside of class, and the fact that students often need support from teachers when they want to express ideas beyond their current capabilities. Both of these comments indicate that Chinese teachers use scripted role-plays much more often than non-scripted role-plays. In fact, when asked what type of role-plays they use in the classroom, only one teacher explicitly mentioned that she uses improvised (unscripted) role-plays.

Beyond scripted vs unscripted role-plays, the most commonly used role-plays are those based on textbook dialogues, “以对话为主”. Many teachers described how they use role-play to act out text-book dialogues and to practice the grammar points raised in the chapter.

The other commonly cited type of role-play was task based. Teachers often mentioned shopping, ordering food, and visiting the doctor as examples of the role-plays they used in the classroom. There was, however, considerable variation and creativity in the types of tasks mentioned. One teacher, for example, responded, “Giving a situation. Eg: in a restaurant ordering food, shopping, with a doctor, freshman orientation, giving suggestions on course enrollment/lodging, Harry Potter, giving a storyline everyone knows, etc).”

One partial solution to this constant tension between scripted and unscripted role-plays is to introduce a third middle group between the two extremes. These semi-controlled role-plays are ones where teachers provide students with key words, structures, and ideas which are necessary to successfully complete the role-play. For example, this could be a list of medical terms in a doctor role-play. This scaffolding gives students the support they need, while also allowing them to attempt less structured role-plays than the scripted ones commonly seen in the classroom. When running a Murder Mystery role-play in my classroom, we started by
brainstorming a list of questions that police officers could ask suspects. Although the interrogations themselves were unscripted, this initial preparation gave students the confidence and resources they needed to get into character and continue through the role-play without pausing.

5.8 Benefits to role-play

Although there were a wide variety of responses as to the benefits of role-play, three benefits were mentioned much more often by teachers. In order of frequency they are:

1. The first and most common category was that of teachers who mentioned how role-plays can prepare students to use the target language in the real world. Almost ⅓ of the teachers described this as an important benefit of role-play. These teachers also often mentioned how role-plays can be used to introduce authentic cultural elements both in the form of realia and in the form of abstract concepts like festivals and cultural norms.

   “实际应用语言，体验实际生活”
   (“Practical use of the language, experience real life”)

   “若roleplay足够真是，能让学生练习到真实的对话”
   (“If roleplay is sufficiently realistic, it can get students to practice real conversations”)

   “Really use the language in a setting that try to simulate the real world”

2. The use of role-play to practice grammar and vocabulary.

   “能在表演深入理解记忆单词”
   (“In the performance they can deeply understand and remember vocabulary”)

   “我觉得学生有更多机会去练习语法”
   (“I think that students have more opportunities to practice grammar”)

3. The ability of role-play to increase student motivation and have them be more engaged in the classroom. These teachers also often overlapped with the first category, talking about how role-play can bring the language to life in the classroom.
“激发学生热情。让语言更贴近生活”
*(It stimulates student enthusiasm. It makes the language come closer to life)*

“It is more fun and engaging”

There were several other benefits that individual teachers brought up. Interestingly, although many teachers said in other areas of the survey that they use role-play as an assessment, only one teacher mentioned that role-play is valuable for finding out areas where students are struggling, “在这个过程中会暴露他们的问题.” *(In this process students can expose their problems).*

Other benefits mentioned include the potential for collaborative work, increasing student confidence, creating a safe environment and increasing student motivation. In addition, two teachers discussed how role-play, “有助于发展学生创造力.” *(It helps develop their creativity).*

**5.9 Teacher experience and role-play**

The Kruskal-Wallis H test was used to see if teacher experience changes the way that teachers use role-play in the classroom. No significant relationship was found between years of teaching and any of the other factors analyzed including frequency of role-play use, group size, type of feedback, and teacher role in the classroom.

These results were confirmed with use of a chi-squared test which also showed no relationship between years teaching and frequency of role-play use, group size, type of feedback, and teacher role in the classroom. Although the small sample size makes chi-squared a sub-optimal statistical test in this case, it is still valuable as a tool for verification rather than an initial test.
As shown in chapter four, there are a variety of practices that can help students get the most out of role-plays, and most importantly using more large group role-plays. However, the results of the teacher survey discussed in chapter five show that the majority of Chinese teachers use small group role-plays exclusively. Moreover, these role-plays tend to be scripted and used as a form of assessment, thus limiting true communicative use of the target language. As a result, these role-plays fail to take advantage of the many benefits of unscripted, spontaneous role-play. What follows is a discussion of the best ways to incorporate and run role-plays in the language classroom, taking into account the research and findings from earlier, as well as relevant studies cited in chapter 2. The key research questions tried to answer are: 1) What is the current state of role-play in Chinese language classrooms and 2) How can teachers improve their use of role-play in the classroom, particularly in the context of large group role-plays.

