

Supporting information for: Oxford, R. L., & Cuéllar, L. Positive psychology in cross-cultural narratives: Mexican students discover themselves while learning Chinese.

APPENDIX

Text of the narratives

The narratives presented below were the basis for the data reported in the article by Oxford and Cuéllar. The text below also presents member checks that were conducted after analysis was complete. They come from Mariana, José Luis, Claudia, Jorge, and Lizett. From the article:

We invited five students of different ages to participate in the study. All were deeply interested in learning Chinese at the time of the study. We intentionally included participants representing different academic areas and interests. We also ensured that the sample included some participants who had experience learning Chinese not only in Mexico but also in China. Participants gave informed consent for their narratives to be included in the study. The narratives and member checks are presented below.

Narrative 1. Mariana: Mystery and Inspiration

I have been learning Chinese for 6 years, but it still seems new. My first Chinese class with Professor Xu was mysterious and inspiring at the same time. It was inspiring because it opened a new world for us. I personally had never been this close to a Chinese person, let alone heard of self-perception and transmission of a different culture, which became fascinating. However, that world was also mysterious because it involved not only mental structures different from ours, but different pronunciations and complications which required lots of storage in memory.

Only a few people were studying Chinese when I was at university. Those who continued really liked it and enjoyed it. We did not think much about how Chinese would help us in the future, we were just there for the sake of learning.

Among my classmates, just a few finished the six levels offered by the CELE (there were only 5 of us), and there were certainly many reasons to explain the drop in numbers. In my point of view, the most important thing was that those of us who kept on learning Chinese really liked it and enjoyed it. We didn't think so much about how we would use the language in the future or which advantages we would have from learning Chinese. We were just there for the sake of learning.

Unfortunately, the first four years of my Chinese learning, I could never study full time, and the study tools I used were not perhaps the most appropriate for me. What I tried on several occasions was the use of cards (flashcards), but in fact after making them I did not have the time to review them or use them again, so it was in vain. It worked for some of my colleagues but not for me. In the early stage of learning Chinese, the best strategy for me was the most traditional: writing the characters countless times until I felt I had memorized them, while at the same time I was thinking about the meaning and pronunciation.

Over time, after I was already familiar with the characters, including strokes and composition, it was not necessary to write out each character infinite times. I could read or rewrite more complex sentences. My problem was that I focused so much on correcting my weakest point (writing) and put aside the other skills necessary for learning a language

such as listening, speaking, reading comprehension, etc. This had a negative result. The points that were strong before were now weak.

Honestly, I'm wondering which are the best strategies to further develop my skills in the language, but I can say that in the last two years, and having a slightly more advanced level than when I started studying Chinese, the most useful strategies have been to watch Chinese TV series (dramas that seemed completely unpleasant, now seem surprisingly a little bit more appealing) and to read. All this takes time, of course. It can become tiring and sometimes cause frustration of not being able to understand at the same speed that we understand something in our native language, but because we are interested in the content, we are invited to follow.

Based on this, we can get a lot of satisfaction from not having to encounter boring, childish, or overly elementary contents in books, particularly those of us who began studying Chinese as adults. It takes a lot of patience.

Studying for the master's degree in the Chinese language then allowed me to apply my knowledge of the language – though insufficient – to themes that piqued my interest. The power to read, write, and understand the content in Chinese was the most rewarding aspect. It gave me a very present sense of strength for so many years and a greater motivation for learning the language, although the road is long.

Member check: At the stage of the member check, Mariana agreed with the interpretation we made of her story (see the Results and Discussion section). She took the opportunity to make some small changes in the wording of the translation, and she added the following insightful paragraph to her narrative.

Learning Chinese was an unexpected way of discovering something that I'm passionate about, a way of life and understanding another culture. The most rewarding aspect was that learning Chinese made me travel to another continent and live in China, which is one of the most memorable experiences in my life. I challenged myself in different ways when living in China. It was not only the language, but living on my own and merging in a new culture. Perhaps unconsciously, since my profession is International Relations, I was looking for new ways of understanding the world in a different context.

Narrative 2. José Luis: Studying Chinese in Mexico and China

The idea of studying Chinese arose from the fact that I studied history as an undergraduate. For my master's I thought about expanding beyond Mexican history and studying the history of another country or region. Of all the possibilities, I was most interested in the history of China. From this came the idea of starting to study the language first and later going to postgraduate studies in Chinese history.

