

Teaching Chinese to Indian Students: An Understanding (教印度学生学汉语：一些认识)

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Abstract: The paper highlights the difficulties of learning Chinese language for Indian students with diverse linguistic backgrounds, while reemphasizing the point that Chinese language in itself is one of the toughest languages, especially in India where it has to be learned through another foreign language i.e. English. The paper hypothesizes that multilingual speakers of any community faces greater problems of learning new languages when the medium of teaching is not their mother tongue and when there is lack of target language environment with proper infrastructure. The study is based on a questionnaire circulated among 79 students between the age group of 18 to 30 learning Chinese as a major. Respondents belong to various regional and linguistic backgrounds, but residing and learning Chinese in Delhi. In addition, speech recording analysis and answer scripts analysis is done to identify practical problems faced by the students of Jawaharlal Nehru University. The study excludes those who acquired the language more than three years ago.

摘要：印度学生虽然有多种语言的背景，可是学汉语的时候有不少困难。汉语本身就是难以掌握的语言，不过，对印度学生来说，通过一个外语，即英语，掌握汉语是最大的难点。本论文认为，会说多种语言的群体如果不用母语来学外语而且也没有目的语言的环境，就难以掌握外语。本论文用尼赫鲁大学 79 个学生的实际考察来作分析。结果发现间接方法来教汉语是学生掌握不了汉语的最大原因。印度大学的汉语教材陈旧，当地教师的缺乏，以及缺少当地语言环境是其他的困境。先进技术的使用可以消除一些困难。

Keywords: Indian students, Chinese language learning, non-native language and multilingual environment, learning difficulties

关键词：印度学生，汉语学习，非母语多语言环境，学习难点

1. Introduction

Acquiring Chinese language skills in India is at its peak. Young school graduates as well as professionals are all trying to cash in on improved India-China relations. However, the centers for learning are not keeping pace with the amplified demand. The long established institutions are the prime locations for well formulated and intense Chinese learning courses, though some private and other grant-in-aid institutes have sprung up to fill the gap. The main hindrance to basic and advanced Chinese language skills, apart from the lack of highly qualified language teachers and native speakers, is the diversity of students and their demands. This paper highlights the difficulties of learning Chinese language for Indian students with diverse linguistic backgrounds, while reemphasizing the point that Chinese language in itself is one of the toughest languages to master, especially in India where it has to be learned through another foreign language i.e. English.¹ The paper hypothesizes that multilingual speaker of any community faces greater problems of learning new languages when the medium of teaching is not their mother tongue and when there is lack of target language environment with proper infrastructure.

To date, in India, there has been no field study to analyze and assess the problems of learning Chinese language, though there have been a few studies to understand the state of Chinese language and Chinese studies in a holistic manner.² Although some studies dwell on the challenges and problems of teaching Chinese language in India, they fall short of incorporating students' perspectives in their analysis as there is lack of fine grained qualitative data from students' perspective. This paper is an attempt to present a new perspective wherein my personal teaching and learning experience clubbed with students' response to a questionnaire forms the basis for an overall understanding of teaching Chinese language to multilingual speakers in India.

2. Methodology

The study uses a questionnaire (See Appendix II) circulated among 79 students learning Chinese belonging to varied regional and linguistic backgrounds but residing and learning Chinese language in Delhi. The survey basically includes graduate and post-graduate students of Chinese language (having Chinese as their major) between the age group of 18 to 30 (85% aged 18-24, 13% 25-30, and 2% above 30, See Chart 1). In addition, out of the total number of respondents, 18 Basic and Intermediate level students

¹ English language in this paper is regarded as a foreign language, though it is the official language in India. The reason being, among the members of larger Indian community, although English is a medium of formal interactions, it is still not the communicative language among a majority of Indians who prefer to use their local language/dialect. This results in poor, and at times very poor, level of competency. The subjects used in this paper as well do not possess high degree of proficiency and understanding of English level though most are college level educated students.

² See H.P. Ray (2004), Tan Chung (1999), Zhao Shouhui (1996).

along with 8 Advance level students were selected for recording speech while speaking Chinese language. Varied sounds are given to them on the basis of problems highlighted in response to the questionnaire and speech recordings analyzed to identify practical problems in pronunciation (See Chart 4). The respondents for speech recording are selected on the basis of representation of different regions of India ensuring a diversity of language backgrounds, though all belong to Jawaharlal Nehru University for which they cleared an entrance exam in English. In addition, few answer scripts of previous four years of the students belonging to graduate and under-graduate level of Jawaharlal Nehru University are used to analyze the practical problems of language learning, relating it with the responses to the questionnaire to form a cross corroboration. The entire methodology process does not include students who have acquired the language more than three years ago, but focus on those who form a part of the current high tide, whereby the motivation of learning Chinese to easily get jobs. The limitation of the survey is its limited area, though the representation is remarkable except in case of sound recordings.

3. Broader Understanding

Teaching of Chinese language in India began back in 1918 in Calcutta University, West Bengal. Due to shortage of students, the course had to be abandoned. Later, in 1937 with the setting up of Cheena-Bhavana (中国学院) in Viswa Bharti University also located in West Bengal, Chinese language teaching was formally institutionalized.³ This was a joint effort of Gurudeva Rabindranath Tagore and Prof. Tan Yunshan. The setting up of Cheena-Bhavana was a “pledge to maintain the intercourse of culture and friendship” between the two nations and its people.⁴ The prime objective envisaged by Prof Tan Yunshan was also to amalgamate the feelings of the people of both countries and to create peace among the nations. The Sino-Indian Cultural Society was as a major actor in promoting this vision. Later by the end of 1960s, although Delhi University and Jawaharlal Nehru University, now the prime locations of teaching Chinese besides Viswa Bharti University, started Chinese language courses, the learning of Chinese language in India was put on a backburner due to the downturn in China-India relations. With the normalization process since 90s, interest in Chinese language in India has been revived with greater thrust and vigour.

At present, there are a host of Universities and Institutes, which offer Chinese language courses as Certificate, Diploma or Degree courses in India. However, the major obstacle lies in the production of textbooks that can cater to the real needs of Indian students. This is in addition to the bottleneck of having adequate native teachers and a sound language environment. Quantitative feedback from students supporting the contention that lack of native speaking teachers is a significant problem. The survey shows, 53% of the respondents feel that the environment to teach Chinese in India has to be improved and 48% feel that their course books need to be improved (See Chart 2). The demand for a native Chinese teacher is resonating among both the teaching as well as

³ Zhao Shouhui, p. 106.

⁴ Rabindranath Tagore, Address at the Opening Ceremony of Visva-Bharati Cheena Bhavana, April 14, 1937 India and China cited in Tan Chung, *In the Footsteps of Xuanzang: Tan Yun-shan and India*, p. 29.

learning community. The survey reflects that 33% of the students seem to think that having a native teacher would have been better, while 25% of others are assertive to say that native Chinese teacher is definitely better to teach a foreign language. There are 28% more who think that probably a native Chinese teacher is better than local teacher. The maximum number of respondents, accounting for 39% of the total, relate the need for native Chinese teacher for creating a better environment of teaching Chinese, while 30% relate it for creating a better cultural environment and 29% for having a near perfect style of speech (See Chart 3). There were also individual respondents who believe that native Chinese teacher is better at higher levels and is good for boosting confidence level of students in speaking the language. A strong point made by a respondent is also that the native Chinese teacher is good only if he/she knows proper ways of teaching.

