October 2017

A Study of the Nature and Impact of Shona and Chinese Rhyming Words/Phrases

Herbert Mushangwe
University of Zimbabwe, Confucius Institute

Muchinei Musona
Hebei University

A Study of the Nature and Impact of Shona and Chinese Rhyming Words/Phrases

Herbert Mushangwe *University of Zimbabwe, Confucius Institute*
Muchinei Musona *Hebei University*

Abstract

Pairs of rhyming words/phrases in Chinese and Shona were investigated in an attempt to bring out the effect of such words to the teaching and learning of Chinese language. The pairs were grouped in accordance to their effects and nature of relationship. The selection of the words was based on samples obtained during classroom teaching. Students' reaction to Chinese words automatically tells the story of the effect of such rhyming words. For instance, for embarrassing rhyming words learners naturally shy out to pronounce the words or they laugh instead of imitating the teacher. It is clear that the study of rhyming words/phrases across languages in the field of second language teaching is as important as the study of transfer errors. The research was however limited in terms of its scope, more focus was placed on the perspective of Chinese words from a native speaker of Shona language's point of view. It was suggested that future researches should engage speakers of other languages and further explore effects of rhyming of words across other languages.

汉语与修纳语韵律词和短语的性质与影响研究

摘要：本研究对汉语和修纳语韵律词和短语的性质进行了研究。本研究把这些词按照其汉语教学的影响进行分组。这些词的选择是基于课堂教学中经常遇到的汉语词汇。在汉语教学当中学生对汉语和修纳语韵律词的明显说明这种韵律词的影响。例如，有尴尬的韵律词汇使学习者在课堂不愿意说话，或者让全班的学生笑。在第二语言教学领域，语言中韵律词语的研究与偏误研究一样重要。不管怎么说，本研究的范围是有限的因为本研究的重点在以修纳语为母语者的角度来看汉语词汇。我们建议，未来的研究应该对更多语言之间进一步探讨其语言的词汇韵律影响。

Introduction

The present study partially falls under the mother tongue transfer theory. Mother tongue transfer theory, which is also known as language transfer, refers to "the influence resulting from the similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired" (Odlin, 1989, p. 27). This transfer is normally associated with grammatical and phonetic transfers. In this research the main focus is on the rhyming words that are found in two languages, where one of the languages is the learners' first language and the other language is the target language, which can be either a foreign language or a second language. According to Pattamadilok, Perre, and Ziegler (2011), rhyming words in spoken language often share parallel or close spelling patterns hence causing listeners to perceive the patterns as similar. Therefore, if such patterns happen to occur between two languages they can lead to phonological transfer errors. According to Jenkins (1995) phonological 'errors' can easily lead to miscommunication. Miscommunication which is caused by phonological errors might be difficult to correct once a learner reaches an advanced stage, and this therefore means that there is a need to deal with learners' possible phonological transfer errors while the given learners are still beginners.

This subject of rhyming words is rarely researched in the field of second language or foreign language teaching. Hence, the present study seeks to explore the implications and contributions of rhyming words to the acquisition of Chinese language by native speakers of Shona. Yoncheva, Maurer, Zevin, and McCandliss (2013) view rhyming as a central device in poetry, songs, and children's books that rests upon similarities between spoken words at a sub-syllabic level. A number of research studies focus on rhyming in poetry; however, there is little research with regard to inter-lingual rhyming. This research therefore attempts to go beyond rhyming of words within a single language in order to promote second language teaching and learning.

Justification

The present research derives its motivation from the fact that rhyming between languages is unavoidable yet while sometimes it can create confusion or lead to misinterpretation of meaning; it can be explored and used for the effective teaching of a second or foreign language. In this paper, we propose that in teaching a second/foreign language there are certain words that rhyme and such words can be of benefit to the students if the instructor is well informed in advance. Rhyming words across two languages therefore can be deliberately adopted for the purposes of teaching second/foreign languages. Rhyming words are normally used in poetry in order to bring a high aesthetic value to the poem (Yuliya, Urs, Jason, & Bruce: 2013). The author however believes that a careful study of rhyming words across languages may lead to interesting and useful structures. For instance, such rhyming words were used by the script writer for the movie ***Rush Hour 3*** (Ratner, 2007) as shown below**:**