### 6.1 The role of the teacher and feedback

When running role-plays, teachers can either observe from the side or participate directly. Each option has its own advantages: observing allows teachers to circulate freely, observe more students, and maintain discipline, while participating provides students with immediate feedback as well as interaction with a presumably highly competent speaker. Currently, the majority of Chinese teachers prefer to observe, while a substantial minority switch between observing and participating, depending on the particular role-play (4.1.3 Role of the teacher).

A closely related concern is that of feedback. When teachers are observing, they are limited to providing feedback afterwards which some research suggests is less effective for student learning (Shabani, et al. 2016 and Opitz, et al., 2017). Imagine a pair of students acting
out a restaurant role-play. If the teacher were to suddenly join as another waiter, engage with the students for a few sentences, and then leave just as abruptly it would be very disruptive. A small group role-play forces a teacher to choose between observing passively, joining and leaving groups disruptively, or focusing all his/her attention on a small subgroup of students. In the first case feedback is delayed, while the second feedback takes away from the immersive experience that is one of the primary benefits of role-play. The third situation is also clearly sub-optimal as it deprives the majority of students of any sort of feedback and teacher interaction. The fourth possibility is for the students to perform the role-play one group at a time while the other students observe, but this option minimizes the speaking time of the other students and is extremely time-consuming.

Large group role-play provides teachers with a superior alternative. While students circulate and interact freely with one another it is easy for a teacher to alternate between observing and participating. If a student is struggling the teacher can take up a corresponding role and guide him or he through the interaction. Afterwards, the instructor can step back and observe as the student goes on to practice with other class members. Large group role-play provides the perfect medium, as the teacher can observe and maintain class discipline, while still having the freedom to interact with students individually without disrupting the activity. Large group role-play allows for immediate feedback that is non-disruptive, both of which are key considerations (Porter-Ladousse 1987).

6.2 Large group role-plays and the student

This study suggests that there are many benefits to large group role-play compared to small group role-play. Students were significantly more likely to enjoy large group role-plays, and they were also more likely to respond that they learned from the experience (4.2.1.1 Group
Size and Role-play). It is startling that there is such a contrast between the potential benefits of large group role-play and their almost complete absence from the Chinese classroom, suggesting that more work may be needed to introduce teachers to large group role-play and to make it more available and accessible.

There are many other benefits to large group role-play that have been observed anecdotally. Firstly, large group role-plays can be much less stressful for students compared to small group role-plays. Rather than simply having one opportunity to perform a role-play, often in front of a class, large group role-plays offer students the opportunity to practice the same task repeatedly. Rather than an all-or-nothing challenge, large group role-plays provide an environment where students can push themselves to use the language in a new way, receive feedback, and immediately implement that feedback thus making the learning process less stressful.

It is important to note that group role-play is especially effective in situations where the role-play imitates a real life activity that involves many people interacting with one another. For example, rather than have students practice buying and selling items in pairs, the shopping bazaar role-play in section B3 of the appendix B provides a realistic scenario where students would have to bargain and trade with multiple people. In contrast, when practicing seeing a doctor it would be difficult to realistically implement a large group role-play.

**6.3 Role-plays and peer teaching**

Peer teaching can be an extremely effective tool. However, it is rarely used to its full potential in the classroom (Frey, 1990). Role-play, particularly large group role-play, gives students both opportunities as well as motivation to learn from one another. These large group
role-plays allow students to easily step up when they feel confident, and to also step back and shadow one another when they feel unready for the linguistic demands a role-play presents.

Large scale role-plays allow a spectrum of participation; due to the repetitive nature of large scale-role-plays students can start by observing and gradually participate more and more until they are full, independent participants in the activity. In contrast, small group role-plays force their participants to jump into their role completely from the very beginning. This lack of preparation can be stressful for students and make it difficult for them to gradually participate more and more fully in the role-play.

6.4 Student proficiency

The viewpoint that role-play is better suited to lower level students appears to be prevalent in the teaching community. Several teachers in the survey indicated that role-play, while a useful teaching tool for beginning students, is unsuitable for higher level students. The results of the study at Sen Lin Hu back up this idea to some extent. Student responses indicate that students with higher proficiency levels find role-plays less engaging. However these results must be viewed with some level of skepticism; there were no large group role-plays conducted exclusively with higher level students. All of the large group role-plays they participated in were with learners at different proficiency levels, and thus were designed to provide lower level students with meaningful opportunities to participate. The rest of the role-plays in which the advanced students participated were small group role-plays which are less engaging than large group role-plays in general. These two factors combined could make it appear that role-plays are not suitable for advanced students, when in reality, there were simply none designed for their particular needs.
There are many role-plays designed specifically for advanced students that provide a suitably challenging and engaging experience for them. For example, García-Carbonell describes a challenging role-play where students prepare for and participate in a debate, Model UN style (García-Carbonell, 2001). The experience is very challenging and would be wildly inappropriate for beginner students. It is, however, an excellent activity for students who feel comfortable communicating and discussing topics such as energy security, geo-politics, and world affairs.

