

Learning Chinese with XiangLong



A Collection of Chinese Idioms

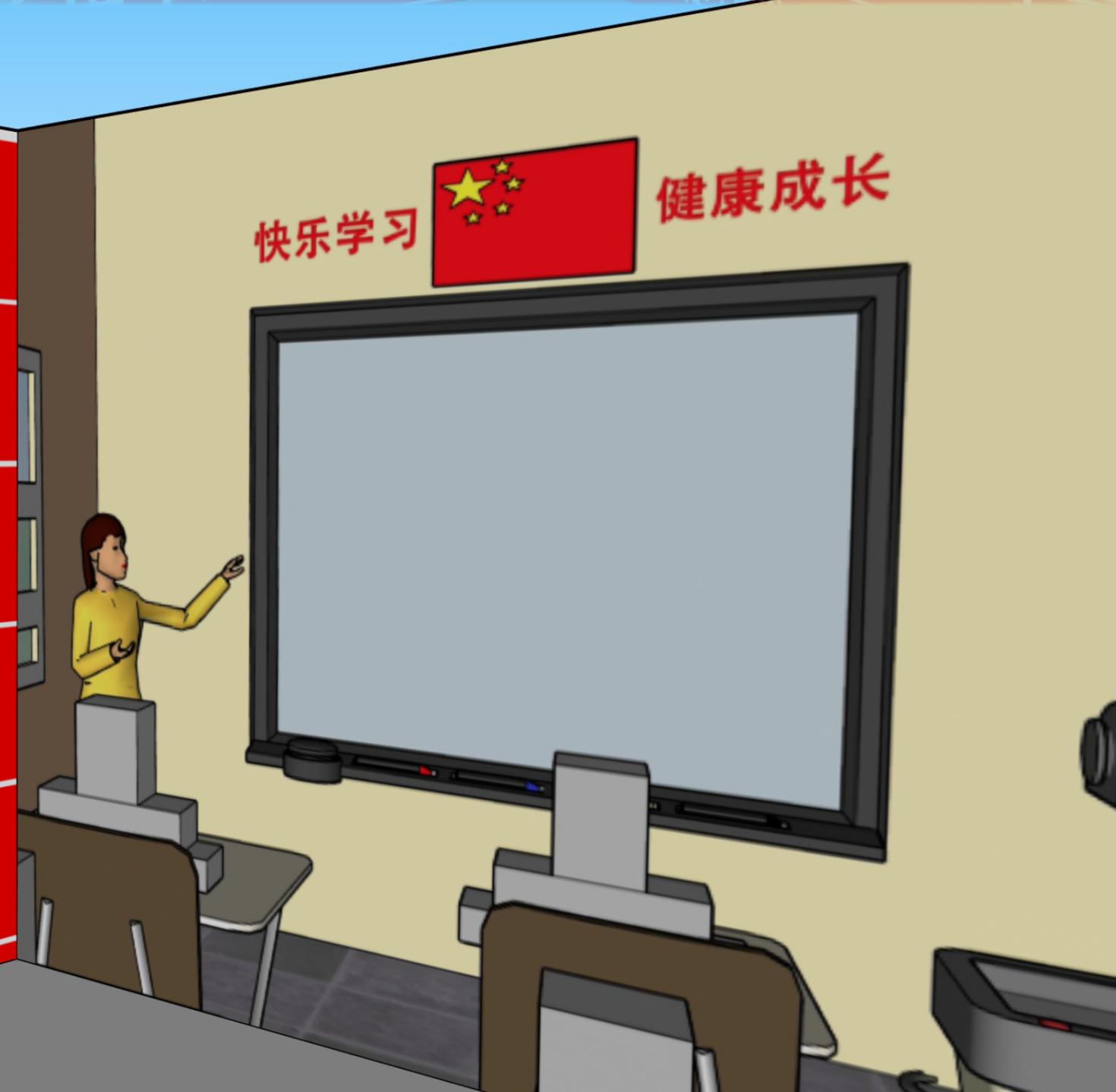
ARE YOU READY?

In my thesis project *Learning Chinese with XiangLong: A Collection of Chinese Idioms*, I explore the theme of mistranslation between Chinese and English. It is an installation consisting of one projector with 10 short videos surrounded by a series of posters with slogans—*biāoyǔ* on them.

坏习惯毁人前程
功倍 好习惯受益终身
雨后 成功细节中
责 辉煌人生起于今日
之母 自卑是失败之父

不抱有一丝幻想
读书成就梦想 知识
纳百川之流成大海 通千古
勤奋可以弥补聪明的不足 但聪明无法
幻想是美丽的彩虹 行动才是
竞争不是比

不怕路远 就怕志短
今天拼搏努力 他日谁与争锋
团结拼搏 求实进取
努力造就实力 态度决定高度
慎而思之 勤而行之





Chinese people are only good at math and science

Diversities of cultures and languages often lead to mistranslation.

