

Muhammad Wolfgang G. A. Schmidt

*Prepare Yourself  
for the Chinese Language  
Proficiency Exam (HSK)*

Elementary Chinese Language  
Difficulty Levels

汉语水平考试

Volume I: HSK Levels 1 and 2

**disserta**  
Verlag

**Schmidt, Muhammad Wolfgang G. A.: Prepare Yourself for the Chinese Language Proficiency Exam (HSK). Elementary Chinese Language Difficulty Levels. Volume I: HSK Levels 1 and 2, Hamburg, disserta Verlag, 2019**

Buch-ISBN: 978-3-95935-503-2

PDF-eBook-ISBN: 978-3-95935-504-9

Druck/Herstellung: disserta Verlag, Hamburg, 2019

**Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek:**

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet über <http://dnb.d-nb.de> abrufbar.

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Hermannstal 119k, 22119 Hamburg  
<http://www.disserta-verlag.de>, Hamburg 2019  
Printed in Germany

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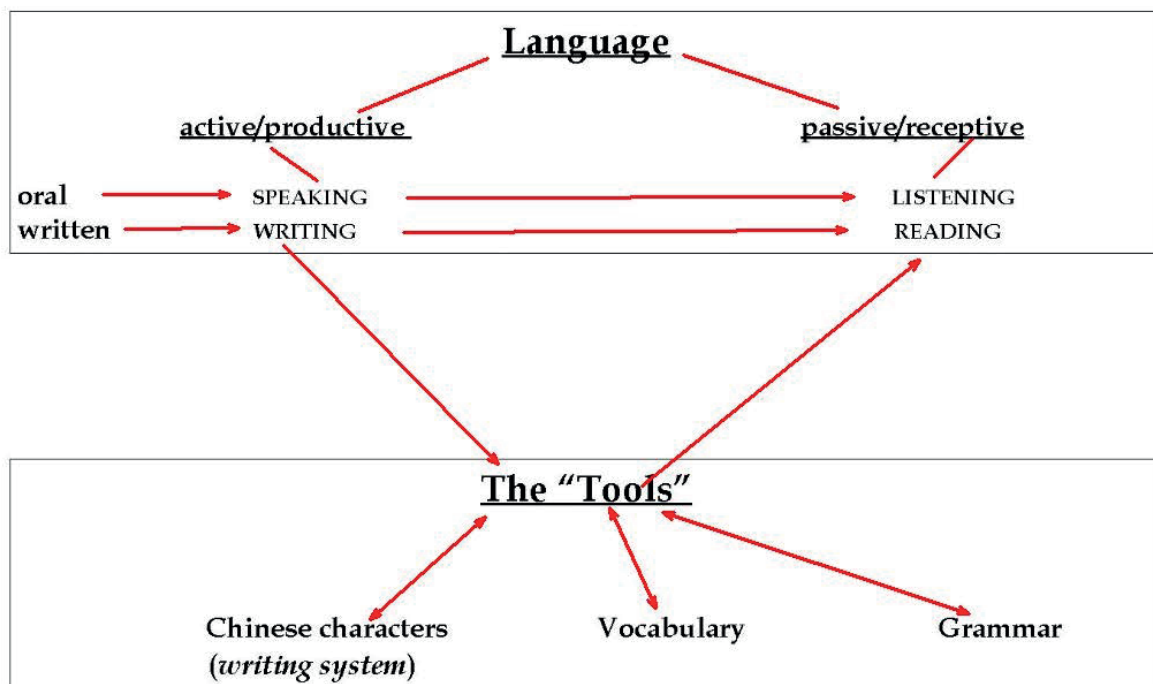
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## Introductory Notes

While preparing for the Chinese Language Proficiency Exam (CLPE, [HSK, 汉语水平考试 *Hànyǔ Shuǐpíng Kǎoshì*]), administered by the Hanban in the People's Republic of China, you will face the issue of mastering the foreign language (here: Chinese) via the four communicative language skills of speaking, writing, listening and reading comprehension. You won't be able to achieve any level of mastering such language skills without a sound knowledge of its "material" like the knowledge of Chinese characters, their pronunciation, a certain amount of vocabulary acquired and following an essential set of grammatical rules. This book in your hands will cover all the necessary material that is needed as a pre-requisite for mastering the four communicative language skills. In other words, you will find here all the essential material covering Chinese characters, vocabulary and Grammar Points enabling you to communicate effectively and efficiently by making use of the four communicative language skills up to a level that is relevant for your appropriate level of chosen from among the six difficulty levels of the CLPE (HSK).