Role-play is an extremely versatile and adaptable tool, and saying that its suitability is limited to students of a certain level is extremely short-sighted. It is undeniable that certain role-plays are best for students with certain proficiency levels. However, rather than dismissing role-plays altogether, a far more beneficial approach would be to work on designing role-plays appropriate for the students in question.

6.5 Challenges to running role-plays

The numerous challenges to incorporating role-play in the classroom have been clearly enumerated by both prior researchers and by the teachers who were surveyed for this study (Van Ments, 1990). As mentioned in section 4.1.5 Obstacles to role-play, the two most commonly cited obstacles to role-play mentioned by teachers were the amount of time role-plays take, and a lack of student enthusiasm for role-plays.

It is true that class time is limited and role-plays can be time consuming. However, this objection is like saying there is so much material to cover in math class that there is no time to cover problem solving. The entire purpose of language learning is to facilitate communication. If we do not make time for an activity that allows students to practice communicating spontaneously in a realistic task, we are turning language learning into an exercise in rote memorization. Moreover, it has been made clear that many of these teachers use only scripted
role-plays, with groups coming to the front to perform one at a time. This type of role-play is much more time consuming and has significantly less student participation than unscripted large group role-play.

The second complaint, a lack of student interest in role-plays, may be partially attributed to the types of role-plays run by teachers. 88% of students enjoyed the large group role-plays in which they participated, compared to 55% of students in small group role-plays. Given that Chinese teachers overwhelmingly use small group role-plays in the classroom, it is likely that if they were to use more large group role-plays, students would become more enthusiastic about the activities.

Many of the other so-called challenges and disadvantages to running role-plays are in fact core features and benefits of role-play. Rather than requiring additional effort from the teacher to correct these aspects, teachers must change their mindset to accept these as a normal, even beneficial, part of language learning. For example, many teachers commented about chaos in the classroom as a problem when running role-plays. In fact, many used this as a justification for keeping group size small. In reality, controlled chaos is not something to be avoided; provided students are engaged with the task, elevated noise levels are a positive sign that they are participating actively.

Teachers also commented on the repetitive nature of vocabulary and content used by students in role-plays. Rather than view this as a negative, it is a highly beneficial aspect to role-play. Mastery of new material can only occur through repeated deliberate practice. Role-play, especially large group role-play, gives students an opportunity to practice the same structures, vocabulary, and tasks again and again, without resulting in the boredom and withdrawal common to repetitive drills.
There was also a group of concerns regarding role-play that were specific to scripted role-plays. These included comments about the amount of time it takes for students to prepare outside of class, how to keep students who observe the performances on task and productive, and the problem of students using dictionaries too much. The simplest solution to these concerns is to focus more on unscripted role-plays. Although scripted role-plays do have their place in the classroom, they are currently used to the exclusion of unscripted role-plays. A better balance would provide students with new and different opportunities for language use.

6.6 Metacognition

The results of this study indicate that students often lack metacognition skills. They show difficulty in evaluating the benefits of role-play and what they learn during role-plays. After role-plays, many students simply said they had not learned anything from the activity; those that did say they learned struggled to articulate exactly what they had learned and often defaulted to describing their learning in terms of isolated, low frequency vocabulary words. This result is exemplified in one student who, during a fruit market role-play, went from pointing to the object she wanted to purchasing it using the phrase, “请给我(#)个 (fruit).” Despite this significant progress, at the end of the role-play when asked what she had learned she said, “Not much.”

At first glance, this may not appear to be a problem. Teachers may reasonably say that since student learning is the goal, as long as they are learning there is no need for students to aware of their own progress in the short term. This viewpoint ignores the importance of metacognition for student motivation, engagement, and long term success. Many studies have indicated that a student’s own understanding of her own learning process is a crucial factor in foreign language learning (Raoofi, 2013). In addition, if students are unaware of their progress and the purpose of their work, they “have no ownership over their own learning” and are less
likely to be engaged in the activity (Hall, 2008). In short, if students are not aware of the purpose behind an activity, they have no incentive to participate fully beyond blind obedience. Making them full-fledged active participants in their own learning starts with ensuring they understand the benefits of activities, and showing them the progress they make.

Teachers should make an effort to systematically explain the purpose of role-plays to students, and to point out their progress when it occurs. Otherwise, they risk students staying unaware of the benefits of role-play, and consequently, becoming less and less engaged in the activities. Engaging students in their own education is particularly important with more advanced students who may view role-play as too childish or easy, if they are not conscious of the benefits.