Not only that, but more and more westerners have common stereotypes about Chinese people and their culture.



image from the internet



Chinese people look exactly the same



with XiangLong



Learning Chinese with XiangLong



Learning Chinese with X

The general course mainly teaches learners what is the meaning of the Chinese idiom in each Lesson. The practical course focuses on how to use the idiom that we learned from the lesson in practice.

with XiangLong



Learning Chinese with XiangLong



Learning Chinese with X

with XiangLong



Learning Chinese with XiangLong



Learning Chinese with X

Based on this phenomenon, I opened an Educational Channel on YouTube which consists of a series of language learning videos, made for foreign audiences whose first language is English. This channel could be divided into general course and practical course.

with XiangLong



Learning Chinese with XiangLong



Learning Chinese with X

with XiangLong



Learning Chinese with XiangLong



Learning Chinese with X

with XiangLong



Learning Chinese with XiangLong



Learning Chinese with X

with XiangLong



Learning Chinese with XiangLong



Learning Chinese with X

125% 显示 缩放

插入 表格 图表 文本 形状 媒体 批注

共享 提示

格式 文稿

文本

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Times

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段后 0 磅

项目符号与列表 无*

68 个字

First, a brief introduction of the channel, accompanied by a catchy message (e.g. “You can learn English in just three minutes each day”).

Before making my videos, I referred to some language courses which teach English to Chinese people on YouTube and also I extracted their teaching structure into three steps.

Second, making a list of words you need to learn in the class, reading aloud to audiences, then explaining them in greater detail.

Third, providing examples of the words in practice, to make a story accompanied with the words we learned from a class.

ENGLISH IN A MINUTE

VOA Learning English

欢迎来到“一分钟美语”

Welcome to English in a Minute.

