

Chinese Language Teaching Methodology and Technology

Volume 3 | Issue 1

Article 3

July 2020

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Recommended Citation

Liang, Kai (2020) "A Discussion on the Pedagogical Concepts in Confucian Analects from the View of the Pedagogy of Performed Culture Approach," *Chinese Language Teaching Methodology and Technology*.

Vol. 3: Iss. 1, Article 3.

Available at: <https://engagedscholarship.csuohio.edu/cltmt/vol3/iss1/3>

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Cover Page Footnote

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A Discussion on the Pedagogical Concepts in Confucian Analects from the View of the Pedagogy of Performed Culture Approach

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ABSTRACT

Confucian *Analects* contains many pedagogical concepts and viewpoints that have a significant influence on China's culture and history. Many of the concepts can be interpreted and understood from the perspective of the pedagogy of Performed Culture Approach. This paper investigates the meanings of some Confucian pedagogical discussions and thoughts, such as communicating with other social members, the relationship between language and behavior, multiple procedures in learning, and how social contexts affect one's language and performance in the *Analects*, which is mainly from the perspective of the relationship between language and Performed Culture Approach.

Keywords: Performed Culture Approach, PCA, Confucian *Analects*, pedagogy, foreign language

1. Introduction

The pedagogy of Performed Culture Approach (hereinafter referred to as PCA) for learning a foreign language was architected by Galal Walker and Mari Noda (Yu, 2020). The PCA emphasizes that a learner should learn the target language in the language's authentic culture. The goal of learning the target language is being a functional participant in the target culture. According to the PCA, the experience of learning must be conducted and processed in communicational contexts in the target culture (Walker, 2010, 1, 10).

Confucian *Analects* is a classic work that has been influencing the Chinese culture and China's educational and pedagogical traditions for two thousand years. Many pedagogical concepts in the *Analects* can be investigated from the view of the PCA. In this paper, I will discuss communicating with other social members, the relationship between language and behavior, multiple procedures in learning, and how social contexts affect one's language and performance. Chai (2018) points out that learning and teaching in the *Analects* include setting and learning exemplary behaviors and performances in socialized environments. McGinnis (1994) discusses some pedagogical traditions in the *Analects* from the perspectives of life-long language learning, expertise, cultural-based learning and teaching, learner responsibility, and

responsiveness to local conditions. Galal Walker (2017, Preface) claims that the source of pleasure in learning is to try out one learned at the right time and occasions. This is based on his understanding of the first sentence of the *Analects* and the meaning of teaching and learning in Confucian pedagogical traditions. Their research sheds light on the values of Confucian pedagogical traditions from a perspective of the PCA.

The English translation of the entries in Confucian *Analects* in this paper is developed by my own version, which is mainly based on Legge's (1893) and Waley's (1938) translations. However, because Legge's and Waley's translations can date back to the late 19th and early 20th centuries, I also make references from other later English and Chinese versions, e.g., Ames (1998), Lau & Yang (2008), Qian (1985), and Fu (2012).

Previous translations and connotations did not interpret the *Analects*' pedagogical ideas and strategies from a PCA's perspective. The *Analects* and the PCA do not have perfect counterparts because the PCA is for CFL (Chinese as a Foreign Language), while the *Analects* is for broader learning that includes language learning. However, I think both the PCA and the *Analects* pay attention to the importance of performance. They believe that effective and practical learning, including language learning, should be based on a performance-oriented methodology in communicational environments.

2. Learning in community

The PCA is designed for learners to engage and participate in social activities with other members in the community (Walker, 2010, 3). In a curriculum for the American learners of Chinese, like Chinese language classes in American institutes, the curricular aim for teachers should be providing activities in authentic contexts of the target culture, for learners to perform and receive corrective feedback from teachers and other classmates or native Chinese who sit in the class. The goal is to enable the learners to use the target language appropriately in the language's authentic context. For example, in beginning-level Chinese language classes, students learn to use different greeting strategies in a variety of authentic contexts of the Chinese culture (e.g., to a teacher in the Chinese university, to a close friend at a party, to a Chinese host family's member at their home in China, and to an unacquainted person in public) by performing what they have prepared based on the pedagogical materials before class, through conversing with the teacher or students who act as the interlocutors in the assigned contexts. The students can get instant feedback and correction from the teacher on pronunciation, grammar, and especially cultural appropriateness, demonstrated through verbal behaviors and non-verbal behaviors (e.g., facial expression, emotion) (Walker, 2010, 51-95).