The other way that teachers can help facilitate these meta-learning skills is through the systematic use of debriefings after role-plays. These debriefings have several important benefits for students. From a language learning perspective, they provide an opportunity to draw attention to linguistic progress, as well as an opportunity to provide feedback to the group as a whole about any systematic errors that were observed. Moreover, during a debriefing a teacher can ask students to reflect on and discuss culturally important themes that were introduced, and to compare them to their own native culture. This facilitates cultural comparisons, an important standard for language learning.

6.7 Cultural Appropriateness

Role-plays represent a wonderful opportunity to introduce cultural topics in the classroom in a very natural fashion (Salies, 1995). For example, the marriage market role-play described in section B2 of the appendix is designed to not only have students practice vocabulary and structures related to describing people, but it also lets teachers initiate a conversation about dating norms and the role of parents across cultures. The night market role-play observed at Sen
Lin Hu was another highly successful role-play that introduced learners to an aspect of Taiwanese culture that they may not have been familiar with before. As it is impossible to realistically and fully recreate another culture in the classroom, while designing role-plays it is important not to devolve into stereotypes and false generalizations (Kodotchigova, 2002). One essential element to any successful role-play is a debriefing afterwards where said cultural aspects can be discussed and examined in more detail. In particular, any aspects that were simplified or changed for the sake of a class’ needs should be discussed in order to provide the most accurate presentation possible of the target culture.

For culturally appropriate large group role-plays, it is valuable to consider what real-world activities involve many people interacting with one another. For example, while the interactions between a doctor and a patient may provide the basis for an engaging and interesting role-play that focuses on the different cultural approaches to medicine, this role-play would likely not translate well to a large group role-play since doctor-patient interactions are almost always done one-on-one. In contrast, rather than having students practice buying and selling items in pairs, a role-play based around Taiwan’s night markets would practice many of the same skills, provide a culturally authentic context, and allow students to engage in large group role-play. The added group dynamics and cultural aspects can further enhance the role-play experience for students.

6.8 Limitations and areas for further study

It is possible that the teachers surveyed for this thesis are not representative of the general population of Chinese teachers. Those college teachers who were survey are at Umass Amherst, and those who teach in primary or secondary schools took the survey at a workshop organized by the New England Chinese Language Teachers Association. It is possible
that these groups differ in some way from the larger population of Chinese teachers, making the results suspect. Moreover, the sample size was relatively small, with only thirty-five teachers. Ideally, more Chinese teachers would be surveyed to provide additional statistical validity.

All of the role-plays were observed at Sen Lin Hu, a Chinese language immersion summer camp. Children who attend the camp either have a strong interest in learning Chinese or have been encouraged to attend by their parents. In either case, this level of commitment from students and their families is rare and may represent an underlying difference in these students’ approach and attitudes towards language learning. However, since the benefits of role-play have already been well established and accepted in the teaching community. Since this role-play attempts to show the benefits of large group role-play relative to small group role-play, the results should not be overly impacted by this unique population of students. That is to say, although large group role-play may be less effective in traditional school settings than at Sen Lin Hu, we would still expect large group role-play to be more effective than small group role-play in most settings, regardless of the student body.

Another possible weakness in the study is that large group role-plays, by their nature, tend to last much longer than small group role-plays. It’s very possible that students felt like they learned more during large group role-plays simply due to the lengthier nature of the activity. However, many other benefits to large group role-plays, such as the superior opportunities for teacher feedback and peer learning, are unrelated to the time and depend entirely on the format. As such, it is impossible to claim that all the benefits observed are a result of the increased time relative to small group role-plays.

Teachers will certainly face challenges in adapting role-plays designed for a large immersion camp to a school setting. For example, the night market simulation was run with close
to one hundred participants and over six different food stands; this is clearly not feasible for most schools. Despite these difficulties, I believe that most of the role-plays can be successfully used in most public school settings. Several, such as the murder mystery and the bazaar I have used in my classes on multiple occasions with minimal issues. Ultimately, any teacher who wants to use a large group role-play in their classroom with have to adapt the role-play for the unique needs of his/her students, the change in the number of participants is simply one more factor they must consider.

Lastly, this study looked primarily at student attitudes towards role-plays, such as their enjoyment, and their perception of whether or not they had learned. In the future, more study is needed to empirically show the educational outcomes of role-plays, particularly with regard to large group role-plays. Ideally this would take the form of a longitudinal study following a large group of students in a class that incorporated many role-plays, and then comparing the learning of these students to a control group from a traditional Chinese classroom.

6.9 Conclusion

Role-plays represent an innovative and exciting tool for educators. They provide the opportunity for students to immerse themselves in culturally authentic, communicative tasks. The research discussed in this thesis makes it clear that the study of role-play is still in its infancy. Many basic questions such as the ideal group size, the impact of student language proficiency, and the best way for the teacher to participate and supervise, are still in the process of being answered.