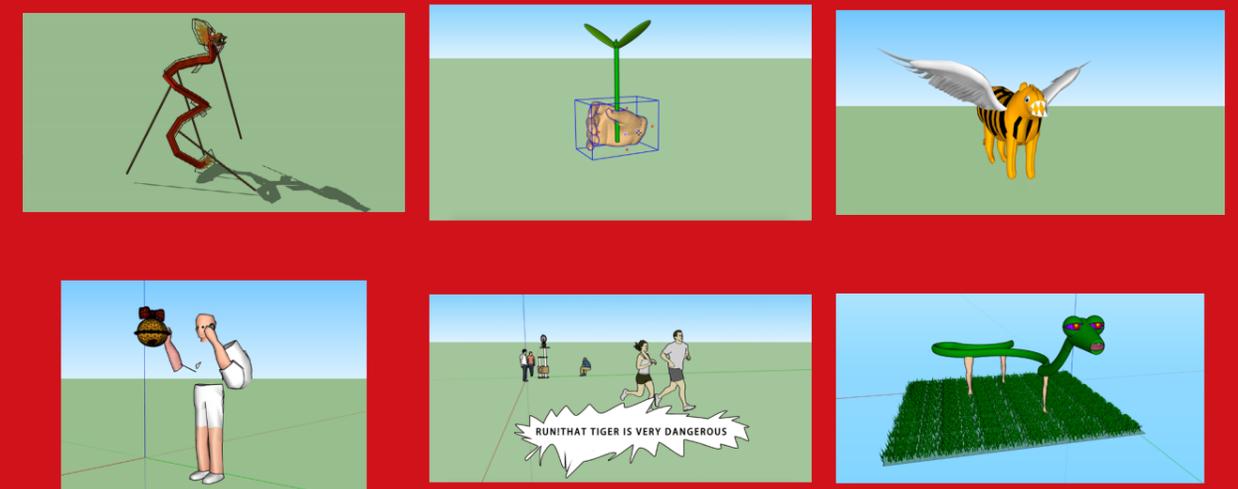
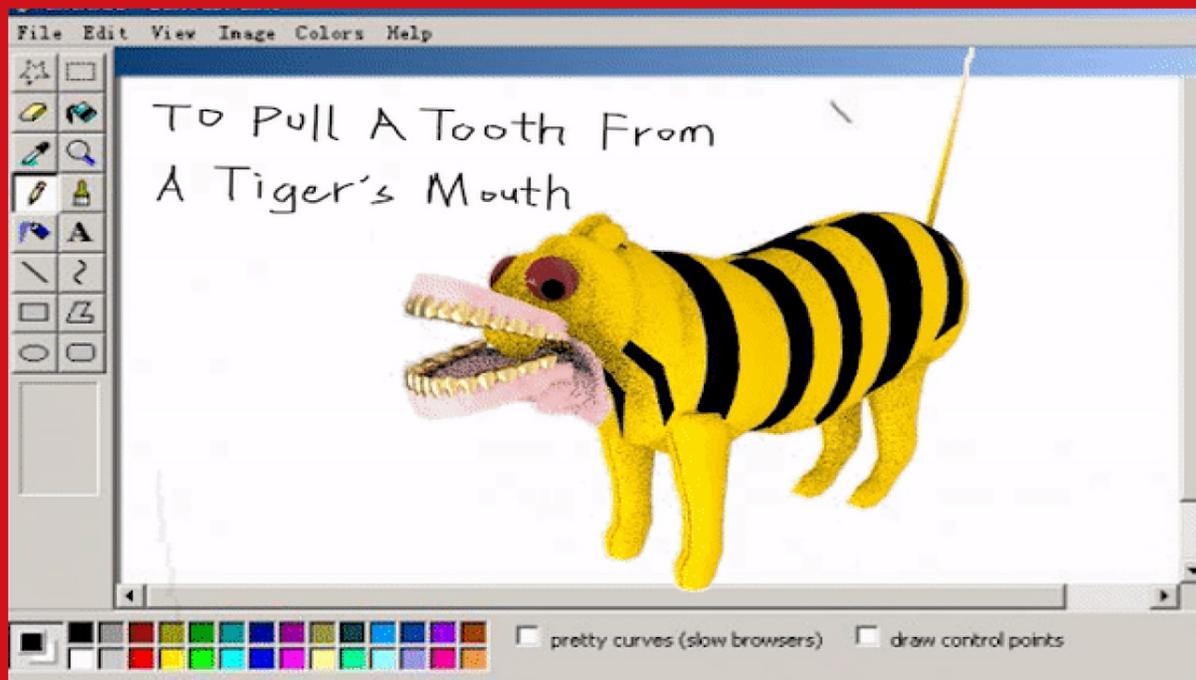
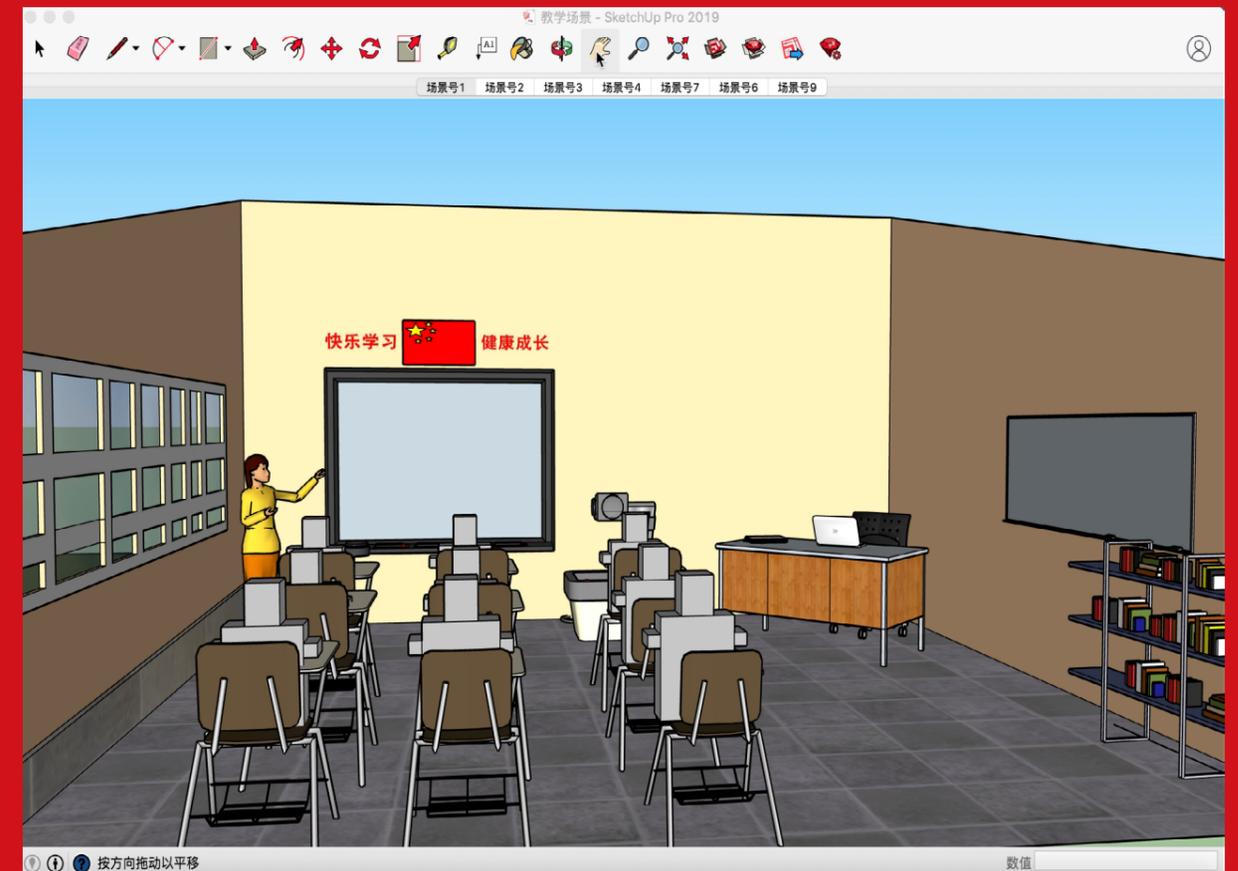
ENGLISH IN A MINUTE

VOA Learning English

有一些成语，你可以很容易的猜出它们的含义

With some idioms, it is easy to guess their meaning.