Master Yu: *May I help **you**?*
Detective James Carter: *… Who are **you**?*
MasterYu: ***Yu***.
Detective James Carter: *No, not me. **You**.*
Master Yu: *Yes, I'm **Yu**.*
Detective James Carter: *Just answer the damn question! Who are **you**?*
Master Yu: *I have told **you**!*
Detective James Carter: *Are **you** deaf?*
Master Yu: No. ***Yu** is blind.*
Detective James Carter: *I'm not blind. **You** blind.*
Master Yu: *That is what I just said.*
Detective James Carter: ***You** just said what?*
Master Yu: *I did not say what, I said **Yu**.*
Detective James Carter: *That's what I'm asking **you**.*
Master Yu: *And **Yu** was answering.*
Detective James Carter: Shut up!
Detective James Carter: **You**!
Master Yu: *Yes?*
Detective James Carter: *Not **you**. Him! What's your name?*
Mi: ***Mi***.
Detective James Carter: *Yes, you.*
Mi: *I'm **Mi**.*
Master Yu: *He's **Mi** and I'm **Yu**.*

This scene extracted from the movie titled Rush Hour 3 (2007) is quite hilarious and contributed to the theatrical depth of the movie. This shows that such rhymes are useful if well explored. The above extract uses a well explored rhyming technique of the English word "you" and the Chinese name "玉 Yù", as well as the English pronoun "me" and Chinese proper noun "秘 Mì". The technique created an exciting conflict that propels the story in a funny and emotional way. This shows that rhyming across languages can be explored for the good. This is the thrust of the present research. An attempt will be made to bring out the types of rhyming words that exist between Shona and Chinese language, as well as their contribution to the acquisition of Chinese language by native speakers of Shona language.

Literature Review

The subject under research is under researched; a general survey of the available literature shows that there is no scientific research in the area of cross lingual rhyming words. However, despite the general scarcity of literature in this field, there are a number of studies that motivated the present research. For instance, Seidenberg & Tanenhaus (1979) notes that it is the influence of the knowledge of orthography or spellings that influences the rhyming effects. Mushangwe and Chisoni (2015) as well as Li (2008) once noted that the orthography of Shona and Chinese Pinyin is similar. Therefore, it is highly likely that there should be rhyming words between Shona and Chinese language.

Mushangwe and Tahwa (2015) also studied on the aspect of words in Shona and Chinese language borrowed from English. In their research they pointed out that there are certain borrowed words in these two languages that sound the same. Such words that sound the same are likely to be acquired easily by native speakers of Chinese learning Shona and vice versa. Some of the examples stated include the English word sofa, which is transliterated as 沙发 shāfā in Chinese and *sofa* in Shona. Such words rhyme and therefore are easy to grasp for the second language learners of these language pair. Borrowing from Mushangwe and Tahwa's research we can identify a number of words that are relevant to the present research. The present research differs from this previous research in the sense that the major focus in this paper will be on Chinese and Shona original words; less emphasis will be placed on loanwords from English. Mushangwe and Tahwa's research however provided a great deal of inspiration and motivation in terms of data collection and data analysis.

Mushangwe and Chisoni (2015) critically examined the impact of the Chinese pinyin in relation to the acquisition of Chinese characters by native speakers of Shona. The authors pointed out that a number of native speakers of Shona language enjoy Chinese pinyin because of the similarities that exist between Chinese pinyin and Shona orthography. This previous research did not go beyond analyzing the negative impact caused by the dependency syndrome that results from over use of pinyin instead of characters. However, it is apparent that Shona and Chinese are likely to have rhyming words since they both use the Roman letters.

Mushangwe (2015) in his PhD thesis pointed out that, native speakers of Shona language normally confuse the Chinese words 你 (nǐ) [you] and 我 (wǒ) [me/I]. The two pronouns are equivalent to the Shona pronouns *iwe* and *ini* respectively, which poses a challenge in the sense that learners naturally associate the Chinese pinyin nǐ (你) to the Shona pronoun *ini*. This kind of

error is related to the effect of rhyming words across languages. While Mushangwe (2015) focuses on lexical similarities and differences of Shona and Chinese, the present paper put emphasis on the orthographic similarities which are influenced by phonetic similarities of given sets of words/phrases thus leading to the rhyming effect. This research therefore aims to answer the following research questions: What is the percentage of Shona and Chinese rhyming words found in elementary Chinese courses? What is the possible impact of these Shona and Chinese rhyming words? This is meant to show the significance of the Shona and Chinese rhyming words to the teaching of Chinese language.