My first impression of the language was that it was difficult. I had previously studied English, German, and Italian in college, and these were relatively close languages and easy to learn. They had letters for reading any text. But the Chinese language was completely new, different, and somewhat strange. With Chinese I had to face what initially seemed like drawings. Learning to "read drawings" seemed so weird.

At first I struggled with methods for studying Chinese. Sometimes I focused more on the characters, sometimes more on studying phonetics. To devote more time to one of these two things resulted in neglecting the other.

It was a bit frustrating that in the study of this language progress was initially slow, slower compared to other languages. Only rarely could I use complete sentences. If I

learned single word combinations, they were very few. Classes were four days a week, two hours each day, which I thought was a good number of hours a week. Unfortunately there were no places to experience the language aside from the classroom, like watching movies or TV shows, listening to songs, etc., or to meet people from China to practice conversation. However, Professor Lourdes cared about creating a richer approach in class and taught culture as much as possible, through the screening of some films, presenting parts of certain literary works, and teaching about holidays and traditions.

It was very important in my education to emphasize the correct pronunciation of the tones. That would be very useful in case I went to China, where a wrong pronunciation would sometimes cause the other person to understand something completely different or at worst not understand anything I said.

Among the exercises that I did in class, it was very useful to copy the texts without pinyin above each character while placing a mark indicating its own tone. Making repetitions of each character was also very useful to help me memorize how to write. Copying a text was a very good exercise for writing practice but in a context of knowing that the text is the actual lesson studied.

An unforgettable experience for me was taking part in the Chinese Bridge competition and having the opportunity to travel to China for the first time. Practicing the Chinese language in the same country where it is spoken natively helped me to know my weaknesses and my strengths in the use of the language.

Later I had the great opportunity to go to China to study the language for two years. With total immersion I made great progress in the study of language in context. Without being in the same country, I could not have seen, known, and experienced such things. It was a little frustrating the first few days to encounter the language directly and to understand almost nothing while going out and listening to people talk colloquially, which is often not learned in the classroom.

The pace of studying in China was a bit heavy. The classes were four hours a day, 5 days a week. I took four different classes each semester and had to learn the vocabulary (which was rather extensive) of each class. The heaviest thing was memorizing characters. And the most important thing was not just memorization but also being able to use the vocabulary in different contexts, such as when speaking.

A key in the study of Chinese was not being locked in my room studying from books all day but instead going out and interacting with people. The travel was very helpful, because China is so big, and being in places north or south, east or west you could recognize marked differences that explain so much. I learned many things by talking to people.

Anecdotally I can say that one day walking down the street a few U.S. friends and I saw the remains of what looked like a horse made of paper and cardboard. All of us, my American friends and I, thought the remains were those of a piñata. Therefore, I moved off to take a photo of it. Just then a Chinese person came by and told us not to take photos because a person had just died. It turned out that what I thought was a piñata was an object that is used at funerals and that can burn or destroy people.

Member check: José Luis agreed with the analysis of his story. As shown below, he also added considerably more information to his narrative during the member check interview.

In my particular case, the way I learn, I remember I was more interested in the grammar. I had a natural disposition to only focus on grammar, which made me sit down, go [carefully] through the vocabulary, grammar... And from there start building up... In fact, I spent the first year in China saying to myself, "I must learn everything, otherwise I

cannot go out to the street.” But it also happened that classmates that went out to the streets were doing better than me; they communicated better.

I realised that I had to practice everything that I was learning, good or bad, but make a go at it.

The cultural insight was particularly important. In Chinese, if you do not learn at least a minimum of cultural aspects, you are kind of fried...you are not learning the language properly. It’s a circle: culture serves language, and the language is the door to the culture...and a spiral starts building up. Maybe due to my background in history, learning Chinese helped me learn about the Chinese culture. That satisfied my historical curiosity; well, cultural, because to understand the culture you have to go back to history. I started feeling my personal gaps, something that did not happen with other languages I’ve learnt. In University I studied some Italian, some German, some English, but I cannot recall studying so many cultural aspects during the course. So regarding the Chinese language, it satisfied my intellectual curiosity.