Based on this research, I copied this structure and converted into my language course by creating a virtual classroom, designing a group of short animations with 3d model to present Chinese idiom, presenting the idiom and explaining the details through give example in slide shows. As a Chinese teacher, I hope viewers could understand and retain Chinese idioms, and they would use these idioms in conversation from the outside of the fine art world. I also wish that the western audiences could realize the national stereotypes of China exist after watching my language course.

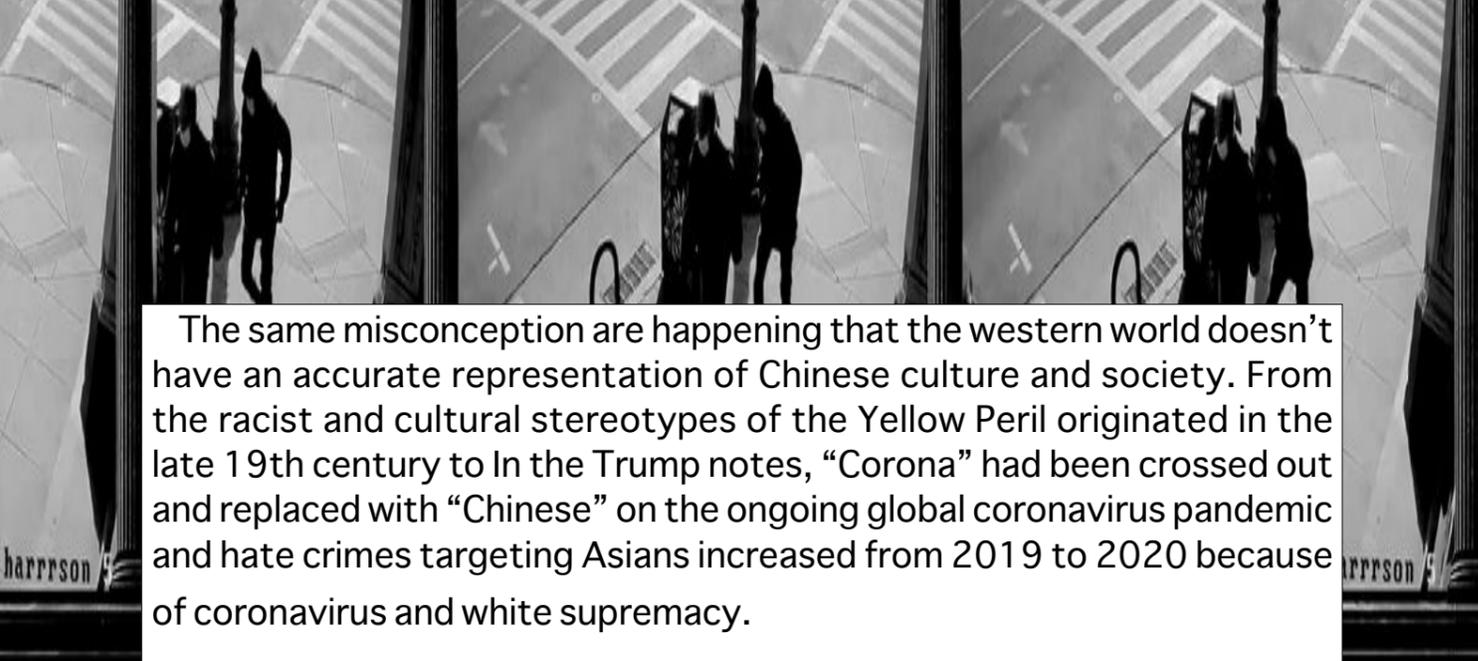


There is one important difference between Chinese and English, Chinese does not have an alphabet but uses a logographic system for its written language. In logographic systems symbols represent the words themselves. Chinese is all about thousands of Chinese characters which are not made up of various letters as in alphabetic systems. Because of this fundamental difference, resulting in a large number of untranslatable phenomena in translation with foreign language. English speakers may have great difficulty reading Chinese texts and writing characters correctly. Chinese speakers learning English is difficult as well. Related to our daily life, some of English speakers like to have a beautiful Chinese sentence as their tattoo, but in most cases, they just thought Chinese characters are beautiful and don't know what that means. Also, the Chinese translations are usually mistranslated with English.

When I was in United States, I also noticed mistranslations on the menus of most of the Chinese restaurants in China Town. For example, there is a special dish called "Ants climbing a Tree" in Chinese but the real meaning of this dish is "Sauteed Vermicelli with minced Pork."