It is my hope that this thesis can play a small role in answering some of these vital questions. I sincerely hope that the role-play lesson plans attached in the appendix provide a
useful guide and starting point for teachers who aspire to use more large group role-plays in their classroom.
APPENDIX A

TEACHER SURVEY

Role-play Survey - English

1. How long have you been teaching Chinese? _________________________
2. Are you a native Chinese speaker? Yes/No
3. What setting do you teach Chinese in? (middle school, high school, college, etc)
4. How often do you use role-play in the classroom? ________________
   (3+ times a week, 1-2 times a week, a few times a month, once a month, rarely, never)
5. (a) During role-plays do you usually participate or observe? ________________
5. (b) Why? ___________________________________________________________
6. When/how do you usually give feedback? (during the roleplay, afterwards, one-on one, whole class, etc)
   ______________________________________________________________________
7. (a) When doing role-plays, how many students are usually in each group?
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5-7
   - 8+
7. (b) Why do you usually use role-plays of this size?
   ______________________________________________________________________
8. What type of role-plays (if any) do you usually run?
   ______________________________________________________________________
9. What are the biggest challenges to running role-plays? Do these influence how often you use role-play?
   ______________________________________________________________________
10. What do you believe are the benefits (if any) of role-play for students?
    ______________________________________________________________________
11. Any other comments/thoughts on role-play?
    ______________________________________________________________________

角色扮演调查 – 中文

1. 你教中文教了多久了？________________________
2. 中文是不是你的母语？是 / 不是
3. 你在什么样的学校教中文？（小学，中学，高中，大学）____________________
4. 在你的课堂上你多久使用一次角色扮演？__________________
每个星期3次或3次以上、每个星期1-2次、每个月几次、每个月一次、很少、不用

5. (a) 角色扮演的时候你通常会参与其中还是在旁观察？______________________________
5.b – 为什么？______________________________

6. 你怎么给学生回馈？（当时・以后・一对一・全班一起・等等）

7. (a) 做角色扮演的时候，每组通常有一个学生?
    - 2
    - 3
    - 4
    - 5-7
    - 8+

7. (b) 为什么角色扮演时的人数是这些?
    ________________________________
    ________________________________

8. 你一般组织什么样的角色扮演?
    ________________________________
    ________________________________

9. 做角色扮演面临哪些困难？这些困难会不会影响角色扮演的效率？
    ________________________________
    ________________________________

10. 你觉得角色扮演对学生有什么帮助？
    ________________________________
    ________________________________

你还有没有关于角色扮演的其他的想法？
    ________________________________
    ________________________________
APPENDIX B

CRIMESCENE INVESTIGATION

Below is one of several fully designed lesson plans with all required materials for four unique large group role-plays including: a crime investigation, a marriage market, a shopping bazaar, and a travel role-play. These role-plays are intended to be used in the middle school, high school, and university Chinese classroom; they can also be adapted for other languages. Teachers are invited to not only take these lessons and use them in their curriculum, but also look to them as examples to be studied and used as a starting point for their own role-plays, designed for the particular needs of their students.

This role-play is well suited working with students on the past tense. It starts with the teacher introducing a crime scene. This can be done in real time or via a pre-taped video (a sample video can be found at www.youtube.com/watch?v=46G0-PuVNU0). Students will be shown a variety of clues at the crime scene that correspond to the vocabulary they have been learning lately. For example, if students have been learning about sports, the clues could include a tennis racket, a baseball, a swimsuit, and a pair of running shoes.

Afterwards, students will be divided into 2 groups, suspects and police officers. It is recommended that suspects be chosen in advance with their express consent. Each suspect will have a persona and alibi, police officers must interrogate all the suspects in order to determine who the guilty party is. Following the end of the role-play, all police officers are asked to write a short paragraph explaining who they think is guilty and why. Suspects can instead write a paragraph elaborating on their alibi and explaining why they are innocent. At the end, ask students to share their conclusions and the whole class can debate to decide who the criminal was.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedures</th>
<th>Time (minutes)</th>
<th>Materials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Introduce the crime scene (can be done live or via video). Afterwards, check for comprehension by asking students what the clues were</td>
<td>5-8</td>
<td>Clues or video of crime scene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Brainstorm with students what questions a police officer could ask (optional)</td>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>Suspect identity sheets, police question sheets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Divide students into roles (suspects and detectives). Ideally roles should be determined in advance, students that are more comfortable with speaking can play the part of suspects</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Model how police officers should question suspects. It is important to go slowly so all students understand their job. Make it clear that police officers should gather information to determine who the criminal is.</td>
<td>3-5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Have police officers question suspects. The teacher should participate as a police officer and/or suspect, switching between the roles to engage with as many students as possible.

6. As students finish questioning all the suspects, have them work alone or in pairs to decide who the guilty person is. They then should write a statement explaining their reasoning (students more comfortable with writing can write a full paragraph, those less comfortable can write separate sentences).