The discourse of having adequate and well-qualified teachers to teach Chinese in India is a focal point of building a strong base of Chinese language learning in India. Every year hundreds of students pass out as graduates in the language, but there is a whole dilemma of acquiring basic fluency of speech and knowledge, but lack of proficiency and accuracy. This is also for the reason that the standards for grading individual proficiency are not based on internationally acknowledged HSK (汉语水平考试 Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi) tests; meaning to date Indian education system does not accredit HSK evaluation system. Hence, the proficiencies acquired for Chinese language in India varies according to the institutes and universities, rather than any binding standardized system. This hinders the production of high caliber teachers at one level, and overall requirement of abilities of students at other.

4. Regional Variations and Articulation Issues

India is a unique multilingual and diverse society wherein a person from the northern belt finds the language spoken by the southerners as a foreign language and vice-versa. Same is the case among other parts of India. Having 452 languages including 22 official scheduled languages⁵ and hundreds of dialects, people are born with a knack of acquiring different languages and dialects. In particular, English language though being a foreign language to this land, has been incorporated as one of the official languages in the Indian constitution. This has its pros and cons for people acquiring other foreign languages. The major advantage is that since childhood children are accustomed to acquiring different scripts, develop the ability to moderate speech, and memorize various language vocabularies. However, the worst drawback of such learning pedagogy is the limitation to a deeper understanding of the target language as the medium of teaching, in this case English, in itself is incomprehensible. This poses a grave concern for the future of high caliber Sinologists in India.

The survey incorporated 30% of students belonging to North India, 3% belonging to South India, 56% from East India, 3% from West India, and another 3% from Central parts of India along with five foreigners (accounting for 6%) including one Chinese

⁵ “Languages of India”, Ethnologue.

native born and brought up in India (See Chart 1). The reason for overwhelming majority of students belonging to Eastern part of India is attributed to: (a) Chinese language teaching in India started from Eastern part of India; (b) China-India links due to Buddhism relates in Eastern India; (c) Jawaharlal Nehru University in particular, from where majority of the respondents are selected, encourages students from all backward and lower strata of the society to avail higher education. This, however, does not influence the overall outcome of the result as the heterogeneity of the respondents is maintained and they are the representative group of learning Chinese language in India.

The mother tongue of 59% of the respondents is Hindi, while 41% has other languages as their mother tongue and only one (Overseas Chinese) having English as her mother tongue. In addition to this, 57% of the respondents know one, two or three Indian languages other than their mother tongue, while 27% of them at least know one foreign language besides English (See Chart 1). Although nurtured under such multilingual backgrounds, yet the majority of the respondents tilt towards having a combination of English and their mother tongue as a medium of teaching Chinese. English is an official medium of teaching in India for all levels of courses after primary education. It is also recognized as one of the more comprehensible languages for students belonging to varied linguistic backgrounds. Although the level of English language of students coming to JNU on an overall is not very high, yet 29% of the respondents feel that English can remain as the main medium of teaching. There are also 14% of those who feel that a combination of English and Chinese can be applied for an improvement of the target language; however, there are only 6% who agree to Chinese language as a direct medium of teaching the target language, emphasizing the point that it should apply at higher levels of language learning (See Chart 2).

5. Pronunciation Problems

Learning accurate ways of pronouncing the four tones of Chinese language remains a challenge for Indian learners even at a very advance stage of learning process. With regard to the articulation of sounds, a major difficulty lies in learning “ü” sound at the initial stages. However, the survey highlights the fact that a greater issue lies with articulating sounds such as “Zi”, “Ci”, “Ze”, “Ce”, “Zhi”, “Chi,” “S”, “Sh”, “Re”, “Ri”, “P”, “F”. The sound recording of the learners reflect the practical problems. Out of the total subjects whose voices are recorded, half have their mother tongue as Hindi, while the other half have other regional languages as their mother tongue. This applies to the basic and intermediate level learners as well as to the advance learners. The following practical problems are observed:

5.1 Unable to Differentiate an/ang

The sound analysis of basic and intermediate level learners show that 57% learners belonging to Eastern parts of India and 29% belonging to Northern parts of India cannot accurately differentiate the articulation of “an” and “ang” sounds (See Chart 5). However, this problem is rectified by the time they reach advance levels of learning.

5.2 Unable to Differentiate en/eng

The sound analysis of basic and intermediate level learners show that 43% learners belonging to Eastern parts of India along with 14% belonging to Northern parts of India cannot accurately differentiate the articulation of “en” and “eng” sounds (See Chart 5). However, this problem is also rectified by the time they reach advance levels of learning.

5.3 Unable to Differentiate Ze/Ce

The sound analysis of basic and intermediate level learners show that 43% learners belonging to Eastern parts of India and 14% belonging to Northern parts of India cannot accurately differentiate the articulation of “Ze” and “Ce” sounds; while 100% of Southerners face this difficulty (See Chart 5) . However, this problem also does not pose major issue at advance levels of learning.

5.4 Unable to Differentiate Zi/Ze

The sound analysis of basic and intermediate level learners show that 57% learners belonging to Eastern parts of India and 57% belonging to Northern parts of India cannot accurately differentiate the articulation of “Zi” and “Ze” sounds; while 100% of learners from Central, Western and Southern parts of India find it difficult to articulate. Even at the advance levels, 50% of learners from Northern parts and 25% from Eastern parts of India continue to have problems differentiating these sounds (See Chart 5).

5.5 Unable to Differentiate Zi/Ci

The sound analysis of basic and intermediate level learners show that 57% learners belonging to Eastern parts of India and 57% belonging to Northern parts of India cannot accurately differentiate the articulation of “Zi” and “Ci” sounds; while 100% of learners from Central and Western parts of India along with 50% from Southern find it difficult to articulate. Even at the advance levels, 50% of learners from Northern parts and 25% from Eastern parts of India continue to have problems differentiating these sounds (See Chart 5).

5.6 Unable to Differentiate Zhi/Chi

The sound analysis of basic and intermediate level learners show that 57% learners belonging to Eastern parts of India and 86% belonging to Northern parts of India cannot accurately differentiate the articulation of “Zhi” and “Chi” sounds; while 100% of learners from Central and Southern parts of India find it difficult to articulate. Even at the advance levels, 75% of learners from Eastern parts of India continue to have problems differentiating these sounds (See Chart 5).

5.7 Unable to Differentiate Re/Ri

The sound analysis of basic and intermediate level learners show that 14% learners belonging to Eastern parts of India and 29% belonging to Northern parts of India cannot accurately differentiate the articulation of “Re” and “Ri” sounds; while 100% of learners from Central and Southern parts of India find it difficult to articulate (See Chart 5). At the advance levels, however, half of the learners from Eastern and Northern parts of India continue to have problems differentiating these sounds.