In Confucian *Analects*, Confucius requires his disciples to communicate with other members in the society for individual development and saving the chaotic society. The *Analects* claims that becoming a *junzi* (君子, a virtuous man; a superior man) through learning is the way to transform an individual to be a capable and moral person to save the collapsing society. The role models that a learner can learn from are in the community. For example, *jianxiansiqi* (見賢思齊, when we see men of worth, we should think of equaling them) emphasizes that one needs to think of how to take actions to become a person of virtue. Moreover, learning is about the

capabilities of doing things in the society. See an example below.

- (1) Chapter *Xue Er*: Zi Xia said: “If a man can change his appearance into sincerity when he treats the virtuous as virtuous; if he can put his utmost strength in serving his parents; if he can devote his whole life in serving his prince; if he can keep his word in his intercourse with his friends even if others may say that the man has not learned, I will certainly say that he already has learned.”
(学而：賢賢易色，事父母能竭其力，事君能致其身，與朋友交言而有信。雖曰未學，吾必謂之學矣。)

Moreover, learning from other members in the community (in Chinese language classes, other members can be teachers, well-performed classmates, and role models which are exemplary dialogues in pedagogical materials) is critical to a learner’s individual development. The most famous demonstration about learning from other members in the community in the *Analects* might be as follows.

- (2) Chapter *Shu Er*: The Master said, “When several people are doing things, there must be those who can serve me as my teachers. I will choose their good qualities to follow them, their bad qualities to correct them.”
(述而：子曰：“三人行，必有我師焉。擇其善者而從之，其不善者而改之。”)

This entry clearly shows Confucius’ idea that one should learn from members in the community. No matter the qualities of other members are good or bad, a good learner can always learn something valuable from them. Confucius requires his disciples to analyze the performance that they observed, and then to positively choose what to learn and what to avoid. However, for American learners of Chinese, it’s not easy to always find and learn the proper cultural behaviors if the characters in pedagogical materials demonstrate inauthentic behaviors. Therefore, the pedagogical materials should be authentic to demonstrate the culturally and linguistically appropriate language and behaviors in their corresponding contexts, while teachers have an obligation to provide explanations, feedback, and corrections to those inappropriate language and behaviors appeared in pedagogical materials and Chinese language class.

In the PCA, the experience of learning is performance-based, which stresses on interpersonal communication and interactions through participating in simulated activities in the target culture. Performance lays a solid foundation for understanding the meanings of words. A learner’s experience unfolds in socialized communication and interactions by using the target language. The learning experience of participating in activities by performing what one has studied is also helpful in constructing and extending the learner’s repertoire of future occasions, which might be called *remembering the future* (Walker, 2010, 21).

The first sentence in the *Analects*, which is also one of the most well-known sayings in the Chinese culture is about learning and doing.

- (3) Chapter *Xue Er*: The Master said, “Is it not a pleasure to learn and then try out at the right time? Is it not delightful to have friends who are coming from a distant place? Is he not a superior man, who does not resent though others may not understand him?”
(學而：子曰：“學而時習之，不亦說乎？有朋自遠方來，不亦樂乎？人不知而不慍，不亦君子乎？”)

This clearly demonstrates Confucius’ pedagogical concept that learning is practiced at the right time, and the purpose of learning is doing. This is a statement about performance-based learning. Also, learning-doing is a source of attaining pleasure, which is a significant philosophy in Confucius’ teaching.

3. Language and performance

When it comes to the relationship between language and performance, the PCA claims that the meaning of language is in its corresponding behaviors and performance rather than merely its linguistic meaning.

In the *Analects*, only those words that can match performance might be considered as appropriate language. Language and performance are associated, while performance is the foundation of words. Otherwise, the language will not have a positive social meaning. For instance:

- (4) Chapter *Wei Zheng*: Zi Gong asked about the superior man; the Master said, “He acts before he speaks out, and afterwards speaks according to what he did.”
(為政：子貢問君子。子曰：“先行其言，而後從之。”)

Meanwhile, language must match its corresponding performance. A good learner should make sure one’s words and behaviors match each other.