7. Debrief as a class. Some possibilities are to have the class vote on who the guilty person is, read their statements, go over common mistakes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crime Investigation Materials:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Suspect sheets (each suspect should be assigned 1 identity from below)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Suspect 1:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Last week you were buying a new computer. It cost $352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- You like to drink tea. You also like to dance, sing, and hang out with friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- You never study Chinese, but your Chinese is good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Last night you went to your friends house to watch TV. You went there at 4:50pm and got back home at 2am.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Yesterday you were wearing jeans, a sweater, and a coat. (make up sizes/prices/colors if they ask)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Suspect 2:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Last week you were hanging out with friends, getting dinner together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- You like to cook and play basketball with your older sister.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Yesterday you were wearing a shirt ($60, blue, large), pants ($100, purple, long), shoes ($150, orange, large 加大 jiā dà)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- You often study Chinese with friends. Although you speak very well, you don’t write very well. (虽然我说得很好可是我写字写得不好)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Last night you went to the library, but not to study. You went there to meet friends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Suspect 3:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Last week you were studying for a Chinese test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- You like to draw (huà huà). You also like to go to music concerts. When you go you sing. Everyone hates you. (我喜欢去音乐会。去的时候我会唱歌)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Yesterday you were wearing a dress ($652, yellow, medium)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Your Chinese is pretty good (挺好的). You often go to the teacher’s office to practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Last night you went shopping! You bought... (make up 3-4 things)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Suspect 4</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Last week you were buying clothes. Two skirts ($45 – purple and blue - small), three tshirts ($115 – red, blue, gray - medium), a pair of pants ($48, orange, medium).
- You like to dance while singing (一边跳舞一边唱歌给)
- Yesterday you were wearing a coat ($49, black, large)
- Your Chinese is not very good. Normally you study after class.
- Last night you did something really cool (make something up)

Suspect 5
- Last week you were doing homework. All day. All night. Too much homework.
- You like to watch tv and movies. Your favorite movie is Powerpuff Girls the Musical.
- Yesterday you were wearing a hat ($60, red), pants ($32, blue, long)
- Your Chinese is good, but you don’t like to study Chinese.
- Last night you went to China. You just got back so you’re tired.

Suspect 6
- Last week you were singing with friends. You want to be on America’s Got Talent.
- You like to buy things with your credit card.
- Yesterday you were wearing shorts (small, pink, $2), shirt (small, pink, $5)
- Although you love to study Chinese, you never test well. You should review more.
- Last night you had classes for your major. You also had Chinese classes. You have way too many classes.

Suspect 7
- Last week you were at a tea shop with your significant other. You drank eight cups of tea and five bottles of beer.
- You like to buy purple things.
- Yesterday you were wearing clothing. $999.
- Your chinese level: What’s Chinese?
- Last night you called home. You talked to your mom about what you should do with your life. Now you’re very sad.

**Police Officer worksheet (here are the questions officers should ask to each suspect):**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>名字</th>
<th>你上个星期做了什么了?</th>
<th>你昨天晚上在哪里? (with whom, what did they do)</th>
<th>What were they wearing? (sizes, colors, prices)</th>
<th>Ask about their hobbies</th>
<th>Ask about their Chinese (is it good, how often do they study, etc)</th>
<th>Other information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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APPENDIX C

MARRIAGE MARKET

This role-play simulates a marriage market in China. It is well suited to teaching descriptions, talking about family, and starting a dialogue with students on cultural difference with regards to dating. As students may not familiar with this concept, start by showing them a picture of a Chinese marriage market (below). Have them guess what it is, eventually leading them to the correct answer.

In this role-play each student should imagine they are a parent, seeking a partner for their child. They should first write an “advertisement” for their child. Encourage students to be creative and use vocabulary they have learned recently. For example, if a recent unit was on hobbies, then students should be sure to list the hobbies of their “child”. Once everyone is done act out a marriage market where they try to find the best match for their child. As with any activity involving dating norms, it is important to be sensitive to the needs of LGBT students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedures</th>
<th>Time (minutes)</th>
<th>Materials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Show students a picture of a marriage market. Have students guess what is happening, eventually explain it is a marriage market.</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>Picture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Explain that today students will be acting out their own marriage market. Give them time to create an advertisement for their “child/grandchild” (this can be done alone or in pairs)</td>
<td>10 (more if advertisements are done entirely in Chinese)</td>
<td>paper/pencils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Hold a marriage market, have students walk around and find a match for their child/grandchild.</td>
<td>10-20 (depending on student interest/speed this portion can be run more than once)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Afterwards debrief. It is a great opportunity to discuss cultural dating norms such as the role of parents in dating.</td>
<td>5-10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX D

SHOPPING BAZAAR

This role-play is designed to give students practice buying, selling, and bargaining. Have students assigned to roles as either buyer or shop owner. All buyers should receive a list of things they are required to find (sample list below). They should also be provided with a certain amount of paper money. Shop owners start with a wide variety of products, their goal is to make as much money as possible. The teacher can bring in realia to make the experience more genuine, or pictures of the items for convenience.