Methodology

The present research places methodology on the top priority with an aim to collect reliable data that do not mislead learners, teachers and other researchers. In order to have balanced results both quantitative and qualitative research methods were employed. A simple survey of the list of vocabulary in Chinese Proficiency HSK levels 1, 2, and 3 was carried out, and words that rhyme with Shona words were presented in a tabular form. This was meant to show the progression of the rhyming words as one's Chinese proficiency level goes up.

The words collected for the purpose of the present research were also collected during Chinese language classes based on students' perception to the Chinese sounds over a period of more than two years. All the students were native speakers of Shona language, with basic Chinese proficiency. The present research also drew much of the data from observation and participation in the learning of Chinese language. The researchers studied Chinese language for 7 years, and taught Chinese for more than 2 years. During this period it was observed that during lessons sometimes students end up laughing because they are associating certain Chinese words with certain words in their mother tongue that sound funny.

Data Analysis and Discussions

Firstly, we physically counted the number of words that rhyme with Shona words collected from the elementary and lower intermediate Chinese proficiency levels. Below is a summary of what was obtained from the survey.

Table 1. *Chinese words that Rhyme with Shona words in elementary - lower Intermediate levels*

Chinese Proficiency Level	Total Number of words per level	Number of Chinese words that rhyme with Shona words	Percentage
HSK 1	150	21	14%
HSK 2	300	42	14%
HSK 3	600	83	13.8%

Based on Table 1, there is an average of 14 percent of the Chinese words that rhyme with Shona words per Chinese proficiency level. There is however a cumulative growth in terms of the actual number of words. At Levels 1 and 2, normally known as the lower and upper elementary level, the number of Chinese words that rhyme with Shona words is quite small, not more than 50; the number goes up to above 80 words at Level 3. This shows that Chinese words that rhyme with Shona words cannot be ignored. The number of such words (14%) is quite significant in the acquisition of Chinese language.

After the physical counting of the words we went on to analyze the words identified in terms of their relationship with their counterparts in Shona language. The words analyzed were not limited to Levels 1 to 3 mainly because some of the data were collected from intermediate and Chinese advanced classes.

The data collected were grouped into three in accordance to the nature of the relationship between the rhyming words. It was observed that some rhymes are close in terms of meanings while some certain interesting historical lingual relationships are apparently visible. There are also certain Chinese words which rhyme with Shona words, in this paper grouped as "embarrassing rhymes". The majority of rhyming words identified in this paper falls under the random rhyming words.

Related Rhymes
This group of rhymes has a number of onomatopoeic words. The rhyme is caused by the universal similarities that exist on natural sounds. Table 2 lists some of the onomatopoeic words identified:

Table 2: Chinese and Shona Words with Similar Rhymes Caused by Universal Similarities

Chinese Word		Shona Rhyming Onomatopoeic Word	Meaning/Sounds Imitated
洒洒	sǎsǎ	*sasa*	Both referring to sprinkle water
啪	pā	*pa*	Referring to slamming sound
嘎	gā	*ga*	Sound produced from cutting a tree
吧	ba	*bha*	Referring to crackling sound
吧嗒	bādā	*pata*	referring to a sound of falling object

Apart from these onomatopoeic words, there are other rhyming words requiring careful analysis in order to understand their historical connections. The relationship is direct or indirect, for instance, the Chinese word "咳嗽 késou" rhymes with the Shona word "*kosora*". Both words mean coughing. These two words seem to have a similar historical background. The Shona word *kosora* is a result of the sound produced when one is coughing. The same applies to the corresponding Chinese rhyming word.