Chinese has not only been a language form of Chinese culture for thousands of years, but also contains the diversified and comprehensive culture of the Chinese nation manifested in the rich and colorful language of characters, which is an art in China.

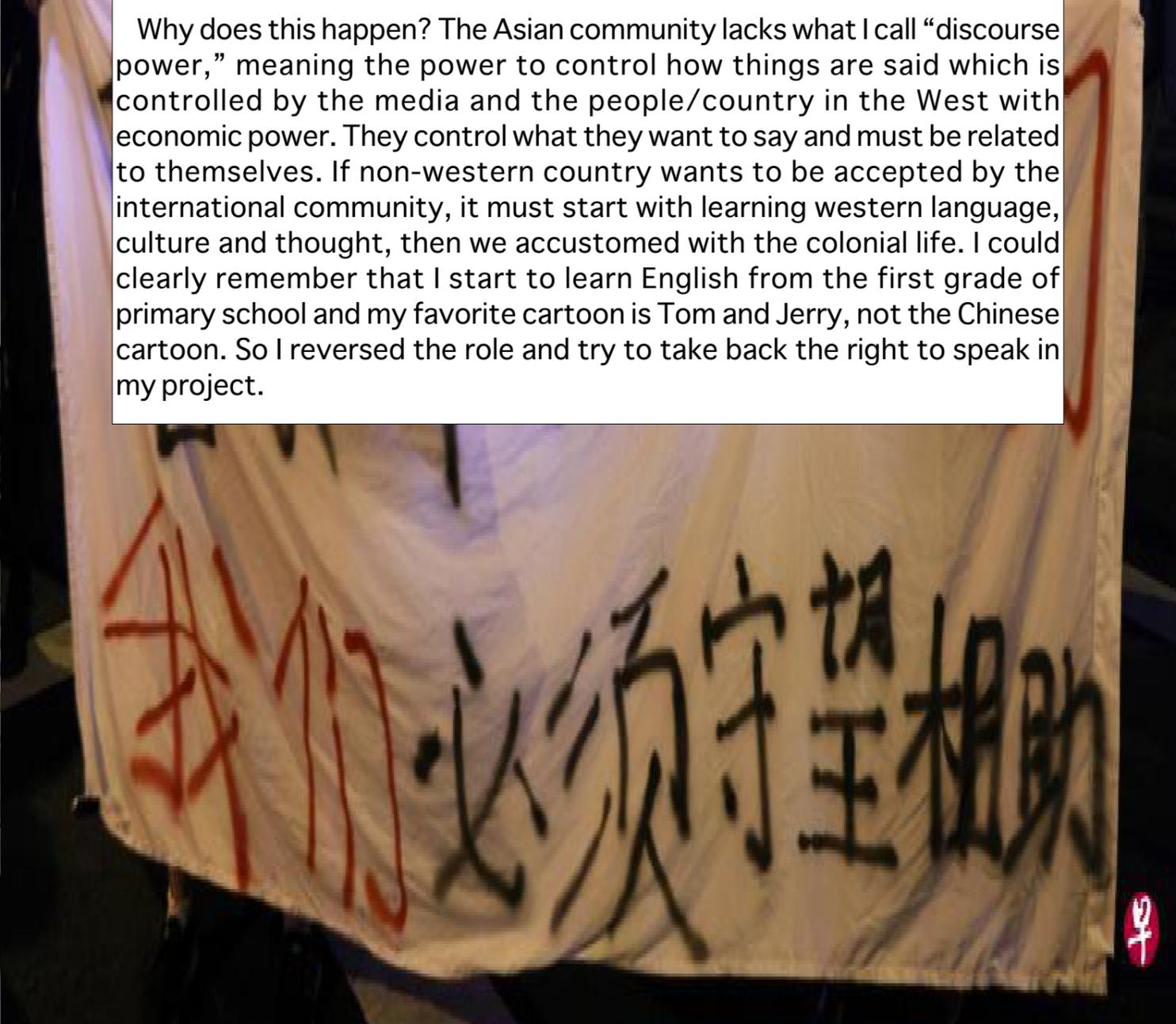




The same misconception are happening that the western world doesn't have an accurate representation of Chinese culture and society. From the racist and cultural stereotypes of the Yellow Peril originated in the late 19th century to In the Trump notes, "Corona" had been crossed out and replaced with "Chinese" on the ongoing global coronavirus pandemic and hate crimes targeting Asians increased from 2019 to 2020 because of coronavirus and white supremacy.



Why does this happen? The Asian community lacks what I call "discourse power," meaning the power to control how things are said which is controlled by the media and the people/country in the West with economic power. They control what they want to say and must be related to themselves. If non-western country wants to be accepted by the international community, it must start with learning western language, culture and thought, then we accustomed with the colonial life. I could clearly remember that I start to learn English from the first grade of primary school and my favorite cartoon is Tom and Jerry, not the Chinese cartoon. So I reversed the role and try to take back the right to speak in my project.