5.8 Unable to Differentiate Pa/Fa

The sound analysis of basic and intermediate level learners show that 14% learners belonging each to Eastern parts and Northern parts of India along with 100% from Western and Central parts of India cannot accurately differentiate the articulation of “Pa” and “Fa” sounds. For 50% of those belong to Northern parts of India, the problem remains even at the advance level (See Chart 5).

5.9 Unable to Differentiate Ji/Qi

The sound analysis of basic and intermediate level learners show that 100% learners belonging Central parts of India cannot accurately differentiate the articulation of “Ji” and “Qi” sounds; while 50% of those belong to Northern parts of India have this problem even at the advance level (See Chart 5).

Other sound differentiation of u/iu, Ba/Pa, Di/Ti, Ji/Xi, Xi/Qi, Za/Ca, Zha/Cha, Xu/Yu are like the teething problems, but there are a few who face severe problems of differentiating Sa/Shu. 50% of those belonging to Northern parts of India have this problem even at advance level of learning (See Chart 5). Interestingly, most of the learners at advance levels do not show any of the sound differentiation and articulation problems when they have been trained in China for a year, implying that in a sound environment most of the problems are rectified.

6. Functional Challenges

Grammar of a language defines the rules and ways in which a properly constructed sentence can be used. Chinese grammar is largely different from the grammar of many of the Indian languages and hence, poses a different set of perceptual problems for many Indian learners. The survey found that learners feel they have a variety of problems, some of which are common with foreign learners of Chinese language. These range from “use of phrases”, “use of compliments of direction”, “placement of adjective and nouns”, “word order”, “active and passive voice sentences” to “use of measure words”, “‘ba’ and ‘le’ constructions” etc. However, there is no denial of the fact that many of these problems in India stem not from the basic difficulty of Chinese language per se, but from the conceptions of grammar based on English language or their Regional

language (i.e. their Mother tongue). Hence, the sentences students make are literal translation of English or regional language structure, rather than having any understanding of Chinese structure, style, manner of speech. Few examples from intermediate and advance learners' examination copies are highlighted below to present the understanding of Indian learners.

6.1 English Grammar as a Concept

- | | |
|----------------|-------------------------------|
| (i) 我明白了全事情。 | (I understood everything) |
| (ii) 我想学习在屋里。 | (I want to study in my room) |
| (iii) 我也要跟她去。 | (I also want to go with her) |
| (iv) 今天我起床七点钟。 | (Today I got up at 7 O'clock) |

6.2 Regional Grammar as a Concept

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| (i) 以后, 他没有别人说。 | (After that he did not tell anyone) |
| (ii) 他的心里没有东西。 | (He had nothing in his heart) |
| (iii) 我的生活也发生得多。 | (Even in my life many things happened) |

Problems also arise from the lack of deeper understanding of certain grammatical constructions. Below are some such examples.

6.2.1 The use of “dou” (都)

Many times students relate the meaning of “dou” to all or everything. This kind of perception carries on even at advance stages of learning. Therefore, they create sentences like:

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| (i) 我有什么困难都帮我。 | (No matter what problem I have, everyone will help me) |
| (ii) 我不能讲都东西。 | (I cannot tell everything) |

6.2.2 The use of “le” (了)

Even at advance level of learning Chinese, the use of “le” remains a big headache. The only understanding that gets strongly embedded in their minds is the use of “le” for making a past tense of the sentence. The sentences thus formed are:

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| (i) 毛泽东是第一个中华人民共和国主席了。 | (Mao Zedong was the first President of the PRC) |
| (ii) 农民的生活很痛苦了。 | (Life of peasants were very tough) |

6.2.3 The use of “duo” (多)

For many beginners “duo” fits all sense of “many”. Hence, they produce sentences like:

- (i) 多人民来看。(Many people come to see)

Of course, there are many other problems which arise due to lack of deeper understanding of Chinese language such as:

- (i) Not able to place “nian” (年), or “shi” (市), or “sheng” (生) whenever a year or city or province etc. is mentioned.
- (ii) Unable to understand the reduplicated use of similar meaning words to emphasize the sentence like “jiaqiang” (加强), “zengqiang” (增强) etc.
- (iii) The use “wei le” (为了) for every translation of English sentence which contains the word “for”.
- (iv) The indiscriminate use of suffix “men” (们) for making plural words like 学生们.
- (v) Unable to distinguish the use of “hua” (化) and “xing” (性).
- (vi) Unable to distinguish the use of similar meaning words like “biancheng” (变成) and “gaicheng” (改成) both meaning “to become”; “jinxing” (进行) and “juxing” (举行) both meaning “to hold” etc.

7. Infrastructural Problems and Motivational Factors

Apart from the influence of their Regional languages or the influence of English in the learning process, problems also arise to the lack of infrastructure facilities including quality of teachers, audio-visual labs, multimedia labs, and adequate localized textbooks. There has been no major stress on learning Chinese grammar in India. Although the basic and intermediate level books have elaborate grammatical explanations and exercises after the main text, but very little practical emphasis is laid on making the students work for it. At times, students also claim that faculty members are themselves not very clear of certain structures and usages. This leaves a major space for learners to engage in active self-learning for higher standards of understanding. In fact, students who have been to China for a year find themselves capable of dealing with a majority of such mistakes.

One of the major obstacles of proficient and high caliber sociolinguists in India is the aim with which students opt for foreign languages in India. Very few have a sincere desire to do in-depth research on the target language. The high tide in demand for learning a foreign language is marked by the fact that job prospects, which have declined in other fields, have gained accelerated momentum in high money-making temporary jobs relating to foreign languages. This applies to the amplified demand for learning

Chinese language as well. 44% of the respondents chose Chinese for the job prospects linked to it; while 34% found Chinese language as a new interesting subject to learn. There were 6% who went along the lines of the advice given by their friends and 4% who simply wanted to acquire a degree or certificate. Individual respondents also cited reasons as “interest in learning foreign languages” and “a requirement due to their business links with China”. It is thus that having an intermediate level of Chinese language is adequate for practical needs of the individuals. Unless there is a strong mechanism to motivate the students, the sincerity of learning does not get a boost, which is also reflected in the level one attains.

The survey included 56% of those who have intermediate level of Chinese language, while 28% have basic level and 16% have advance level. These levels are imparted on a daily basis with a majority (85%) having two to four hours of language classes every day. At the basic level, text books with audio-visual tools are used, while the textual base expands at intermediate levels. Most teaching/learning is dependent on textbook and on some basic audio. Even though audio-visual tools are a part of the curriculum, except basic audio listening, other tools such as multimedia and visual classes for movies/documentaries/serials do not have functional usage in the present Indian context. This greatly hinders the contextual learning of the students.