The other example in this category is the Chinese word 发烧 fāshāo which means to have high fever. This word rhymes with the Shona word *fazha* which means to boil. The Shona word *fazha* comes from the sound that is produced when water boils. Thus, there is a Shona onomatopoeic word "*fashafasha*". These rhyming words are partially linked in the sense that having high fever seems like one's body has boiled. A native speaker of Shona will quickly link fever to the boiling of water. This existing link is the base for teaching Chinese in Zimbabwe. Teachers can take advantage of this link and assist learners to internalize such words by intentionally pointing out this existing relationship of the words.

There is also a Shona word called "*jiti*", a name of a dance that originated in the 1960s during the war of liberation in Zimbabwe. This word rhymes with the Chinese word 集体 jítǐ, which means to work together or to do something together as a group. There is a possibility that the Shona word "*jiti*" came from the Chinese people's concept of togetherness. This is so

because during the war of liberation in Zimbabwe in the 1960s, the Zimbabwean solders had cultural contact with the Chinese soldiers, where they were sent to China for war training. One of Mao Zedong's war principle during that time was that of incorporating the mass into the war, where the mass would be taken as the water, while the fighters are the fish. This concept of oneness is the same concept of 集体 jítǐ, which is also reflected in the Shona word *jiti*, referring to a type of dance for community involvement. The *jiti* dance was and is still a major tool employed for motivating people to participate in community activities. According to Houston (2005), "dance is for everyone" (p. 195). This means that dance is central in the community; it brings all people together despite their social or political background, hence dance unifies the people. This therefore entails that the Chinese word 集体 jítǐ that rhymes with the word Shona *jiti* are principally based on a similar concept of community's oneness.

Coincidental Rhymes with a Misleading Effect
There are a few Chinese words/phrases that coincidentally rhyme with Shona words/phrases. Such rhyming words with a slight connection in terms of the meanings are likely to mislead learners in terms of comprehension of the actual meanings of the target language words.

For example, the Chinese phrase 偷了 tōule as in the example 手机被偷了 (in English, *the phone was stolen*.), where the word 偷 tōu means to steal and 偷了 tōule is the past tense form, rhymes with the Shona word "*tora*" which means to take away. 偷了 tōule and *tora* do not mean the same but they have a slight relationship in the sense that in Shona culture stealing is seen as a form of taking away somebody's property without the owner's consent. The word *tora* is sometimes used as an idiom to show that somebody is a thief as in the statement "*anotora uyu*", (in English, *he is a thief*.).

Another example with such coincidental rhyme is the word 拿 ná that rhymes with the Shona idiophone *nha* which means to pick up something normally in a hurried manner. The idiophone *nha* rhymes with the word 拿 ná which coincidentally means to pick up or take something. Also, the Chinese word 忙 máng which means to be busy coincidentally rhymes with the Shona word root –*manga* which means to be pressed. This Shona word root appears in such phrases as "*mazuva ano ndakamangwa nebasa*" translated as "These days I'm too busy" 我这几天很忙. Though the Shona word root -*manga* means to be pressed as in being busy, it also means to be pressed with an item.

Such words can easily mislead learners since they will feel like these rhyming words are completely same in terms of their meaning and pronunciation. In fact, these words do not have any relationship, hence the teachers should make it a point that from the very first day learners are introduced to such words they do not confuse the meanings of these rhyming words.

Embarrassing rhymes
In teaching Chinese language in Zimbabwe, there are a few Chinese words that all teachers should treat with care due to the fact that they rhyme with certain Shona words that are rarely said in the public. Such words are either regarded as vulgar or embarrassing. Under this category, the following words and phrases were identified:

The Chinese phrase 他妈妈 (Tāmāma) which means "his mother", rhymes with the Shona phrase which means to discharge feces. The Shona rhyming phrase is "*tamama*" which literary means "we have defecated on ourselves". This is a Shona slang expression that also means "we have messed up" or "we are in trouble". Linked to this phrase is also the Chinese phrase 我妈妈 (wǒmāma) which means "my mother". This Chinese phrase rhymes with the Shona phrase "*wamama*" literary translated into "you have defecated on yourself" which means "you have messed up". Both phrases are quite embarrassing to say in the public. Those who say such phrases are regarded as hooligans, uncultured, rude, impudent, and etcetera.