You asked whether anything has changed in my life. Definitely. Because the Chinese culture is like a 360 degrees turn compared to the Mexican or western culture, so it helped me a lot knowing that another human being, similar to me, two eyes, two legs, two arms, sometimes can think and act in completely different ways, and from that perspective [I can] see all the creation that this person’s culture has produced for such a long time, regarding architecture, thought, etc. It helped me open my mind in order to not be culture shocked. I do not think I had culture shock. On the personal level I believe I am quite adaptable. During the two years that I was there [in China] I had a greater chance to live with Chinese people in their natural habitat, I’m talking about being sitting at a simple bar next to three strangers, who are smoking in front of you, spitting, and stuff like that. I do believe that my history background, having understood that the human being has changed throughout time, helped me understand and accept them as persons.

I realised how Mexicans perceive Chinese and how other foreigners perceive Mexicans. Lots of them think that we live like Speedy Gonzalez. Stereotypes exist all over the world, and as for Mexico, they think that all of it is a desert, that all Mexicans drink tequila, and that we all dress up like mariachis. I even remember an image on a store, I think it was a store for clothes and shoes: it was a Mexican wearing a Zarape [a long blanketlike shawl, often brightly colored and fringed at the ends, worn especially by men], lying next to a cactus with a hat on, that was the image.

On the personal level, I realised that I can interact with other people more easily than I thought I could. Over there I realized that I had to either interact or isolate myself, and while interacting with Chinese and foreigners I learned that it is not so difficult, it is not that scary. Now I am teaching Chinese language, and definitely I’d like to keep on teaching because I am passionate about what I am doing. Fortunately I do not go to work with a long face, actually my students are always surprised I am in a good mood, that I always have energy, they say. I am not so sure if it is that I like showing off what I know, or if I want to share, it depends on your perspective. I think it is about inspiring other people to discover the good things that there are, and why not the bad stuff, and let them compare, each one of them, what’s related to the Chinese culture, its people, its history, what they do, the country the way it is, to make them show interest. That’s the light that awakens me, and I want to follow that path. Now that I am talking about it, I realise that inspiration is relevant. Helping students make that “click” makes things a lot easier, and now my experience as a teacher I’ve encountered some students who do not “click”, and those are the ones whom I struggle with the most, they are the ones who give me hard work making them study, basically there is no motiva-

tion. With that and this talk I realise how important it is to awaken that motivation, that inspiration in the students to accomplish well, in a satisfactory way, with the objective of studying (willingly) the Chinese language.

Narrative 3. Claudia: I Truly Love the Chinese Language

The reason I started studying Chinese was because I was curious about the language and because I thought I would open up many opportunities in the future, and so I decided to study it.

Soon afterwards I started to like it a lot and I encountered Chinese culture, food, traditions and all that goes with knowing Chinese. I also met people from China whom I found very attractive and interesting.

Two years later I had a loss: a dear friend died and I felt very sad. He was like a brother to me. I became uninterested in everything. I could not concentrate on anything and could not understand anything in Chinese. I felt I was not moving ahead, and I felt a little frustrated. Realizing that I was not succeeding at studying, I just quit.

A year later I felt that I missed the Chinese language. It seemed like a mistake to have left it. The reason I missed it was that I had been used to studying every day, listening to music, and speaking Chinese. I remembered that my teachers were always friendly and nice to me, and I remembered my Chinese friends. Suddenly I felt a great love for the language! How was that love sparked by the Chinese language? The reasons were: The support I had always felt from my teachers; the songs I sang in Chinese; my fellow Chinese learners, who made the environment very pleasant; and my Chinese friends, since they've offered great support and a beautiful friendship.

I thought that to be able to speak, understand, and write Chinese, the important thing would be to be consistent, such as: studying 15-20 minutes daily, listening to audio lessons to sharpen my ear, reviewing all vocabulary, listening to music, and being in touch with the people of China in order to practice a lot.

Sometimes I felt very insecure, and I thought I might never speak, understand, and write in Chinese, but today I do not think so. I am very happy to be studying Chinese. I love, love, love it!

The only thing is to have perseverance, study, practice, and have clear objectives for language learning. I truly love the Chinese language because I learned a lot. I learned the Chinese culture, customs, and food, but also learned to struggle to get what you want. I really like how I'm progressing. The experience I've had with people from China is wonderful, and they have been very kind to me. The Chinese language has great magic, and it has transformed my life for the better every day. In fact, my goal is to become Chinese teacher and translator.

Member check: Claudia agreed with the analysis. She also added a whole new dimension to her story, shown below.

