

Opponent's opinion  
on Ms. Zuzana Wnuk's dissertation  
*Rozwój metajęzykowej świadomości ortograficznej w kontekście nauczania i uczenia się  
języka chińskiego jako języka obcego*

At the beginning of my review, I would like to say that I would comment on Ms. Zuzana Wnuk's work primarily as a Sinologist. Of course, I will also try to gloss over general linguistic issues, although my professional interest in this area differs significantly from her direction. While the student is primarily interested in didactical aspects of learning Chinese as a foreign language, I am fond of traditional Chinese philology. However, she mentions her field of research very sensitively with a deep understanding of the whole problem.

The thesis is divided into two essential parts: theoretical and research (about two-thirds). This distribution of material is very appropriate, I believe. The theoretical one consists of four chapters: glottodidactics and phenomenography (pp. 7–36); a description of the Chinese writing system in the context of the Chinese language (pp. 37–77); metalinguistic awareness in the Chinese writing system (pp. 78–100); glottodidactics of the Chinese writing system (pp. 101–136). Moreover, it followed by an introduction to the research (pp. 137–300) and a conclusion (pp. 301–322).

I would also like to express my satisfaction with the topic for Ms. Z, Wnuk's dissertation. The importance of studying Chinese writing system has received insufficient attention in Euro-American linguistics, probably related to a misunderstanding of the Saussurean theory of the superiority of spoken over written language. While the problem is researched deeply in China, Japan and partly also in Korea, it is still very weakly anchored in non-Chinese/Japanese/Korean Sinology literature. In addition, the student addresses this topic harmoniously and systematically, raising many compelling questions to which she successfully answers, finding equally inspiring solutions, and reaching very original conclusions.

I am particularly close to those parts of the dissertation which relate to the definitions of the terms **writing system and their typology** (pp. 38–51), **Sinograms** (pp. 52–77), **radicals** (p. 67) and **stroke** (p. 61), and the whole part 3 “metalinguistic awareness in the Chinese character writing system” is a masterpiece that I will recommend as a compulsory reading to my students.

I find several other stimuli throughout the work, mainly because it systematically and in-depth deals with Chinese grammatology, especially from a didactic perspective, the analysis of which is always more complex. I believe that the involvement of the Chinese research context in the Euro-American context is exceptionally beneficial; unfortunately, I do also think that it is not given the attention it deserves in the West.

From a methodological point of view, I highly appreciate Ms. Z.Wnuk's description of research on the development of metalinguistic awareness of the orthographic system of Chinese writing in the context of glottodidactics, i.e., a thorough mapping – and not just a description – of its attributes based on precise analysis and highly demanding work with precious data concerning learning Chinese as foreign language. For me, it is an unquestionable culmination of a student's work, in which theoretical levels of employment and practical ones converge.

From the student's thorough and highly satisfactory description, a wholly groundbreaking and new finding emerges that the Chinese writing system is qualitatively measurable with other analogous writing systems in the world from the perspective of general grammatology. In the context of this statement, therefore, the choice of the topic of Ms. Z. Wnuk's work can also be assessed as very wise, eliminating any doubts about the originality of the submitted work.

Therefore, I believe the student offers the Commission professional work of high quality. Furthermore, it brings new knowledge and perspectives to Sinology; corrects our existing expertise and knowledge complexity. Finally yet importantly, I would like to point out the applicability of the presented dissertation, which has numerous interdisciplinary overlaps. Therefore, the Commission will not be surprised by my recommendation to publish the work I presume.

Ms. Z. Wnuk demonstrates the ability to process a selected professional problem with an interdisciplinary approach and conclusions with the dissertation. In this sense, it seems the present work is highly successful. As a linguist, the student had to face many complex tasks. The breadth of the author's view presented by the extensive bibliography of the thesis (p. 323–334) is respectable. In this sense, the principal and fundamental novelty that the work brings is especially the student's analysis of the Chinese writing system with the tools of cognitive semantics. At the same time, I appreciate the author's consistency and correctness concerning the research results of other colleagues.

I must underline the system's grasp and processing of the topic in terms of content. The student first determines the methodological approaches she places in a broader context. Then, she creates a solid thought framework of her work, making her interpretation logical and understandable even for the nonprofessional. This maximally systematic structure of the work thus also facilitates orientation in a specific, very clearly constructed text. Therefore, I have to evaluate positively even distribution of individual parts of the work and their organic interconnectedness.

In terms of form, I cannot have fundamental reservations about Ms. Z. Wnuk's work. Perhaps the Commission members will find it unnecessary to emphasize this fact when defending her dissertation. However, fulfilling the formal requirements makes any dissertation much easier to read an apparent text but still quite complicated. At the same time, the correctly applied form testifies beyond any doubt about mastering the final preparation of the text, which must also be emphasized and repeatedly evaluated positively.

Finally yet importantly, I have to appreciate how incredibly complicated it is to be acquainted with a culturally different discourse in many respects and successfully interpret it. After reading the work, one must state that Ms. Z. Wnuk dealt with honour. The presented work demonstrates a deep understanding of not only Chinese linguistics but also general linguistics as well, and the dissertation is written in such Polish, that it was very readable even for myself as foreigner.

Based on research, using rich documentary material and scientific methods, the student demonstrates the ability and readiness for independent theoretical work and solving practical problems in her field. Therefore, I consider the work of Ms. Z. Wnuk *Rozwój metajęzykowej świadomości ortograficznej w kontekście nauczania i uczenia się języka chińskiego jako języka obcego* to be very successful in terms of content and form, scientifically beneficial, which is, from my perspective, rarely processed with such erudition.

Furthermore, Ms. Z. Wnuk's dissertation demonstrates the ability to work on a chosen professional problem with an interdisciplinary approach and conclusions. Based on the analysis of extensive language material, the student describes the fundamental manifestations of the behaviour of written Chinese as a system, especially in didactic discourse. Therefore, I believe this study meets the requirements for a dissertation, and I recommend it for defence in front of the Committee.

**Defence questions:**

- How specifically do you plan to continue your research?
- How will you apply the results of your research in your teaching practice?
- Do you feel any difference between the term determinate and radical?
- Do you think the symbols on Chinese Neolithic pottery from Banpo are script? Why?
- Try to think about the accuracy of the term “small seal script.”
- Why do you list Xu Shen’s categories of writing in Ban Gu’s order?
- Chinese calligraphy distinguishes only five basic strokes. Please compare this system with your concept.
- In your opinion, is Xu Shen’s *Shuo Wen Jie Zi* a mere dictionary?
- Are morphemes in Chinese morphemes?



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