7.1 Self-learning as a strong tool

Self-learning to a great level helps improve the levels of Chinese, but the hours spend on self-learning are also significant. Besides, during the self-learning process, it is very important to find out what were the motivations of self-learning. A vast number of respondents (43%) claim to have two-to-four hours of self-learning in a day to improve their language skills. There are 25% of those who do self-learning for four-to-six hours, 24% do for one-to-two hours, and 8% engage in six-to-eight hours of self-learning (See Chart 6). Overlooking the exaggerated/modest figures projected by some due to a questionnaire form required by their teacher to be filled, it is not wrong to posit that on an average three-to-four hours a day is what students devote to self-learning. However, the crucial aspect lies in what is the focus of self-learning. In this regard many respondents have opted for multiple choices, with the greater number (51%) putting their energies to preparing for the next day class along with a remarkable number (28%) revising the things taught in the class. This leaves a handful of those (9%) who learn Chinese language beyond classroom focus and a visibly low (6%) interested in reading on China. Examination fear in our system is so embedded that the focus of all learning activities revolves around attaining higher grades. Though there are 15% of respondents who engage in an all-inclusive learning process, 10% of respondents relate learning the language to “preparation for examination”.

Self-learning coupled with in-and-out classroom environment generates or pacifies the interest in a language. In the present case, Chinese language students’ motivation is maintained even though the environment for learning the language is not adequate. 81% of the respondents feel that Chinese is an interesting language though it is not very easy to learn. 11% feel it is a very tough language, while 6% feel it is more

difficult than learning English language (See Chart 7). Tones form the root problem of learning Chinese language, as none of the Indian languages are tonal languages. 35% of the respondents find difficulty in attaining proficiency in tones, which is the base of Chinese language aptitude. 22% respondents seem to be handicapped due to writing abilities of characters, while 25% feel the ease in writing characters (See Chart 7). However my practical experience says, even if many speakers of Chinese language in India are able to attain some intermediate levels, their ability to write with correct Chinese characters lags far behind. There are 18% respondents who feel Chinese language is difficult in all aspects vis-à-vis character writing, tones, grammar, pronunciation of sounds etc.

7.2 Internet as a medium of Self-learning

In the paucity of Chinese source materials in libraries as well as limited availability of books in Chinese, an increasing number have found Internet quite useful tool for self-learning. 61% of the respondents access internet sites for improving their language abilities or chat with on-line Chinese friends to enhance communicative skills (See Chart 8). In India, online chat rooms and p-to-p internet telephone technology has filled in the gap of lack of proper language environment. The disadvantages of such informal course structure with lack of proper guidance are also taken care with the new technologies. Delivering lectures and providing course material to students without personal long hour interaction, which is evolving as a new system called “coursecasting” and creating a new “iClass revolution” through an online podcast, will sooner or later require Indian teachers to rethink the way teaching can be imparted.⁶ The issue will become significant when individual attention and personalized teaching will become the need of the hour.⁷ Every individual students needs differs and this individual based teaching looks into an individual’s interest and evaluates each as one case. This is as yet not taken care in the present system whereby 25-30 students form one class, although university guidelines have highlighted this issue.

In view of the above problems of learning Chinese language, 53% acknowledge that group discussion in Chinese should form the basic means of imparting language (See Chart 7). The view seems to emanate from the fact that contextual use of words and the usage of expressions in Chinese language are beyond the capabilities of mastering in classroom teaching. 14% of the respondents propose extensive use of audio-visuals along with 15% proposing enhanced cultural activities to understand the culture of China (See Chart 7). The cultural aspect vis-à-vis language learning has often been highlighted as an integral part of any language learning, but in case of Chinese, it acts as a tool of attaining proficiency in morphology and lexicons. There are only 18% who think textbook teaching is an apt pedagogy, while 5% advocate an all-inclusive teaching style (See Chart 7).

⁶ “iClass: A Professor In Your Pocket”.

⁷ iClass is an intelligent cognitive-based open learning system and environment, adapted to individual learners’ needs. The understanding of personalization in iClass is “personalization through and with empowerment”. For further information see, <http://www.iclass.info/iclass01.asp> (31-08-07).

8. Recommendation and Concluding Discussion

Chinese learning in India has major bottlenecks starting from inadequate basic teaching materials to lack of native teachers. However, a less emphasized problem lies in the diversity of linguistic backgrounds of Indian learners. Though multilingual speakers, these learners face a greater challenge due to the handicap of teaching not based on their mother tongue. In India, as Chinese language, a foreign language, is taught via another foreign language i.e. English, as the main medium, the ability to acquire in-depth knowledge of the target language becomes low. It is due to this that many respondents feel that a direct approach to teaching with native teachers is a better choice, provided native teachers use native languages as a medium of teaching. Otherwise, an environment of native culture along with native teachers should be created to fill in the gaps. Indian universities/institutes have been lackadaisical in initiating any MoUs with Chinese universities, which will propel student/faculty exchange programmes. This will not only expose the students to native environment, but will also provide regular orientation for the faculties. In addition, the enthusiasm to engage in deeper research of the language, literature and culture will be created among a larger number of students, which presently is in a state of intensive care.

Better infrastructure facilities are already in place in some places, which requires high caliber teachers to use it for classroom teaching. Technologies like video, multi-media labs etc. for learning of foreign languages should now be utilized for Chinese language in India with updated software, books and other related materials from China. If such technologies are used, problems of sounds like “Pa/Fa”, “Sa/Sha”, and “Re/Ri” can be easily rooted out at the very basic level itself, while the differences of proper articulation of sounds like “Zi/Ze”, “Zi/Ci”, “Zhi/Chi”, “Ji/Qi” could be better explained and corrective speech therapies adopted. For this, an individualistic approach is essential, whereby the sounds that do not exist in native language/mother tongue is given special emphasis at the very basic level.

The present books seem to be grossly inadequate with 48% of the respondents feeling that present course books need to be improved. In an environment where a large number of speakers have Hindi as their mother tongue or are having close linkages with Hindi language (in the present survey 59% had their mother tongue as Hindi and another 12% having a sound knowledge of Hindi language), textbooks and dictionaries designed in Hindi language, if not in all major regional languages, will be a very useful tool.

