

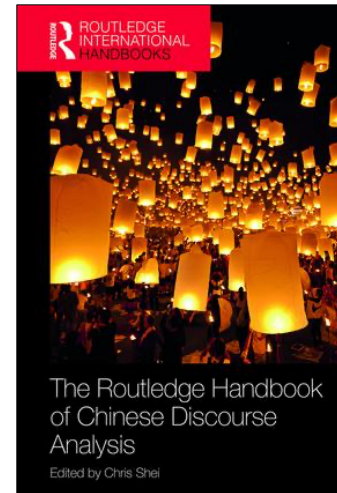
Chris Shei (Ed.), **The Routledge Handbook of Chinese Discourse Analysis**, New York, NY: Routledge, 2019, 674 pp., \$220.95 (hardcover).

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Since American linguist Zellig Harris (1952) introduced discourse analysis in the early 1950s, researchers have actively investigated Chinese discourse. However, it is for want of a comprehensive reference book in this research area. In **The Routledge Handbook of Chinese Discourse Analysis**, editor Chris Shei presents a systematic introduction to Chinese discourse studies from various perspectives. The findings of this book manifest all-leveled language meanings from morpho-syntactic level to discourse level. Thus, the book can guide and inspire both novice and experienced researchers and hopefully advance more research and discussion. It consists of 44 chapters divided into 11 parts with six broad sections.



The first section (Part 1) of the book introduces four dominate research approaches that are applied in Chinese discourse analysis, including conversational analysis, critical discourse analysis, sociolinguistic analysis, and multimodal discourse analysis. These chapters inform readers of the theoretical backgrounds and general scope of these approaches. For each approach, the author also demonstrates how it works in practice with a detailed case study. The section especially highlights the developmental trajectory of each approach and how these approaches impact Chinese discourse analysis.

The second section (Parts 2–4) analyzes some typical grammatical construction and linguistic devices in Chinese. Chinese discourse analysis in this section is largely rooted in a functional descriptive tradition, emphasizing the meaning and function of grammatical structures and context of the use. For instance, the *shi-de* construction in chapter 6 functions to take a stance by introducing “a claim of exclusive truth in anticipation of alternative views without explicitly rejecting any such views” (p. 111). Moreover, chapter 15 identifies the development of some Chinese stance markers according to their source and grammaticalization pathways. In particular, Xuehua Xiang’s chapter shows unique usage and rich connotations of Chinese personal nouns. These studies shed light on the similarities and differences between the grammar structure of Chinese and Western languages, and this research on Chinese-specific features helps learners of Chinese as a second/foreign language as well.

The third section (Part 5) connects the cognitive science with Chinese discourse analysis. Chapter 17 reviews psycholinguistic research involved in bottom-up processing and top-down prediction of Chinese discourse, summarizing how language users conceive and produce discourse. Discourse analysis is long argued for its subjectivity. Chapter 18 provides further information to reveal the neural basis of the complex mechanism for language processing via event-related potentials and functional magnetic resonance imaging techniques, for example, to localize brain activity for certain aspects of discourse processing. This evidence

from cognitive science might not only complement the analysis results but also help clinical populations. Chapter 19 especially enlightens us about the future treatment for Alzheimer's disease (AD) patients by comparing the performance of AD patients and control groups in producing Chinese sentences.

The fourth section (Parts 6–9) deals with Chinese discourse in the social context. The first part in this section looks at politeness strategies and power relations as Vincent X. Wang's chapter discusses how power relations are dynamic, interactional, and relational and depends on the actors in the workplace. Both Part 7 and Part 9 relate computer science development to Chinese discourse. On one hand, it brings about the emergence of online Chinese discourse, such as the case of Weibo as a new kind of Chinese social media discourse. On the other hand, it provides more advanced discourse analysis methods, including computation model, corpus-based analysis, and natural language processing techniques. Part 8 enunciates "the issues of identity and ideology and how they translate into governance of the country" (p. 15).

The fifth section (Part 10) discusses diversified Chinese language outside mainland China, including Singapore Mandarin, Taiwan Hakka, Hong Kong Cantonese, and Southern Min in Taiwan. Chapter 37 introduces the code-switching phenomenon of English and Chinese in Singapore. John Wakefield's chapter describes Cantonese orthography and sentence-final particles. The author emphasizes the constraints on generalizing any Chinese discourse study to all dialects. Chapters 39 and 40 give detailed studies of Hakka and Southern Min in Taiwan respectively, especially their interaction with social and cultural backgrounds.

The last section (Part 11) of the book taps into Chinese discourse analysis from the application end. This discourse analysis could facilitate various language and use research in a more scientific and comprehensive way. For example, discourse analysis in translations studies allow us to analyze translation and interpretation from linguistic, cultural, and social aspects. Additionally, conversation analysis can also help with language learning and teaching in the aspects of classroom interaction, teaching materials, assessment, and teacher training. Chapter 44 analyzes the interview discourse of 23 restaurant chefs. It turns out discourse analysis is useful for revealing the underlying message of the cooks' responses to interview questions and practice of job crafting.

Overall, the book is well structured and wide ranging, as it covers extensive research topics with more materials pertinent to these topics. In particular, all studies contain a well-balanced theoretical foundation and a case study for analysts to follow. It is quite helpful for readers who aim to find enlightenment as well as learn discourse analysis from scratch. The book is also distinctive for integrating different disciplines like cognition and computer science into Chinese discourse analysis. This interdisciplinary research approach is of crucial importance as the boundaries between subjects get blurrier.

Although the authors do try to include all relevant information, there still exists room for improvement in this book. First, Chinese poems are an essential part of Chinese discourse and Chinese discourse analysis. Thus, to tell the whole story of Chinese discourse analysis, the book should include analysis of Chinese poems. Second, while Part 5 approaches the discourse analysis from a psycholinguistic perspective, a further introduction to discursive psychology would make this part more comprehensive. Nonetheless, the ample methodologies, materials, and discussions in this book could provide a theoretical

foundation and practical guidelines for linguistic students and scholars who work or are interested in Chinese discourse analysis to conduct research on Chinese discourse and communication.

### **Reference**

Harris, Z. (1952). Discourse analysis. *Language*, 28(1), 1-30.