For this activity to be successful, students should be encouraged to bargain as much as possible to save money. In addition, the items shoppers are required to acquire can be varied according to their Chinese abilities (e.g. more advanced students can be told to buy specific colors or sizes of certain items, while students who need more support can be given easier tasks like, “Buy 5 different items”). This activity can also be modified to review clothing, colors and/or sizes by requiring students to buy certain sizes/colors of clothing. Note that the activity does not necessarily have to be a clothing market, that is simply one option.

Sample Shopping Lists:

| 1 blue tshirt  | 2 pairs of shoes | 1 pair of dress shoes | 1 hat |
| 1 red tshirt   | 5 tshirts (all different colors) | 1 hat | 1 pair of shoes |
| 1 purple tshirt| 3 jeans         | 2 hoodies         | 2 jackets |
| 1 pair of shoes|                 | 1 sweater    | 1 red tshirt |
| 1 pair of jeans|                 | 3 tshirts (different colors) | 1 pair of pants |
| 2 button down shirts | 2 pairs of shoes | 2 pairs of pants | 3 pairs of shorts |
| 2 pairs of shoes |

| 1 pairs of jeans | 4 pairs of shorts | 1 polo shirt | 15 articles of clothing |
| 1 dress pants | 1 pair of jeans | 1 black shirt | |
| 2 hoodies | 1 pair of sweatpants | 1 black tshirt | |
| 4 button down shirts | 1 pair of sneakers | 1 black pair of jeans | |
| 1 jacket | 1 purple tshirt | 1 black pair of shoes | |
|         | 2 green tshirts | 1 black hoodie | |
|         |                 | 1 black jacket | |
|         |                 | 1 purple tshirt | |
| 1 blue button down shirt | 6 tshirts | 12 articles of clothing, all different colors | 1 hat |
| 1 blue tshirt | 4 pairs of pants | 2 pairs of shoes | 2 pairs of jeans |
| 2 pairs of blue shorts | 2 jackets | 2 blue button down shirts |
| 1 blue hoodie | | 1 polo shirt |
| 1 purple shirt | | 1 orange tshirt |
| 6 other articles of clothing | | 2 blue tshirts |
| 12 articles of clothing, all different colors | | 1 green tshirt |

**Fake Money:**

![Fake Money Images]
APPENDIX E

TRAVEL ROLE-PLAY

Note: none of the materials for the travel role-play were developed by me. They were all observed and collected at Sen Lin Hu.

This role-play has students play the role of either travel agents or travelers, it gives participants lots of practice with the scenario of buying/selling tickets as well as planning a trip. The travelers’ goal is to buy a series of plane tickets letting them travel all the way around the world, starting and ending in Japan. For example, they could buy a ticket from Tokyo to LA, LA to Paris, Paris to Madagascar, and finally from Madagascar back to Tokyo. The task is complicated however by the information gap. They must buy the plane tickets from three separate travel agencies, must ask the travel agents for all flight information, bargain for flights, and are limited to $2200. The following information was distributed to travel agents and travelers:

**Traveler information sheet:**
Your task is to fly **around the world** as fast as you can. Whoever completes the task first is the winner. The team who completes it most cheaply is also the winner.
You buy your plane tickets from the three travel agencies. No single agency has all the tickets you need, so you will have to shop around and compare.
You have $2200. When buying tickets, you can bargain for cheaper prices with the travel agents.
When your money is used up, you can’t buy any more tickets. If you think you’ve bought the wrong ticket, you can always return it for a full refund.
You start in Japan, either Dong1jing1 (Tokyo) or Da4ban3 (Osaka). You can choose where to start, and where to finish. It doesn’t matter which city you go from and to: you can go from Tokyo to Tokyo, Osaka to Tokyo, Osaka to Osaka, or Tokyo to Osaka.
You need to fly in an easterly direction. Make sure that the date and time of the tickets match up: you can’t go into Los Angeles at 11:00 am and leave at 10:00 am. You can’t arrive in Baghdad on January 3 and leave on January 2.
No buses, trains, or boats. You can’t arrive in London and leave from Paris, for example.

**Travel agent information sheet:**
You are a **travel agent**. Your task is to sell tickets to travelers and make as much money as possible. There are three different travel agencies in the game.
You have a list of tickets. You can only sell tickets from your list, but you can sell as many of each as you want. If you have a flight departing from San Francisco and arriving in New York, for example, you can sell that ticket to as many people as you want. If you have no tickets departing from Berlin, though, you cannot sell a ticket from Berlin.
The schedule and the prices listed are your professional secrets. Do not show them to the travelers. The cost of each ticket is written on your schedule. You must sell your tickets for
more than that price, or you do not make any profit. For example, if a ticket is listed as costing $400 and you sell it for $450, you make $50 profit (profit = selling price - cost).