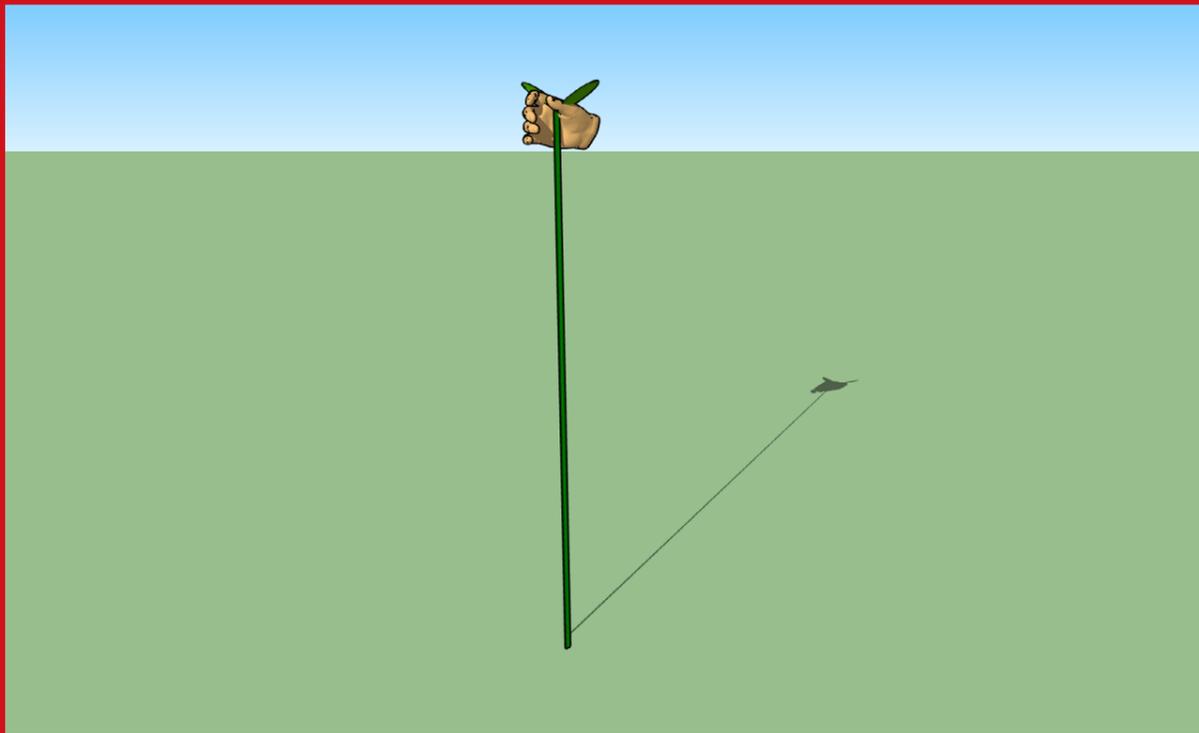


我们必须守住底线

Here's a quick example of how ingenious Chinese characters can be. While *sè* translates to "color", "wolf" is *láng* and if you put these two characters together you get *sè láng* which means "woman chaser". Color wolf = Woman chaser!

Based on this phenomenon, in my work, I focus on the "Cheng Yu"—a type of traditional Chinese idiomatic expression, most of which consist of four characters. The idiomatic expression often reveals a truth or perspective whose origins are based on allegorical stories or historical quotations. When viewers knew what the idiom means after watching my educational videos *Learning Chinese with XiangLong: A Collection of Chinese Idioms*, they will review it in their head, trying to figure out what similar meaning in English-language idioms.

Chinese idioms are explained in an absurd and humorous way. In the process of creating the Chinese idioms' animation in my video, I always start with English translation from a Chinese idiom word by word by Google translator. For example, the Chinese idiom "拔苗助长" (*bá miáo zhù zhǎng*), *miáo* is from the compound *hé miáo*, meaning seedling and rice shoot. *zhù* is from the compound *bāng zhù*, meaning to help. So the English translation of "拔苗助长" is "Pulling up the seedlings to help them grow". Next, I downloaded a seedling and a hand model from 3D Warehouse which is an open source website of 3D modeling content, then I controlled the hand model to pull up the seedling model using the mouse while recording the laptop screen to save this movement as a GIF file. That's how I create an animation of Chinese idioms for starting my educational video.