- (5) Chapter *Gongye Chang*: Zaiyu was sleeping during the day. The Master said, “Rotten wood cannot be carved; a wall of dirty earth cannot be troweled. Yu! -- what is the use of my scolding him?” The Master said, “There was a time when I heard people’s words and believed their conducts. Now my way is not merely to hear what they say, but also observe their conduct. It is from Yu that I have made this change.”
(公冶長：宰予晝寢。子曰：“朽木不可雕也，糞土之牆不可朽也。於予與何誅？”子曰：“始吾於人也，聽其言而信其行。今吾於人也，聽其言而觀其行。於予與改是。”)
- (6) Chapter *Xian Wen*: The Master said, “The superior man is modest in his speech, but exceeds in his actions.”
(憲問：子曰：“君子恥其言而過其行。”)

- (7) Chapter *Li Ren*: The Master said, “Ancients did not easily speak out their words, because they feared that lest their performance cannot come up to the words.”
(里仁：子曰：“古者言之不出，恥躬之不逮也。”)

The above three examples show a performance-based perspective in Confucius’ teaching that behavior and overall performance go before language.

4. Observing in learning

In curriculum design, the PCA follows the principles of Kolb’s learning cycle that observation, reflection, application, and consolidation are important procedures for learners to learn the target language (Cornelius, 2015, 21). For example, when preparing a Chinese class on “ordering in a Chinese restaurant,” a learner previews a video clip of the main dialogue before and after studying new words and grammar. The experience of watching the video is observation, including observing the context and the interaction. When the learner tries to understand the language used in a dining occasion, the learner is reflecting and interpreting the meaning of language in the specific context with words and grammar/sentence pattern s/he just memorized. In this procedure, the student should pay attention to how the interlocutors’ language and intentions are delivered through linguistic and behavioral activities. In the Chinese class, students need to reenact based on the conversation in the video with other students or the teacher. Linguistic, pronunciation, behavioral, and even emotional appropriateness are all critical for a successful communication in the target culture.

The *Analects* uses *jian* 見, *guan* 觀, *shi* 視, and *cha* 察 to demonstrate different types of observation. Confucius expects his students to observe good role models and make positive changes in their learning and individual development through self-reflecting:

- (8) Chapter *Li Ren*: The Master said, “When you see men of virtue, you should think of how to equal them; when you see men of a bad example, you should turn inwards to examine yourselves.”
(里仁：子曰：“見賢思齊焉，見不賢而內自省也。”)

This entry points out that learning requires observation from members of the surrounding environment, and personal growth may derive from active reflection. In the PCA, the performance of members in the community is the source for learners to gain knowledge from. Mari Noda proposed a concept “Performance Watch” (Cornelius, 2015), which means a learner observes a native speaker’s communication for gaining concrete experience in using the language appropriately in the target culture. For knowing one’s personality, Confucius proposes to look (*shi* 視), to observe (*guan* 觀), and to examine (*cha* 察) from multiple aspects.

- (9) Chapter *Wei Zheng*: The Master said, “Look at what a man does, observe his motivations, and examine what he rests on. How can a man conceal his real worth? How can a man conceal his real worth?”

(為政：子曰：“視其所以，觀其所由，察其所安。人焉廋哉？人焉廋哉？”)

This entry shows that looking, observing, and examining are instrumental behaviors to get to know a person. Confucius says that “getting knowledge is just getting to know persons” (Chapter *Yan Yuan*, Verse 22). Knowing a person is mainly from hearing what one said and observing what the person did (Chapter *Gongye Chang*, Verse 10).

5. “Story” and “PARTS”

One of the critical concepts in the PCA is “story,” the basic unit of analysis in language learning (Walker, 2010, 43). A story includes five key elements: place, audience, roles, time, and script, so-called PARTS (Walker, 2010, 24). Learning a language is, to some extent, up to how many stories one can memorize and apply in social communication.

The concept of PARTS emphasizes how the five elements play roles in co-constructing meaning of language. When learners remember a story in which target expressions are used, learners should also remember the five elements that construct the story. A performance is defined by place, time, and social relationship in the target culture. Every element in a story affects how the script should be altered to maintain a culturally appropriate performance.

Galal Walker (2017, Chinese 7701 class lecture) compares two types of conversation scripts that share the same intention but in different cultures (i.e., Chinese and American). The intention is that the householder asks the tenant to return home earlier during workdays because the young tenant often returns late and the householder’s sleep has been interrupted. Walker finds that the script in the Chinese culture shows an indirect strategy while the script in the American culture shows a direct strategy to address the issue. Although both conversations occurred in the same context, their cultural environment is different and thus the linguistic-cultural differences manifestations (and even emotional expressions) are apparently different. Even the ways of expression and emotional hints in the two conversations can be distinguished clearly and easily. This is an excellent example to illustrate how PARTS distinguish the language and its corresponding performance in different cultures.