The other example in this category is the Chinese phrase "真的 zhēn de" which means "really". This phrase rhymes with the Shona word which means man's testicles, and in Shona culture this word cannot be said in the public. When teaching native speakers of Shona, it is wise to understand this cultural background as well as the effect of the rhyming of such words/phrases because some students might not be able to use the words comfortably in the public.

Other Chinese words that have an embarrassing rhyming effect include 钢笔 gāngbǐ (a pen) and 停止 tíngzhǐ (to stop). These two Chinese words are quite innocent. However, whenever a native speaker of Shona language hears them for the first time, there is a tendency to naturally link them to the Shona words that are rarely said in the public. The Word 钢笔 gāngbǐ rhymes with the Shona word *gambi*, which is a slang word for vagina. On the other hand, the phrase 停止 tíngzhǐ rhymes with the Shona word root *–tinji*, which is normally known as *matinji* in its plural form. This latter word refers to the female's stretched labia. Both words are quite embarrassing in Shona culture.

Teaching such words to a native speaker of Shona can be a bit difficult; students will naturally feel shy to participate in the pronunciation exercises—neither will they comfortably use such words in a phrase nor will they willingly pronounce the words loudly in class. This has a negative impact to both the learners and the teacher. If the teacher is also a native speaker of Shona, it is likely to make learners take the teacher as a "rude" teacher or somebody who is not serious. Teaching such words therefore requires good strategies. During the period the researchers taught at the University of Zimbabwe, the morpheme by morpheme pronunciation strategy was adopted. For instance, for the word "真的 zhēnde", instead of producing the two morphemes as combined morphemes, it will reduce the effect when this phrase is pronounced as "真 zhēn +的 de". Learners will acquire such words or phrases without actually feeling the embarrassing rhyme that exists when the word is pronounced as combined morphemes. This works well with the majority of Chinese phrases that rhyme with Shona embarrassing words. Where it is unavoidable, it is advisable to directly warn the learners not to associate the given word with Shona words.

Random Rhymes
The last group of rhyming Shona and Chinese words/phrases which we identified for the purposes of this research includes words that rhyme though they have completely different meanings. Table 3 is a list of the examples identified.

The above listed examples are just a small sample of the words we identified in Shona and Chinese that rhyme yet they have completely different meanings. These words do not have any direct connection in both their meanings and historical origins. Therefore, we called such an inter-lingual rhyming phenomenon 'random rhyming'. The majority of Shona and Chinese rhyming words is composed of these random rhyming words. This kind of rhyming requires a fair attention during teaching of Chinese to native speakers of Shona. Due to the negative influence of first language, learners tend to pronounce such words in the way they are pronounced in their first mother language. This may lead learners into pronouncing the given Chinese words wrongly, thus affecting the meaning of the given words. This is because Chinese is a tonal language hence any change in tone can either affect the meaning of the word or change the way it is perceived by the Chinese native speakers.

The rhyming of Shona and Chinese language emanates from two facts about these two languages. First, these two languages share a similar orthography. Though Chinese language uses pictorial writing known as characters, during the elementary stages of teaching Chinese, a system called Chinese pinyin is used. The Chinese pinyin system is an orthographic system that uses Romanized phonetic spellings (Wai, 1993). This system is similar to the Shona orthography which also uses the Romanized phonetic spellings. Secondly, both Shona and Chinese have a similar syllabic structure, especially the CV, VCV, and CVCV structure. For instance, the word *baba* (father) [CVCV structure] in Shona is also spelt the same in Chinese as *bàba* which is also a CVCV structure, with a similar meaning as in Shona. However, in terms of pronunciation these words are produced differently. It is within this background that we found the above identifying words/phrases that rhyme but have different meanings or close meanings.

The challenge that results from these rhyming words/phrases can be divided into two broad categories: The first category is that of pro-acquisition of Chinese. This category has rhyming words/phrases that have similar or close meanings, hence learners of Chinese who are native speakers of Shona language will naturally find such words easy to grasp and easy to memorize. This is because they can easily identify with such words/phrases because they depend on the inventory from their mother tongue. The majority of such words fall under the category of words with related rhyming words as well as words in Shona and Chinese borrowed from English. Such a list is well articulated in some previous research such as Mushangwe and Tahwa (2015). Example words are *julebu* and *Kirabhu* (club), *katong* and *katuni* (cartoon), *kafei* and *kofi* (coffee), *dísīkě* and *dhisiko* (disco), *gāoěrfū* and *gorofu* (golf), etcetera. This group of words can also motivate learners to enjoy the process of learning Chinese.