I had a challenge that was very important to my learning. It had to do with an accident I had as a child. I had a brain lesion and was about to die. The doctors told me that I would never be able to study. Since then, my life has been transformed. I overcame the challenge, surprising all my doctors. Learning Chinese was another challenge. It was particularly challenging because it has much to do with me, with my spirituality. I feel Chinese people don't see limitations, always find ways out, and this has motivated me very much. I feel the need to break the limits, to know for certain that everything can be achieved, even if slowly. Also, the [Chinese] tones click for me, they are so musical. Because I am a singer, I am always where there is some music. Of all the languages I know, this is the most important.

Narrative 4. Jorge: Deep Meanings

It all started while I studying French. I applied twice to study at CELE but I wasn't accepted, so I decided to apply for another language, but which one? One that wasn't a Romance or Anglo language, for a change. It would be Chinese then. I had been learning about meditation, self-reflection and the knowledge of the obscure arts for a while, and a friend of mine, when I told him I was going to study Chinese, gave me as a gift the Tao Te King by Lao Ze. When I started to study the book in depth, I realized that there were lots of phrases and assertions that modern physics has discovered during the past century, like how everything is made of a kind of void. This really stimulated me to study the language.

During the lessons the teacher, little by little, taught us about the ancient foundations of the language: relativity in the polarity that gives us the meaning for sense perception, like when someone asks "how much?". This question word is made with duo, which means "a lot", and shao, which means "a little", etc. In my experience, studying the Chinese language was much more enriching than any other lessons I've taken at the University of Science, regarding new ways of approaching life, because for me, it was something completely unknown, but at the same time very approachable.

When learning the language I needed to adapt to different study methods according to my inner being and to my intellectual capacities (and in some cases emotional). For example, if one day I feel a bit tired, but it is necessary to go over the lesson, I can lie on my bed and listen to the audio, but if I'm calm I can carefully go over the characters and find a significant meaning for each one of them, and if I don't have that meaning, make it up (just to memorize it). If I'm too upset or disturbed, the best thing is to not study at all and try it some other time; that time should not be used to study a language and should be dedicated to calming myself down and figuring out what's wrong.

At first I wasn't expecting any great advance in my language proficiency in a short time, because a friend said to me that I could have a fluent conversation only after three years. That's a long time, so I decided not to believe him and to take the risk anyway. In this way I would not get desperate if I did not understand anything and I would enjoy the process of learning the language for its own sake. I was surprised when, after a few months of studying, I watched "The House of Flying Daggers" in the original language, Chinese, and I was able to understand a few words and phrases, which excited me a lot. A year later I watched the movie again, and I was amazed with my progress. Words that before didn't mean a thing, now became complete, meaningful phrases, even with a cultural meaning.

Because I do not watch a lot of TV, it took me a long time to realize that at home I have a channel called CCTV, a Chinese channel designed for the Spanish-speaking public. The channel is something wonderful that lets me watch Chinese soap operas (in my opinion terrible, but they were a great help), cultural shows about China in Spanish, and a little about how Chinese people live at the other end of the world.

I also started to practice Tai Ji Quan with a great teacher, who was also an acupuncturist. He totally knows what he is talking about and takes it really seriously. This helped me to relate in a much deeper level to Chinese philosophy and the way it is expressed in every specific movement and each sensation that the nervous stimuli and muscles produce (especially when you practice the deep, serious, serene form). This allowed me to understand a bit more what the language is (because of its deep philosophical ground, even though it has changed a lot over time).

Something that has been very helpful since I started studying this language was translating phrases in my mind, any time of the day; in the subway, at home or walking down the street, I think of the phrases I can translate and those that I cannot. For those I cannot I try to get as close as possible, and for those for which I don't have the right vocabulary, I skip the word. In some cases I don't have the right grammar for a precise translation, but this has become more rare.

On the other hand I have experienced big frustrations based on how the mind works, how it processes, how it saves and filters useful information from that which isn't useful. If the mind hasn't seen a word (heard it or seen it) for approximately six months, probably the mind will not remember it precisely if it is not well documented. I might remember having seen it, but the bond with the meaning has not been well created (in a variable or abstract way like it is in Chinese), even though I have written a whole page of this particular character. So it is much more helpful to review each word every once in a while, using a phrase or sentence to impress its meaning on my mind (something I have not done, of course, but I discovered that it is wonderful).