Fig. 1 demonstrates this inter-relationship between these four communicative language skills and the basic "material" underlying them:



*Figure 1*

The system of the six difficulty levels of the CLPE (HSK) itself is organised and defined in terms of the three basic difficulty levels *Elementary*, *Intermediate* and *Advanced*. These three basic difficulty levels again are sub-divided into respective "sub-levels" like *Elementary 1* and *2*, *Intermediate 1* and *2*, and *Advanced 1* and *2*. "1" and "2" generally stand here for the sub-levels of "Lower" and "Upper" with respect to the three basic language difficulty levels *Elementary*, *Intermediate* and *Advanced*, respectively.

Hence, we have a differentiation system of *Lower* and *Upper Elementary*, *Intermediate* and *Advanced* language difficulty levels in foreign language learning and teaching, now also to be applied to CHINESE AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE.

Fig. 2 indicates these languages difficulty levels and relates them to the difficulty levels of the CLPE (HSK) and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) in the following way:

<i>Language Skill Level</i>	<i>Division into Lower and Upper Level</i>	<b>HSK</b>	<b>CEFR<sup>*</sup></b>
Elementary	<i>Lower</i>	HSK level 1	A1
	<i>Upper</i>	HSK level 2	A2
Intermediate	<i>Lower</i>	HSK level 3	B1
	<i>Upper</i>	HSK level 4	B2
Advanced	<i>Lower</i>	HSK level 5	C1
	<i>Upper</i>	HSK level 6	C2

*\* Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*

**Figure 2**

Based on this division, we have divided and organised the material of Chinese characters, vocabulary and Grammar Points to be mastered for each of the six language difficulty levels of the CLPE into three volumes, each of them covering the language material for two language difficulty levels of the CLPE:

- Volume I covers the HSK Levels 1 and 2 and is thus called *the Elementary HSK Level*.
- Volume II covers the HSK Levels 3 and 4 and is called *the Intermediate HSK Level*.
- Volume III covers the HSK Levels 5 and 6 and is consequently called *the Advanced HSK Level*.

In each of these three volumes and for each of the two HSK language difficulty levels covered there, the following material is presented in depth:

- Chinese Characters
- Vocabulary
- Grammar Points

We will now deal with these three sections in more detail and explain the organisation of the material in each of them.

### *Chinese Characters*

Generally, Chinese characters for each HSK Level are presented according to their individual number of strokes. We hope that this sorting will assist in effectively memorising them for active and passive language use in communication practice. For those HSK Level units with an inventory of over 250 Chinese unique characters set, the number of characters were sub-divided into parts such as HSK 4A, HSK 4B, HSK 4C, etc. HSK distribution of Chinese characters and their sub-divisions according to individual stroke number for each HSK difficulty level are shown in Figure 3 below.

<b>HSK Level</b>	<b>Parts</b>	<b>Strokes</b>	<b>Amount of Unique Hanzi</b>
1	-	1 - 15 strokes	178
2	-	3 - 16 Strokes	171
3	-	2 - 16 strokes	274
4	4A	1 - 8 strokes	Total: 452 4A: 177
	4B	8 - 11 strokes	4B: 180
	4C	11 - 19 strokes	4C: 95
5	5A	1 - 8 strokes	Total: 636 5A: 178
	5B	8 - 10 strokes	5B: 174
	5C	10 - 13 strokes	5C: 179
	5D	13 - 23 strokes	5D: 102
6	6A	3 - 8 strokes	Total: 924 6A: 179
	6B	8 - 9 strokes	6B: 179
	6C	9 - 11 strokes	6C: 179
	6D	11 - 13 strokes	6D: 179
	6E	13 - 22 strokes	6E: 209

*Figure 3*

Each section on Chinese characters covers the following:

- *Character Lists* for each HSK difficulty level. This listing will help you to see which characters are included for each respective HSK exam level, and you can test yourself at a first glance which of them are already known to you and do not present any pro-

blems in writing and comprehension. This “pre-selection” then would enable you to concentrate on those not yet known and to pay special attention to them.