Table 3. *List of Words with Random Rhymes*

Chinese Word/phrase and meaning	Rhyming Shona word/phrase and meaning
头发 (tóufa) which means hair	*tofa* which means we are dying
奶奶(nǎinai) grandmother	*nhainhai* A word normally used to emphasize a point
如果 rúguǒ	*rugo* meaning little and tiny wasp
新的 xīn de which means new one	*shinda* which means thread.
措词"cuòcí " which means wrong word.	*tsotsi* which means thug.
价值"jiàzhí which means value	*jaji* borrowed from the English word "judge".
自在 zìzài meaning to be free and comfortable	*dzidzai* meaning learn, referring to more than one person.

爱你 àinǐ I love you	*ayini* which means an iron （for ironing clothes）
蚂蚁 nǎyǐ ant	*mayi/ mai* which means mother
母牛 mǔniú means cow	*munyu* which means salt.
蛤蟆 háma name for a toad	*hama* a Shona word for relative(s)
拐 guǎi to abduct or 怪 guǎi to blame	*gwai* word for sheep.
一台 yitai "Tai" is a measure word for electronic gadgets such as laptops and cellphone. When it is one it is called "yitai"	*itai* which means *"do"* (referring to many people) and it also rhymes with the Shona name of a person called Itai
不如 bùrú means "…not better than…"	*bhuru* word for *"bull"*
木材 mùcái means wooden	*mutsai* an imperative phrase meaning "cause to awake"
所谓 suǒwèi means "so called"	*sowe* which refers to an open space for worship, usually for apostolic Churches in Zimbabwe such as Johanne Masowe and Johanne Marange
木头(mùtou) means wood	*muto* word for "soup"
复杂(fùzá) means complicated	*fudza* an imperative verbal phrase meaning "to herd"
母子(mǔzǐ) meaning mother and son	*mudzi* meaning plant roots
扶梯(fútī) escalator	*futi* meaning also

The second category falls into what is known as negative transfer. According to Odlin (1989), "negative transfer is the negative influence resulting from the similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired" (p. 27). This category of rhyming words/phrases, instead of promoting the acquisition of Chinese vocabulary it rather reverses the process; it leads to reduction of vocabulary. If this category is not taught well learners are likely to end up getting confused and hence fail to grasp the meaning of the target language's vocabulary. In this category, we also include the random rhyming words and embarrassing rhyming words.

In some instances, the discrepancies that exist between the two languages' rhyming words/phrases disorient the learners thus leading to frustration which later turn into total abandonment of the learning process. Learners are forced to give up learning when they find comprehension of a second language difficulty. Chen (2005) classifies such factors under the "affective barriers", where learners are distracted from learning the target language. This is probably the reason why learners of Chinese language at the University of Zimbabwe are normally more during the elementary stage and later dwindle to less than half of the number of those who would have registered for the beginner's course.

The other impact of such rhyming words/phrases is that of creating fossilization. In language acquisition, fossilization refers to a phenomenon of second language acquisition (SLA) in which second language learners develops and retains a linguistic system, or inter-language, that is self-contained and different from both the learner's first language and the target language (Nesmer, 1971). A number of Zimbabwean students continue to confuse the Chinese word 你 nǐ and 我 wǒ even up to the higher proficiency levels. The confusion is due to the rhyming of pronouns *ini* and *iwe*. This therefore leads to fossilization if the error is not corrected at early stages.

As teachers of Chinese language whose mother tongue is Shona, who at one point also faced the same challenges, we need to come up with strategies in teaching Chinese vocabulary of

such sets of words/phrases that rhyme. The first suggestion is that of adopting an intentional effort, where a group of rhyming words/phrases are grouped together and learners are deliberately taught how to differentiate the meanings. Such comparison where confusing rhyming words for the two targets languages are grouped together makes it easier for the learners to grasp the differences between the words. If the teacher is not conscious of the learners' challenges, it is virtually impossible to offer any solution. Therefore, we also recommend that teachers should be aware of these challenges mentioned in this research paper. This will help teachers to correct and rescue the learners before the process of fossilization takes places. Lastly, teachers should be perennial researchers so that they continue to discover new challenges that students face when learning a second language.