I've discovered that during my learning process I am afraid of talking to Chinese people (in Chinese, naturally), not like in a given moment arranged by an academic unit, but with the Chinese on the street. My fear is that they will talk to me in Chinese, and I will not be able to understand anything of what they are saying. I have to confront this at some point.

I have found deep meaning in the symbolism of each one of the characters. Even though, across the years, they have lost their ability to express the way the world transparently, as it is, lots of the characters have in them in an intrinsic symbolism that immediately reminds us of what they represent, a symbol that probably would not have the same effect on us as Westerners compared with the effect on Chinese people. But for Chinese people, even if nobody explained to them the symbolism of a specific radical, their minds, after seeing the radical so many times as part of the characters, do a selection process that relates the radical to a common denominator, even when Chinese people (yi ge ren) do not consciously realize it. This is related to why calligraphy is an art and a philosophy, not just a way of writing.

My learning process has been very pleasurable and I hope never to abandon it.

Member check: Jorge said that the interpretation was correct and "has a good approach to what I meant then," but he mentioned that some things had changed. Therefore, he added more to his story. To summarize, he started reading the *Daodejing* in Chinese instead of Spanish, and he said, "Truly, studying the *Dao* in its original language is something else entirely." He said that the *Dao* is complicated, abstract, and old, but knowing certain vocabulary makes it possible to read whole chapters in Chinese. He also remarked that through reading the *Dao*, he discovered how intuitive Chinese is. "If you try to see it as entirely rational and square and structured, then you're going to fail because of the number of exceptions in Chinese." Next, he indicated that he had recently changed his career plans.

. . . I started studying acupuncture. I left my career in physics for various reasons. I realized that I did not want to devote myself to it, and I realized that I want to devote myself to Chinese acupuncture. I think I'm good at it, it gives something to me, I really like it, and do not see why I should put up with something [physics] that I do not want to study. . . . The other day I was thinking about my future and what I wanted to do. Well, it's definitely been a long time since I started studying science, and science gave me a way of seeing life. I realized that in my head I have the ability to use science, but my heart is Chinese and my gut is medicine, because I find it very easy, well, not easy but very intuitive. I am very

intuitive. If you feel bad, I inspect your body, I touch an acupuncture point, and it helps you right away. I do not know how that works, but it works viscerally, it's very instinctive.

Chinese gave me great confidence to leave my career because I can dedicate myself to Chinese, whether for translation, or for different things, and it is a great choice for my future. This meant that the connection was not just with the language but with the culture. And culture led me to learn many things, including philosophy, medicine, including how to see life as it is, that Chinese science is not a rational science, but it is a science that has a perfect consistency. It goes beyond [Western] dialogue and discussion. . . In the East, above all in China, important things are based on their philosophy. That's what made me love the language, because the language is not separated from that philosophy, and that philosophy is not separated from their science and art, and science and art are not separated from each other. Then everything is connected in such a way that if you study various issues, it all comes together, and the more you study one subject, the better you'll be at the other. And that does not happen here. The more you study physics, the more you're going to get stuck in physics and you're going to be a specialist. . . . So that's what happens a lot here in the West, and that's something that does not please me. I do not like it. . . . [T]he function and the basis of Chinese science are completely contrary to current science, to modern Western science. Why? Because modern Western science is based on determinism, determining things, everything can be determined if I have the right variables. And Chinese science is the opposite. . . . I think it's very intuitive.

. . . The language has really helped me a lot in learning acupuncture. My teacher shows us each important word, important concept, and new theme, and shows us the relevant character. He has translated many of the books of the Yellow Emperor to Spanish directly. . . . He teaches these characters, pointing out which is the fire, the fire itself – but nothing is just fire, it is also the heart, it is also Mars and it is also related to the small intestine. If you are seeing the character for heart for the first time, it is nothing more than the translation “heart,” and you can imagine the organ pumping blood. But if you really learn the characters, you know the whole concept of heart as emotion, thought, and even its extension to the planets and the elements. That helped me a lot, language, regarding acupuncture. I think it has been a great advantage to have this language in order to learn the science of acupuncture.