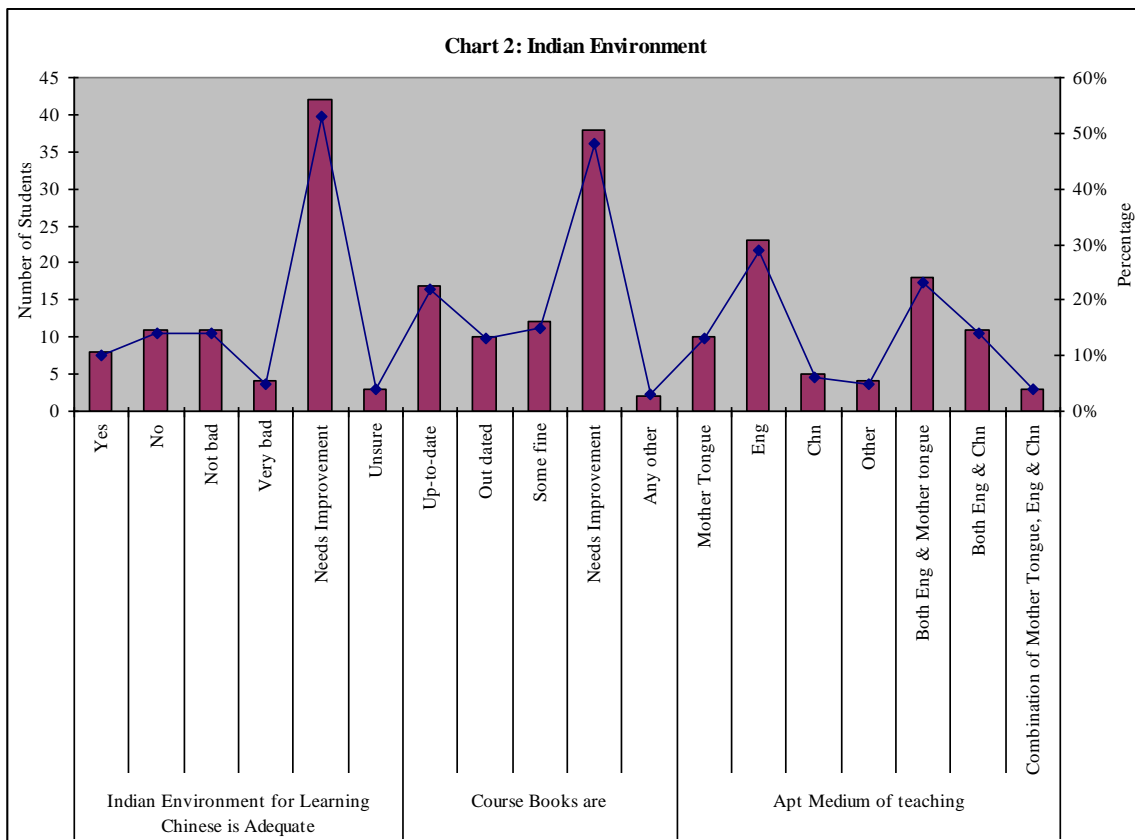
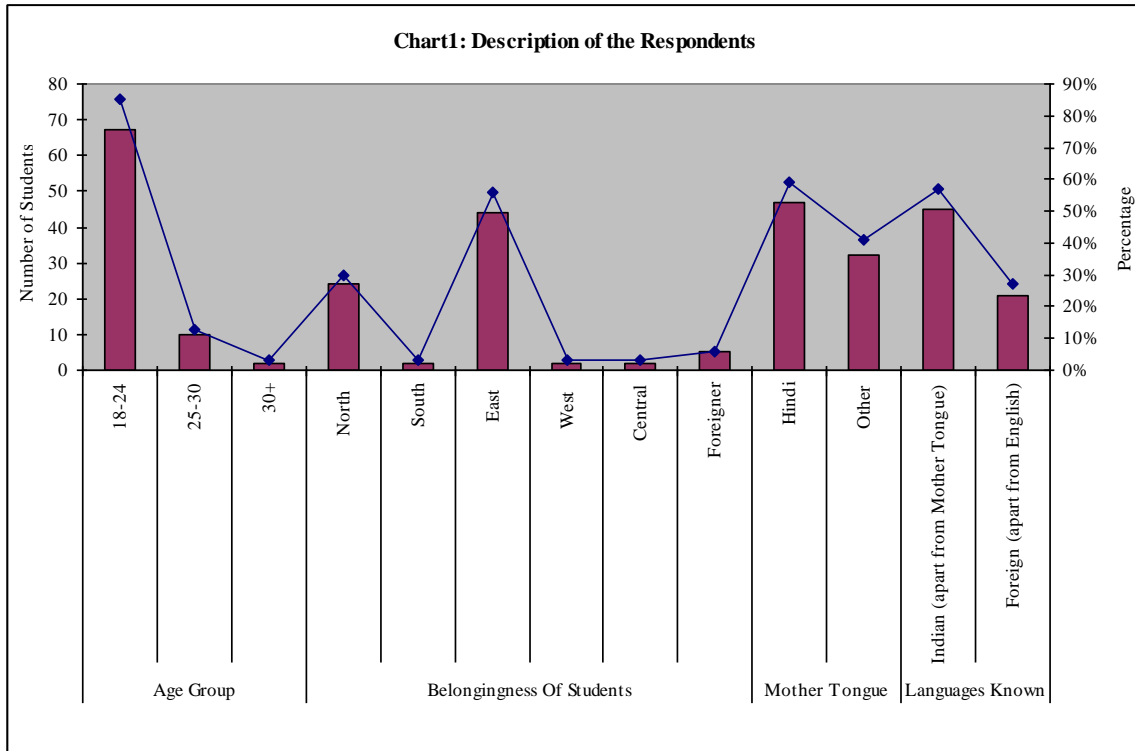
Last but not the least, contextual learning and serious study of rhetoric need to be introduced at intermediate and higher levels. This should be coupled with cultural understanding to produce quality sociolinguists.