Conclusions

Rhyming words/phrases can contribute to the understanding and quick grasp of certain words and phrases in the target language. However, they can easily lead to confusion if not well taught. Where the rhyming words/phrases have a close meaning due to various factors, they positively contribute to the acquisition of the target language. However, where the rhyming words have completely different meanings or have embarrassing meanings in the learners' language, they negatively affect the acquisition process. It is apparently clear that the study of rhyming words/phrases across languages in the field of second language teaching is as important as the study of transfer errors.

Our research is likely to be criticized on the basis that it does not include vocabulary from advanced Chinese proficiency. This was intentionally excluded mainly because as learners acquire higher proficiency Chinese they become more conscious of the differences in pronunciation of the words in the target language and their own mother tongue. The impact of rhyming of words in second language acquisition is more at the beginner's level than at higher proficiency level. Furthermore, this research is likely to be criticized on the basis that it does not explore the Shona Chinese rhyming words as perceived by the native speakers of Chinese language. Also, the research ignores other local languages in Zimbabwe; this was mainly due to researchers' lack of expertise in the other Zimbabwean languages. The present research was limited to the rhyming words as perceived by native speakers of Shona mainly because the researchers are both native speakers of Shona. Such inter-language rhyming is likely to exist in other languages and could be exploited for teaching and learning purposes. It will be interesting to have further research studies in these areas. We therefore suggest that future research should focus on the impact of the Shona and Chinese rhyming words at higher proficiency level, as well as Chinese and other languages' rhyming words. Such research is likely to promote the teaching and learning of Chinese in Zimbabwe and other countries as well as the learning of Zimbabwean local languages by Chinese native speakers.

References

Chen, Y. (2005). Barriers to acquiring listening strategies for EFL learners and their pedagogical implications. *TESL-EJ*, *8*(4), n4.

Houston, S. (2005). Participation in community dance: A road to empowerment and

transformation?. *New Theatre Quarterly*, *21*(2), 166-177.

Jenkins, J. (1995). *Variation in phonological error in interlanguage talk.* (Doctoral dissertation, Institute of Education, University of London). University of London.

Jing, L. (2008). Chinese languages study methods: Audition and the human early stages in Africa. *HRRC Occasional Paper*. Harare: HRRC.

Mushangwe, H. (2015). *A comparative study of Chinese and Shona vocabulary from the acquisition of Chinese language perspective.* (Doctoral dissertation, Hebei University). Hebei University.

Mushangwe, H., & Chisoni, G. (2015). A critical analysis of the use of pinyin as a substitute of Chinese characters. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, *6*(3), 685-694.

Mushangwe, M., & Tahwa, P. (2015). A comparative study of loanwords from English in Shona and Chinese borrowed words, in V. Mugari, L. Mukaro and E. Chabata (Eds.) *Current Trends in Zimbabwean Linguistics: A Festschrift for Chief Kumbirai Mkanganwi*. University of Zimbabwe Publications.

Odlin, T. (1989). *Language transfer: Cross-linguistic influence in language learning*. Cambridge University Press.

Pattamadilok, C., Perre, L., & Ziegler, J. C. (2011). Beyond rhyme or reason: ERPs reveal task-specific activation of orthography on spoken language. *Brain and language*, *116*(3), 116-124.

Ratner, B. (2007). *Rush Hour 3*. United States: Roger Birnbaum Productions.

Seidenberg, M. S., & Tanenhaus, M. K. (1979). Orthographic effects on rhyme monitoring. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Learning and Memory*, *5*(6), 546.

Wong, W. (1993). Typesetting Chinese pinyin using virtual fonts. *TUGboat*, *14*(1), 8-11.

Yoncheva, Y. N., Maurer, U., Zevin, J. D., & McCandliss, B. D. (2013). Effects of rhyme and spelling patterns on auditory word ERPs depend on selective attention to phonology. *Brain and language*, *124*(3), 238-243.