Narrative 5. Lizett: Falling in Love with Chinese

My first interest in studying Chinese started when, at the University, one of the teachers that I get along well with told me and my classmates that if we had the opportunity to study Chinese, we should do it, since there was big business going on with China, and that in the future it would help us greatly if we wanted to earn a better salary. So I kept on thinking about it and said to myself, “It would be really cool, why not?” One of my classmates did as the teacher said, and right after the semester finished, he checked the dates and immediately enrolled in Chinese. I was already too late to enroll so I said to myself, “I won't do it now, but I'll do it next semester.” During the semester my classmate talked to me about what he was learning, but he kept saying how difficult it was, and he didn't know if he was going to keep on studying or not, and as a good friend I told him, that if he started it, he should finish it. However, not long after that he quit. This made me be a little afraid of Chinese and made me lose interest at that time. My interest revived a month later, when one of my bosses at work started negotiating with Chinese people to export clothes from China to Mexico. Given this situation, he said to me and another

workmate that one of us had to learn Chinese, so that we could accompany him on his business trips and be able to have a better communication. My boss could not speak English, only Spanish and Hebrew, because he is Jewish.

That's when I seriously started thinking that learning the language would be interesting, especially for the economic consequences and for taking advantage of everything the UNAM has to offer to us as students. So I decided to enroll in Chinese.

In the first lesson the teachers was explaining to us the points of evaluation, when suddenly she asked us why we had chosen to study Chinese, and most of us said because it is the language of the future, and that it would be an investment for business and our careers. Very few said that they were interested in the language and culture. And I said to myself, "Oops! There is a lot of competition!", because at that time my mind was only on competitiveness and money.

As the weeks went by, I began to feel it was a very heavy load, and we were only starting. Pronunciation, characters, grammar – it was all very difficult for me and I was very nervous when the teacher asked us to pronounce the pinyin with the tones. That's why sometimes I tried to sit in places where she could not see me (hahahaha), so then the teacher would not ask me as much. And I think it worked because lots of times she could not remember my name. So I started wondering if I had made the right decision, and if I hadn't, what the hell was I doing there, just warming up the chair. I started thinking that if I was going to do things, I might as well do them right, and if not it was time to give up. But my pride came first, and when my classmate from the previous semester asked me how I was doing with Chinese, I told him that I was doing fine, that I could do it, and I was going to show him that it was a piece of cake. I could not have been more modest.

That's when I started to get more interested in learning the language, and I did not give up that easily. So I started to investigate the culture, and the teacher would tell us about what was going on in China, their traditions, her experience the first time she was there, and the detailed explanation of the radicals and what each one of them meant. All of this was awakening something within me that motivated me to keep on studying the language. It was no longer a monetary interest, it wasn't a matter of ego or competitiveness, but a feeling for the Chinese language. And in spite of its complexity and difficulty, these days Chinese is part of my life. In a nutshell, I fell in love with it, because for me it is a beautiful language that fills me up and motivates me to keep on studying. Now that I think about it, if I had kept on thinking the way I did earlier, I would not be where I am now. Here's a comparison. It is like when you start a relationship with someone, just to be with somebody, or not to be alone, that relationship becomes boring, monotonous, and short; instead, when you feel love for somebody or something, you enjoy every moment, every experience, and you struggle each day so that the relationship can last longer, because love is what motivates you to go on.

Something else that influenced very much in my learning experience was the group. I made very good friends that support me, and I support them in all circumstances. The excellent teacher touched me, because she knows the language very well, and that is very important in the learning process.

In conclusion, learning Chinese has been one of the most beautiful experiences in my life.

Member check: Lizett agreed with everything in the analysis of her story. In the member check interview she added more about her feelings concerning Chinese, as shown below.

It is a general belief that learning Chinese is difficult. To deal with Chinese and overcome the challenge gives me only pleasure. My feelings about Chinese are so strong that I have decided to stop my administrative studies and focus on Chinese. I would like to be a teacher. Or I might study acupuncture in China to compare it with what we have in Mexico.

I would like to go to your class again [Lizett is speaking to the interviewer, who teaches at the 4th level, while Lizett is at the 6th level] because I want to practice the language more, and I like your classes.

I feel Chinese fulfills me, even if it is more difficult every day. . . . With Chinese I will be able to know more, to see the world with another point of view. It opens worlds and this moves me, enhances me. What makes it hard for me to learn about the Chinese people is what I have learned in my culture, the fixed ideas that clash with the other world I want to know. The language prompts me to connect with that other side, which cannot be seen from this side.