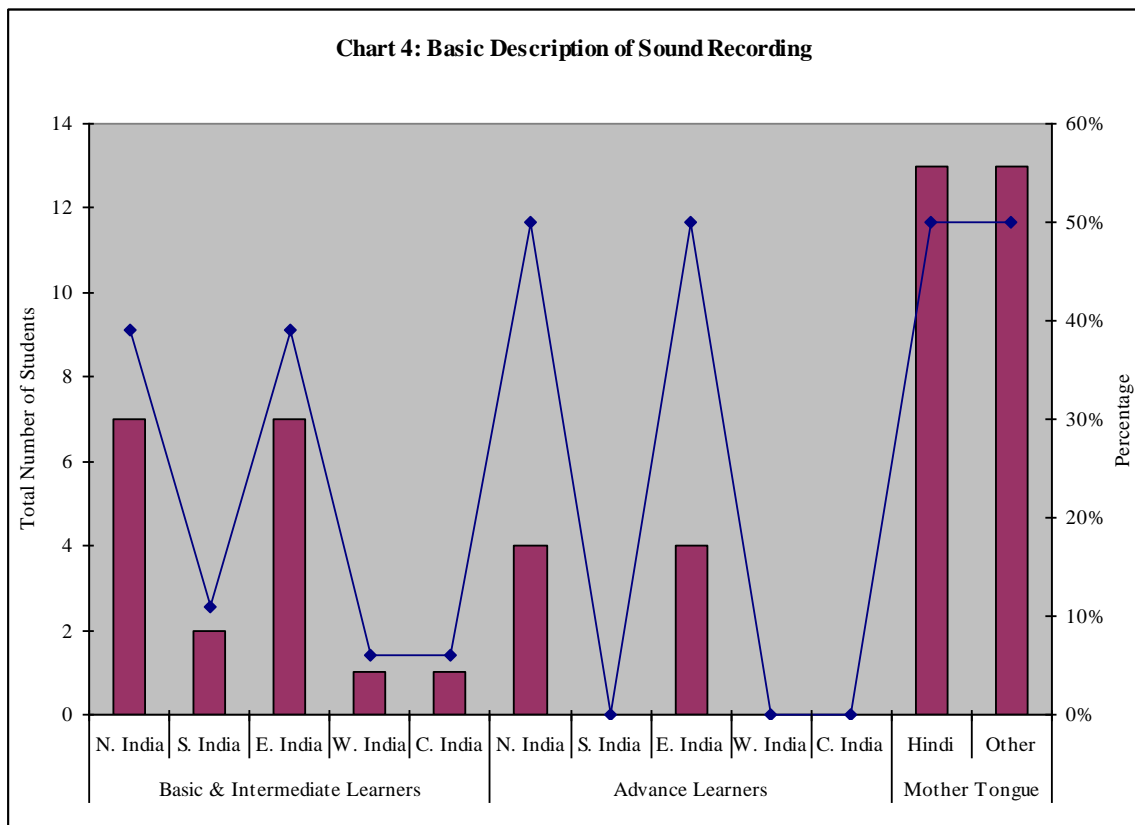
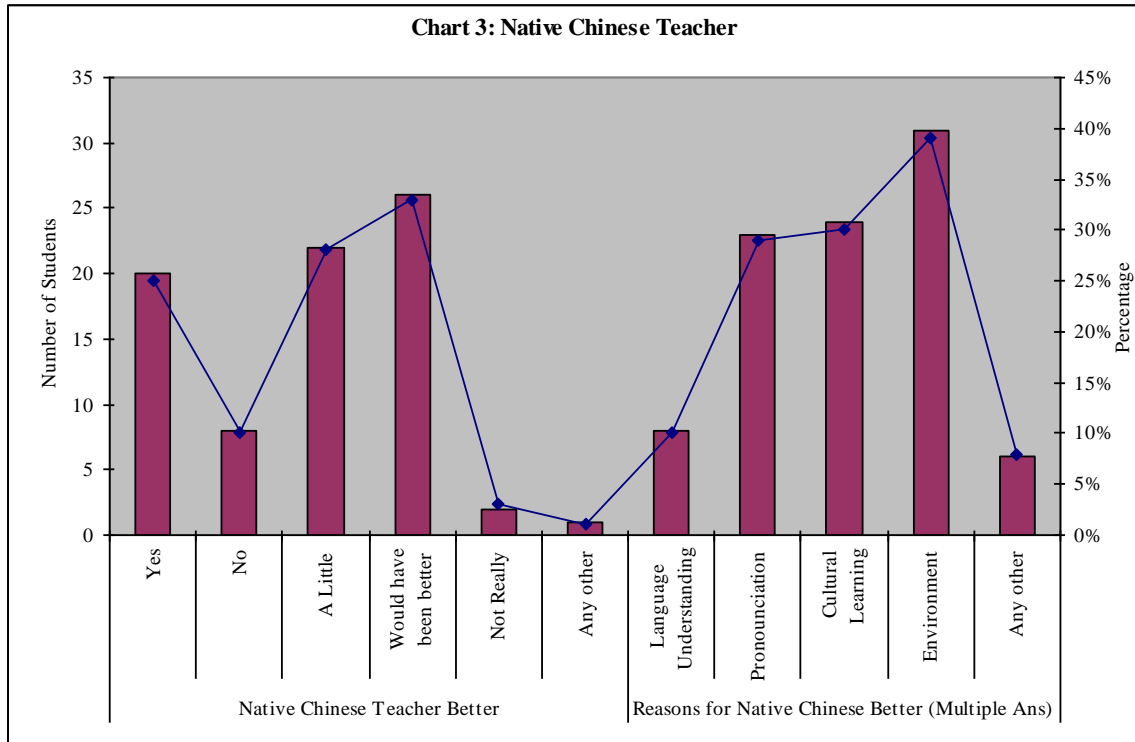
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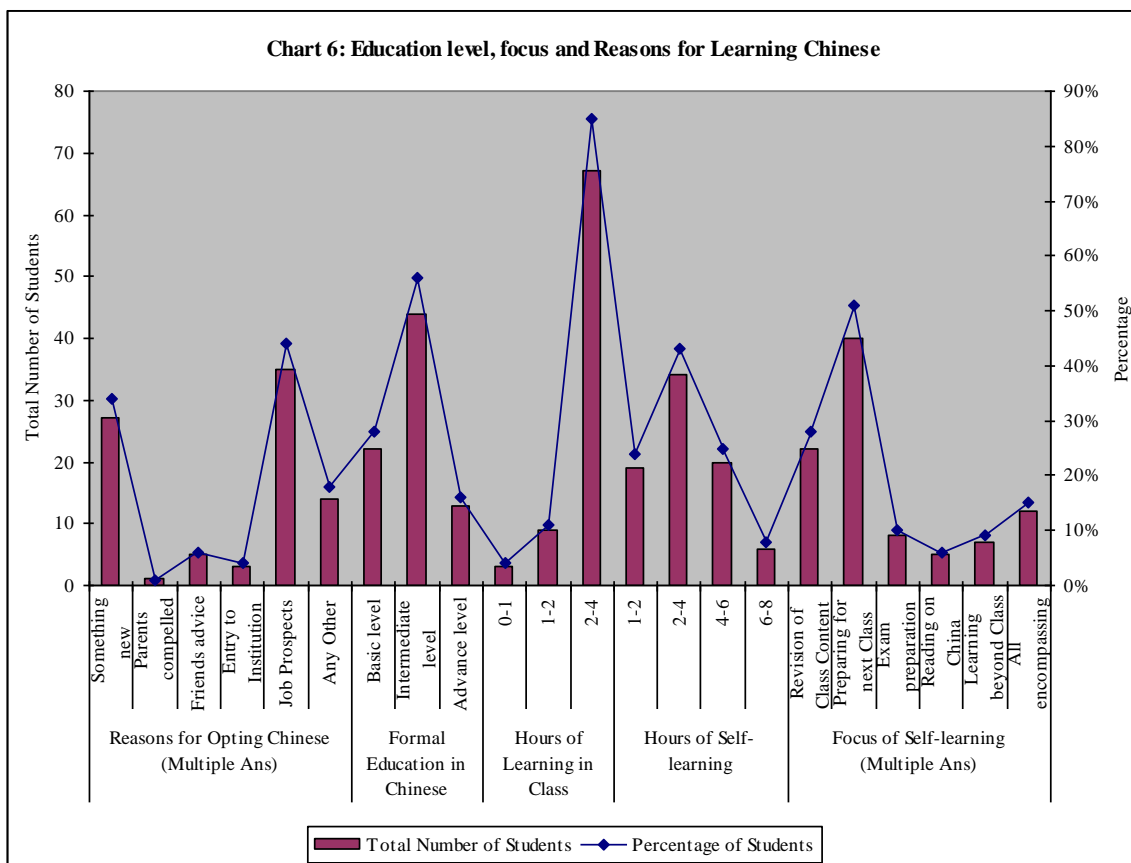
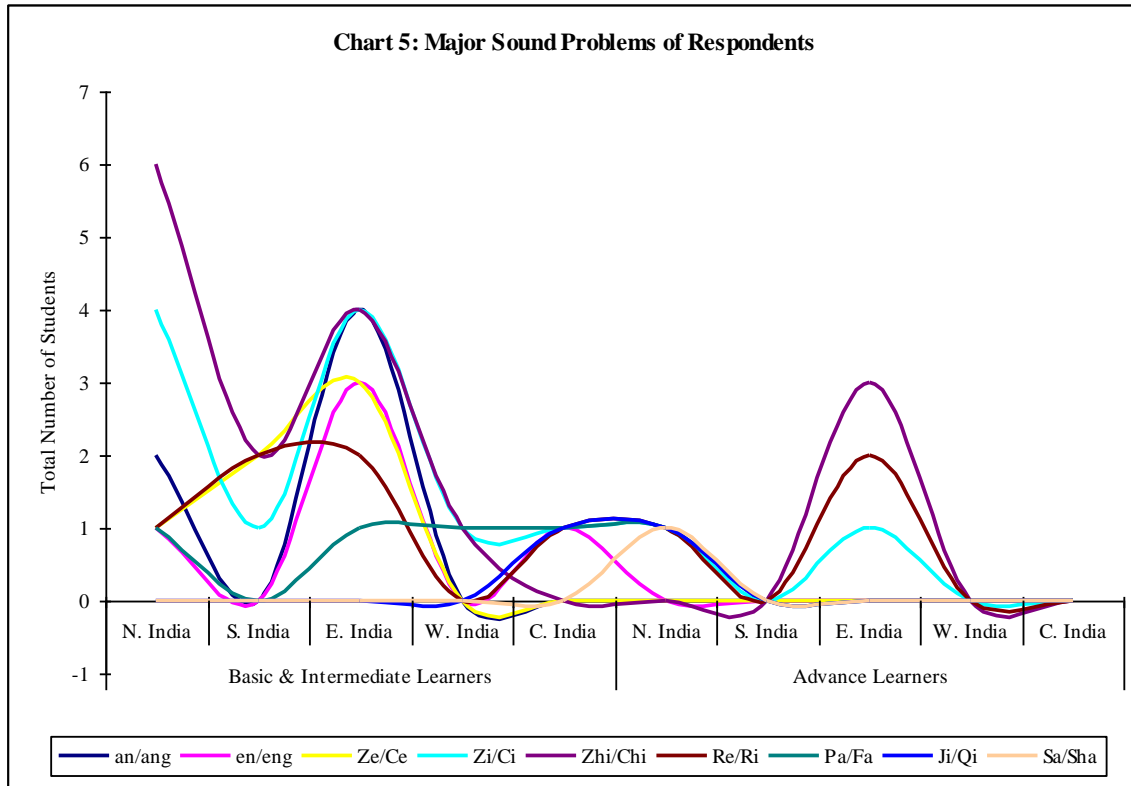