中文(简体) ↔ 英语

Miáo × seedling

“苗”的翻译

名词

seedling
幼苗, 苗, 秧苗, 苗子, 秧, 栽子

vaccine
疫苗, 苗, 痘

中文(简体) ↔ 英语

Zhù × help

“助”的翻译

动词

help
帮助, 帮, 协助, 帮忙, 支援, 助

aid
帮助, 辅助, 协助, 援, 助, 扶持

assist
协助, 辅助, 帮助, 助, 帮, 促进

在Google翻译中打开 · 反馈



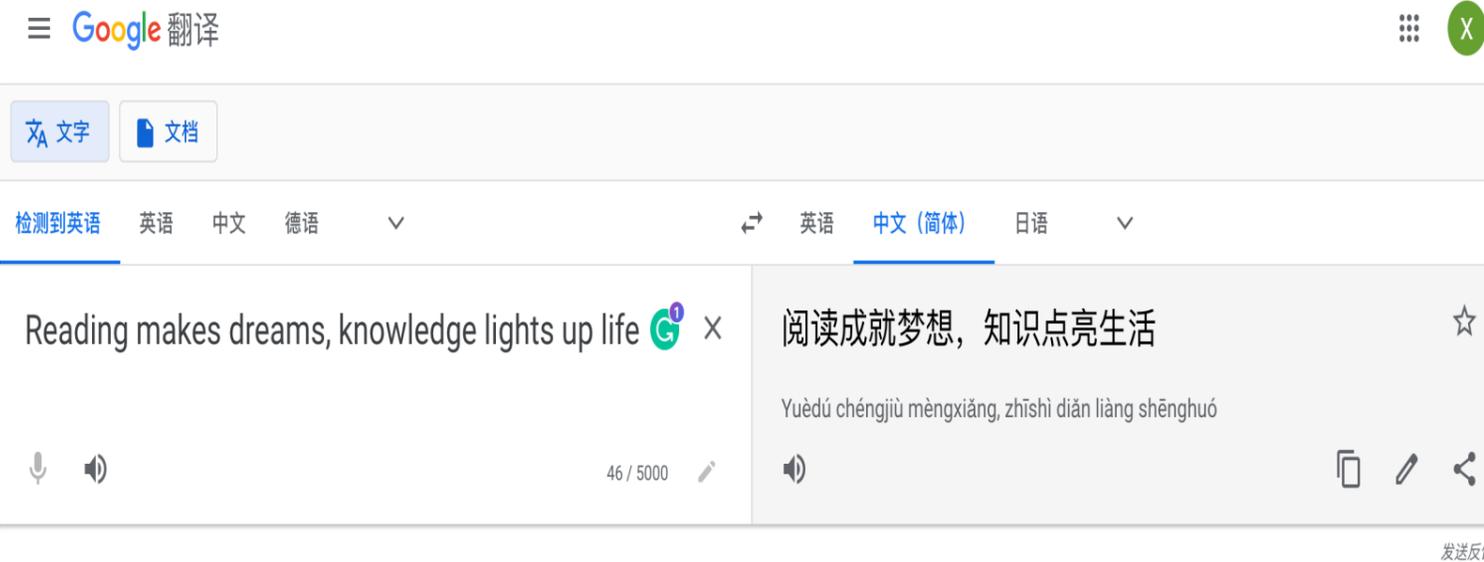
In the practical course video *How to use three man make a tiger in a sentence?*, I reflected the group phenomenon of some Westerners' prejudice against China in the dialogue of this video. The camera went through the window from the classroom to the playground. There are an eagle and a panda chatting with each other on the swing. The eagle (American) says "I want to teach English abroad, and I am thinking about Thailand." Panda(Chinese) responds "Have you considered China?" Eagle: "No way it's so communist! Everybody knows that communism is just bad, people get hurt, they will kill me!" Panda feels so embarrassed and replies, "It was so Three men make a tiger! Look at Shanghai where the Chinese Communist party was born! Mao would spin in his grave if he was there?" I present detailed reference for audiences to let them know how to use this idiom "Three men make a tiger" in a conversation in this video.

My Chinese Lesson has two parts, it can be divided into general course and practical course. There are nine videos in all. For example, in my general course *Lesson7-Three man make a tiger*, I first explained the literal meaning: three man make a tiger with an absurd animation which I made using Sketchup. In the animation, there are three people shouting "This is a tiger" to a Hello Kitty at the same time. When the passer-by saw it, they screamed "Run, that's a tiger" and ran away. Then, from the slide show, we know that Secretary Pompeo's racially charged comments came in an interview video, Trump repeatedly used "Chinese virus" to refer to the coronavirus and many mainstream medias successively used "Chinese virus" as the title to make news report. All these things were so three man make a tiger and reflect that as long as ridiculous information is reused by many times, more and more people would tend to accept it.