When someone buys a ticket, write out the ticket on the slips provided. Keep a list of tickets you have sold and how much profit you made on each one. In the end, the travel agency that makes the most profit is the winner.

一路顺风！

Ticket- this is the form that travel agents use to sell tickets:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>飞机票</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>姓名：</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>出发地：</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>出发日期：</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>出发时间：</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>目的地：</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>到达日期：</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>到达时间：</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>价钱：</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Flight information- this is the information of all the flights, their destinations, departures, times, dates, and price. Each of the three travel agencies has their own unique list of flights they can sell:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>一路旅行社</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>出发地</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>东京</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>大阪</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>波哥大</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>丹佛</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>芝加哥</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>出发地</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>东京</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

顺风旅行社
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Origin</th>
<th>Destination</th>
<th>Date 1</th>
<th>Time 1</th>
<th>Date 2</th>
<th>Time 2</th>
<th>Fare</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tokyo</td>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>20:00</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>09:10</td>
<td>$600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denver</td>
<td>Frankfurt</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>11:33</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>08:30</td>
<td>$450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miami</td>
<td>Paris</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>04:00</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>14:00</td>
<td>$350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bogota</td>
<td>Athens</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>13:00</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>23:30</td>
<td>$500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>05:00</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>13:00</td>
<td>$200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>Athens</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>17:30</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>03:45</td>
<td>$250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>Rome</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>01:00</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>07:15</td>
<td>$200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athens</td>
<td>Baghdad</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>07:30</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>12:35</td>
<td>$150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lagos</td>
<td>Athens</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>02:10</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>06:40</td>
<td>$300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lagos</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>18:00</td>
<td>1/3</td>
<td>10:00</td>
<td>$550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>14:00</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>21:00</td>
<td>$250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>14:10</td>
<td>1/3</td>
<td>04:10</td>
<td>$450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riyadh</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>14:00</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>22:10</td>
<td>$400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riyadh</td>
<td>Doha</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>19:55</td>
<td>1/3</td>
<td>11:05</td>
<td>$200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Riyadh</td>
<td>Doha</td>
<td>1/3</td>
<td>17:50</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>23:00</td>
<td>$250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangkok</td>
<td>Bangkok</td>
<td>1/3</td>
<td>08:00</td>
<td>1/3</td>
<td>12:00</td>
<td>$150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>出发地</td>
<td>目的地</td>
<td>出发日期</td>
<td>出发时间</td>
<td>到达日期</td>
<td>到达时间</td>
<td>价钱</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>孟买</td>
<td>香港</td>
<td>1/3</td>
<td>07:30</td>
<td>1/3</td>
<td>13:30</td>
<td>$100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>北京</td>
<td>东京</td>
<td>1/3</td>
<td>12:15</td>
<td>1/3</td>
<td>19:10</td>
<td>$100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>台北</td>
<td>东京</td>
<td>1/3</td>
<td>02:35</td>
<td>1/3</td>
<td>07:50</td>
<td>$450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>东京</td>
<td>丹佛</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>07:30</td>
<td>1/3</td>
<td>13:30</td>
<td>$100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>东京</td>
<td>旧金山</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>13:30</td>
<td>1/3</td>
<td>19:10</td>
<td>$100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>东京</td>
<td>丹佛</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>19:00</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>09:00</td>
<td>$600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>东京</td>
<td>旧金山</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>02:00</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>14:00</td>
<td>$400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>东京</td>
<td>旧金山</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>18:30</td>
<td>1/3</td>
<td>06:30</td>
<td>$750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>东京</td>
<td>波哥大</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>20:10</td>
<td>1/3</td>
<td>11:05</td>
<td>$550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>丹佛</td>
<td>芝加哥</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>12:05</td>
<td>1/3</td>
<td>14:30</td>
<td>$150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>洛杉矶</td>
<td>迈亚密</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>15:30</td>
<td>1/3</td>
<td>00:25</td>
<td>$300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>洛杉矶</td>
<td>波哥大</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>11:10</td>
<td>1/3</td>
<td>01:30</td>
<td>$350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>洛杉矶</td>
<td>芝加哥</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>15:30</td>
<td>1/3</td>
<td>19:30</td>
<td>$100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>纽约</td>
<td>巴黎</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>04:00</td>
<td>1/3</td>
<td>07:50</td>
<td>$450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>雅典</td>
<td>利雅得</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>09:00</td>
<td>1/3</td>
<td>04:10</td>
<td>$200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

青年旅行社
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<th>Date 1</th>
<th>Time 1</th>
<th>Date 2</th>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Map: The map shows all of the cities that participants are able to buy plane tickets to.
环游世界！
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