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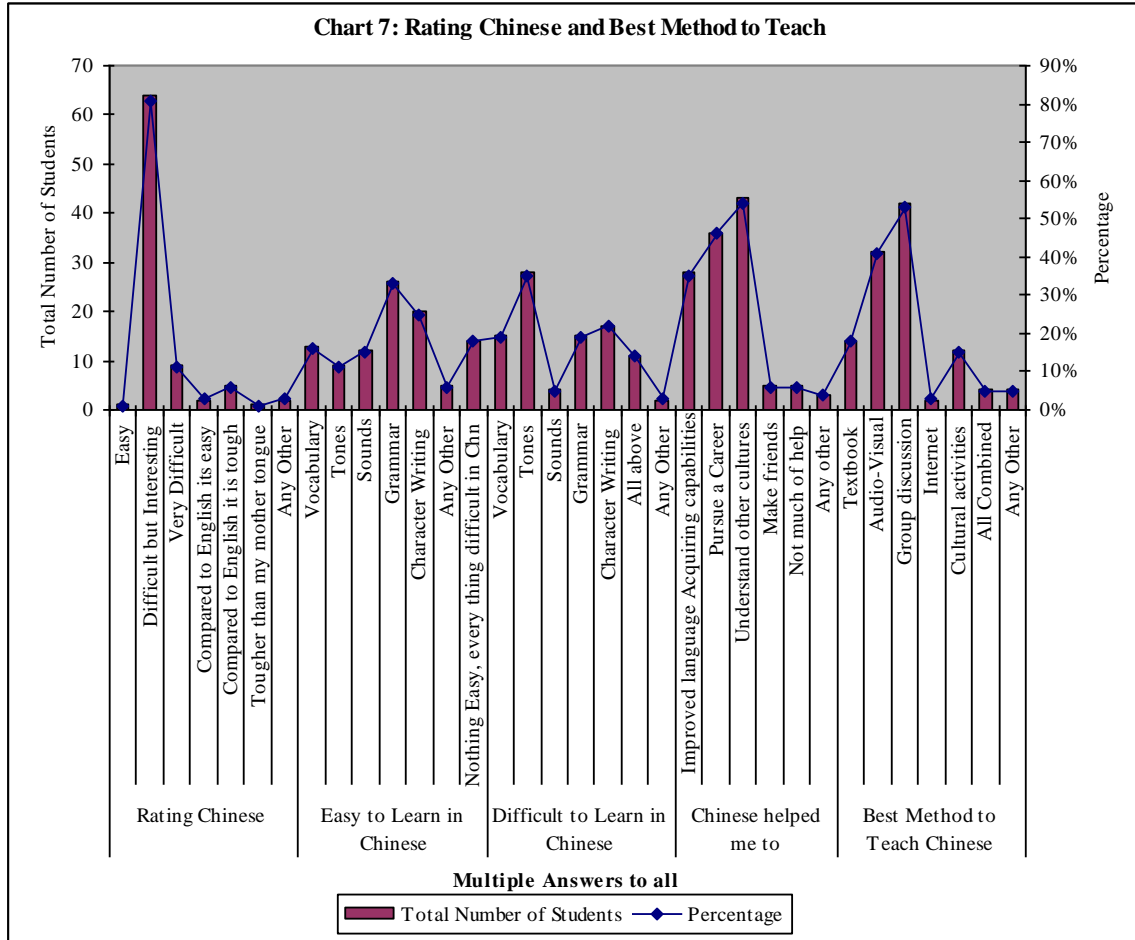
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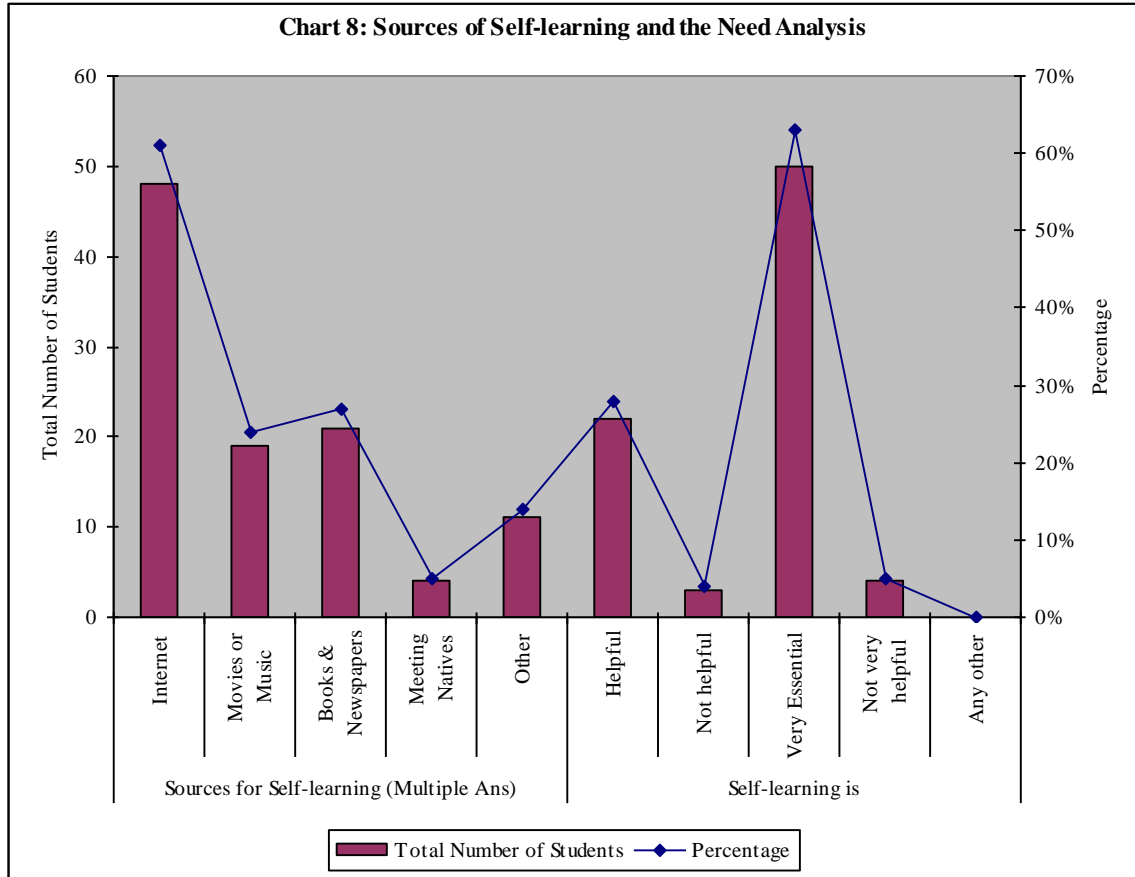
Appendix I: Charts Based on Survey & Sound Analysis