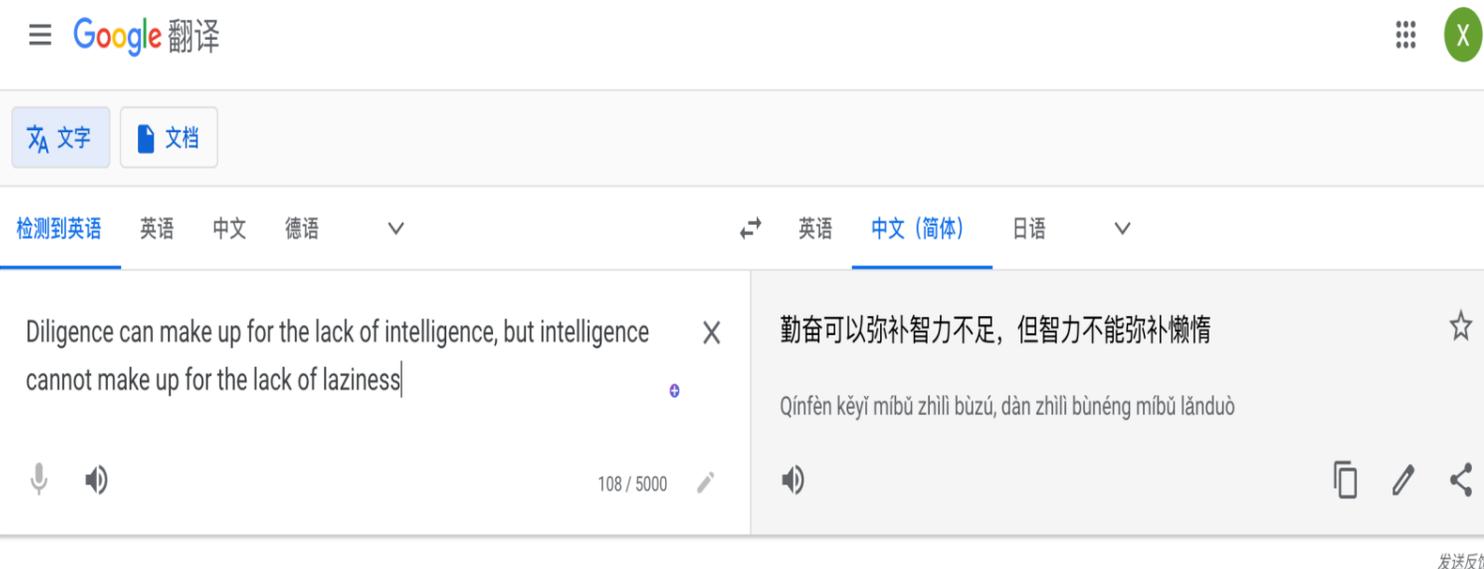
Along with the YouTube Channel I did, I also design biāoyǔ which means “slogans” in China to build the passionate learning atmosphere in my studio. These slogans will be posted on the wall. The content in these slogans are aggressive, inspiring, artistic, and realistic. Such as “Reading makes dreams, knowledge lights up life”, “Fantasy is a beautiful rainbow, action is the ladder of success”, “Diligence can make up for the lack of intelligence, but intelligence cannot make up for the lack of laziness.” This propaganda strategy is to get viewers brainwashed. The audiences’ emotion could be aroused and the learning quality could be improved by stimulating, creating, conducting, preserving passion around the slogans. Additionally, I ordered all these slogans in China and then shipped to the U.S, they are 100% made in China and exported overseas to achieve culture export, in an innovative way.

Related to my experience, the city I grow up is a fourth city classified by The Chinese city tier system. The educational resources in urban areas such as Beijing and Shanghai are much better, so the education inequality between rural and urban areas of the China still happen. You need to do well in high school so you can get into a good college in urban cities, and then you could find a good job and feed yourself at the same time, if you born and grow up in the rural areas but you still want to get more education and health care and more economic opportunity. This is what I have been taught under the guidance of our teachers and parents, as well as red slogans posted on the classroom.



读书成就梦想 知识点亮人生

勤奋可以弥补聪明的不足 但聪明无法弥补懒惰的缺陷



While the Chinese character's image is like square, it is transform from observing nature world to expressing abstract idea. It is similar with the process of art creating. Art work is concrete but the idea is abstract. It will make the idea stay in people's mind.

Youtube Channel:

Learning Chinese with XiangLong

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC1eYGZV200EnhSu6FpkKc5Q>

Course video:

Beginning of the learning Chinese

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CmSc8RRfhkl>

Lesson1 Like a tiger that has grown wings

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jy2DukcLc90>

Lesson2 Draw legs on a snake

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FN0wB9Q3H8Q>

Lesson3 Paint the dragon, dot the eyes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xzghmYL1lhA>

Lesson4 To pull a tooth from a tiger's mouth

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X0cOyAbv5yU&t=4s>

Lesson5 Pulling up the seedlings to help them grow

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pi7JZ1IHdbw>

Lesson6 Cover ears whilst stealing a bell

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gygGmqRWbMs&t=11s>

Lesson7 Three man make a tiger

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JuF-iHxwOE0&t=1s>

How to use Three Man Make A Tiger in a sentence?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M95OB0h8eaA&t=1s>

How to use To Pull A Tooth From A Tiger's Mouth in a sentence?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EAq91aFSiYE>



感谢有你