A script alters when time changes, place changes, roles change, or audience changes. For example, in a high school in China, a student might greet a teacher by addressing the teacher’s family name with a suffix *laoshi*, while the student can directly address her/his classmates’ names when greeting on campus, and probably s/he only says *ba*(dad)/*ma*(mom) to greet parents when s/he returns home.

In the *Analects*, time and place also profoundly affect one’s performance. When Confucius asks Gongming Gu whether Gongshu Wen does not speak, does not laugh, and does not take,

Gongming Gu tells him that Gongshu Wen speaks and behaves appropriately when time, place, and occasions altered.

- (10) Chapter *Xian Wen*: The Master asked Gongming Gu about Gongshu Wen, saying, “Is it true that your master does not speak, does not laugh, and does not take?” Gongming Gu replied, “The reporters exaggerated on this. My master only speaks when it is time to speak, and so men do not dislike his speaking. He only laughs when it is the occasion to be a pleasure, and so men do not dislike his laughing. He only takes when it is with righteousness to do so, and so men dislike his taking.” The Master said, “Nice! Was this really so?”

(憲問：子問公叔文子於公明賈曰：“信乎夫子不言、不笑、不取乎？”公明賈對曰：“以告者過也。夫子時然後言，人不厭其言；樂然後笑，人不厭其笑；義然後取，人不厭其取。”子曰：“其然，豈其然乎？”)

Meanwhile, when some other elements (e.g., roles and audiences) of the PARTS changed, Confucius adapts his language according to the person he communicates with. The following example demonstrates how Confucius adjusts his words and answers for different disciples on the same question based on who the audiences are.

- (11) Chapter *Xian Jin*: Zi Lu asked: “Should I immediately take into practice when I heard it?”

The Master said, “You have father and elder brothers to be consulted - how can you act immediately to take into practice what you hear without discussing with them?” Ran You asked the same question, “Should I immediately take into practice when I heard it?” and the Master answered, “Immediately, take it into practice when you hear it.” Gongxi Hua said, “You asked whether he should take immediately into practice when he heard it, and you said, ‘You have father and elder brothers to be consulted.’ When Qiu asked whether he should take immediately into practice when he heard it, and you said, ‘Take it immediately into practice.’ I, Chi, am confused, and dare to ask you for an explanation.” The Master replied, “Qiu is backward and slow; therefore, I urged him to go forward. (Ran) You is aggressive and emotional; therefore, I held him back.”

(先進：子路問：“聞斯行諸？”子曰：“有父兄在，如之何其聞斯行之？”冉有問：“聞斯行諸？”子曰：“聞斯行之。”公西華曰：“由也問聞斯行諸，子曰‘有父兄在’；求也問聞斯行諸，子曰‘聞斯行之’。赤也惑，敢問。”子曰：“求也退，故進之；由也兼人，故退之。”)

For the same question from two disciples, Confucius gives his answers based on his understanding of their different personalities. The answers are determined by roles and audiences, though Confucius’ intention is the same-to encourage his students to attain personal development. Therefore, in learning a foreign language, paying close attention to the nuances of contextual information of performances in the target culture is fundamental to knowing how to apply it appropriately.

6. A brief discussion of the implications

In CFL (Chinese as Foreign Language), the *Analects* and the PCA's pedagogical concepts can help teachers better design curriculum and class activities from a performance-oriented perspective. Successful communication in Chinese requires learners to learn Chinese in authentic contexts provided by the teachers who put efforts to develop pedagogical materials that include detailed PARTS and exemplary behaviors, even emotional expressions. Activities of a Chinese language curriculum should have specific and clear goals and procedures that reflect the concepts of observing, reflecting, applying, and consolidating. Cultural appropriateness in language and performance is the most critical element to decide whether a learner can have successful communication with native Chinese speakers.

7. Conclusion

The above discussions have shown that Confucian *Analects* has high pedagogical value; learning in community, language and performance, observing in learning, and multiple elements that can affect communication are important concepts in learning. Practitioners who teach Chinese as a foreign language should refer to these Chinese early pedagogical concepts when designing their Chinese language curriculum and class.

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Acknowledgements

I gratefully thank Profs. Xiaobin Jian and Galal Walker, and the participants in Chinese 7705 courses of the Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures at the Ohio State University. I also acknowledge Dr. Mari Noda, Dr. Minru Li, Dr. Patrick McAloon, Dr. Charles Quinn, and Dr. Marjorie Chan for their insightful suggestions and positive comments on my study. All remaining errors are mine.