Appendix II: Questionnaire

1. What is your name?
2. What is your age?
OR
3. What is your age group?
 - (a) 18-25
 - (b) 25-30
 - (c) 30+
4. What is your E.mail ID (preferably gmail)?
5. Which part of India do you belong?
6. What is your mother tongue?
7. How many Indian languages do you know? (specify)
8. How many foreign languages you know? (specify)
9. How many years of Chinese have you formally studied?
 - (a) 2
 - (b) 3
 - (c) 4
 - (d) 5
 - (e) 6
10. Where did you formally study Chinese language?
 - (a) JNU
 - (b) DU
 - (c) Banaras Hindu University
 - (d) Shanti Niketan
 - (e) Bhartiya Vidya Bhawan
 - (f) Any other (specify)
11. Why did you opt Chinese?
 - (a) Something new
 - (b) Parents compelled
 - (c) Friends advice
 - (d) Way to get in JNU
 - (e) Bright job prospects
 - (f) Any other reason (specify)

12. How you rate Chinese language?
- (a) Easy
 - (b) Difficult but interesting
 - (c) Very difficult
 - (d) Compared to English its easy
 - (e) Compared to English it is tough
 - (f) Tougher than my mother tongue
 - (g) Any other rating (specify)
13. What is easy in learning Chinese language?
- (a) Vocabulary
 - (b) Tones
 - (c) Sounds
 - (d) Grammar
 - (e) Character writing
 - (f) Any other (specify)
14. What is difficult in learning Chinese language?
- (a) Vocabulary
 - (b) Tones
 - (c) Sounds
 - (d) Grammar
 - (e) Character writing
 - (f) All above
 - (g) Any other (specify)
15. What method you feel is best suited as a tool to teach Chinese language?
- (a) Textbook teaching
 - (b) Audio-visual
 - (c) Group discussion
 - (d) Use of Internet
 - (e) Cultural activities
 - (f) Any other (specify)
16. How helpful you think are interactions with native Chinese in improving your Chinese language skills?
- (a) Helpful
 - (b) Not helpful
 - (c) Relatively helpful
 - (d) Essential
 - (e) Any other (specify)
17. Do you think there is adequate environment to teach Chinese in India?
- (a) Yes
 - (b) No
 - (c) Not bad

- (d) Very bad
- (e) Needs improvement
- (f) Any other (specify)

18. How many hours in a day you spend on learning Chinese language in a classroom?

- (a) 1-2
- (b) 2-4
- (c) 4-6
- (d) 6-8
- (e) 8-10
- (f) Any other (specify)

19. How many hours in a day you spend on learning Chinese language on your own?

- (a) 1-2
- (b) 2-4
- (c) 4-6
- (d) 6-8
- (e) 8-10
- (f) Any other (specify)

20. In your home learning, you spend most time in?

- (a) Revising things taught in class
- (b) Preparing for class
- (c) Prepare for exams
- (d) Read on China
- (e) Learn beyond course material
- (f) All encompassing
- (g) Any other (specify)

21. Do you think not having a native Chinese teacher influences your learning?

- (a) Yes
- (b) No
- (c) A little
- (d) Would have been better
- (e) Not really
- (f) Any other (specify)

22. What specific difference you think a native Chinese teacher has on teaching Chinese language?

- (a) Understanding of the language is better
- (b) Pronunciation
- (c) Cultural learning would have been better
- (d) Would have created an environment
- (e) Any other (specify)

23. What sources you use to learn Chinese language beyond class?

24. How helpful is self learning in acquiring Chinese language?
- (a) Helpful
 - (b) Not helpful
 - (c) Very essential
 - (d) Not very helpful
 - (e) Any other (specify)
25. Are your present course structures adequate to teach Chinese?
- (a) Yes adequate
 - (b) Not adequate
 - (c) Already too tough
 - (d) Its very easy
 - (e) Not matching the time
 - (f) Any other (specify)
26. You think your course books are
- (a) Up-to-date
 - (b) Out dated
 - (c) Some are fine
 - (d) Needs improvement
 - (e) Any other (specify)
27. What sounds you are never able to speak correctly due to influence of mother tongue?
28. What sounds you find easy to speak due to influence of your mother tongue?
29. What sounds you are able to speak better due to acquiring of other foreign languages (including English)?
30. What are the common mistakes you and your friends make while speaking Chinese sounds?
31. What are the common mistakes you and your friends make while in Chinese grammar?
32. What language you think should be the medium to teaching Chinese language?

33. Chinese learning has helped me:

- (a) Improve my language acquiring abilities
- (b) Pursue a career
- (c) In understanding other cultures
- (d) Make more friends
- (e) Not much of help
- (f) Any other (specify)

34. Any other suggestion/opinion?