- *Chinese - English Character Glossaries* for each HSK difficulty level again follow the same principle of order arrangement according to the individual number of strokes of these characters listed in the inventory for each HSK level. These glossaries contain information on pronunciation of characters in Hanyu Pinyin transcription followed by English Meaning definitions.
- *Stroke Order of Chinese Characters* for each HSK Level allow you to practice the writing of Chinese characters by drawing along the shaded lines with a thin pencil in the stroke order section. The lay-out of these worksheets is explained in more detail below (Figure 4).

Character Entry with Hanyu Pinyin transcription		English Meaning Definitions and stroke order of character	
Indication of HSK Level		Indicating Radical	
字	部首	Definition and Stroke	
力 lì	力	①power ②force ③strength ④ability ⑤strenuously ⑥surname Li	力力
又 yòu	又	①(once) again ②also ③both... and... ④and yet ⑤(used for emphasis) anyway	又又
万 wàn	一	①ten thousand ②a great number ③surname Wan	万万万
久 jiǔ	丿	①(long) time ②(long) duration of time	久久久
于 yú	二	①to go ②to take ③sentence-final interrogative particle ④(evident or ⑤[?]yǐ) ⑥surname Yu ⑦in ⑧at ⑨to ⑩from ⑪by ⑫than ⑬out of ⑭among ⑮to ⑯for ⑰to ⑱from ⑲by ⑳towards ㉑of ㉒surname Yu ㉓(theory) ㉔On ㉕Ab	于于于
口 kǒu	口	①mouth ②classifier for things with mouths (people, domestic animals, cannons, wells etc) ③classifier for bites or mouthfuls	口口口
山 shān	山	①mountain ②hill ③anything that resembles a mountain ④CL:座(zuò) ⑤bundled straw in which silkworms spin cocoons ⑥gable ⑦surname Shan	山山山

Figure 4

Note that for all those sections in the Chinese Character parts of the book, the principles arrangement of characters is the same in sequence: Sorting is according to their individual number of strokes, with those lower in stroke number listed first and fol-



lowed by those higher in number of their respective individual number of strokes. This way of sorting is also advantageous if you need to locate a certain character in any of these sections.

## Vocabulary

In this part of the book, you will deal with *words* instead of *characters*. This distinction is important in terms of Chinese grammar and Linguistic Science of Chinese. Since Chinese characters carry meaning, they easily may be confused with words from a Western point of view. In the early days of modern Chinese Linguistics, this distinction was a matter of debate among scholars and led to the conclusion that the traditional Western framework of grammar was not applicable here and that a separate grammar framework was needed for the Chinese language because of its extreme divergence in comparison to the larger family of Indo-European languages.

Word entries in this part of the book are listed alphabetically according to their transcription in Hanyu Pinyin as the following sample extract from Volume II for HSK Level 3 indicates (Figure 5).

## Words To Know

A	B
<p>阿姨 āyí ◇ {colloquial} auntie (mother's sister) ◇ auntie (term of address for a woman of one's parent's generation) ◇ {Mainland usage} (in a home) nanny, nursemaid, housekeeper; (in a nursery school or kindergarten) child-care worker</p> <p>阿 ā ◇ {regional} dear...(name prefix, used to form terms of endearment; prefix before a kinship term) ◇ Afghanistan (short form for Āfūhàn 阿富汗) ◇ A (surname)</p> <p>矮 ǎi ◇ short (in stature), low (in height) ◇ inferior to</p> <p>爱好 àihào ◇ hobby, an activity one likes ◇ like, love, be fond of, be keen on</p> <p>安静 ānjìng ◇ quiet, calm, noiseless ◇ peaceful</p>	<p>把 bǎ ◇ {grammar} take... (and do sth with it) (auxiliary verb used to introduce the direct object of a sentence in front of the main verb) ◇ hold, grasp, grip ◇ hold (a baby out to relieve itself) ◇ grab, control, monopolize ◇ {sports, colloquial} guard, watch (like a goal) ◇ {colloquial} be close to ◇ hold sth together ◇ {regional} give, offer ◇ handlebar (like of a bicycle) ◇ bunch, bundle, handful ◇ {measure word} (used for tools and other things with a handle, like key, scissors, umbrella, sword, etc., or for things that can be grasped [chair], or for certain abstract things [years, strength, effort], a movement of the hands [like a push, a helping hand]) ◇ "approximately" (when following numerals/measure words, like bǎi bǎ nián 百把年 "approx. 100 years") ◇ refers to sworn brotherhood (as in bài bǎzi 拜把子 "become sworn brothers")</p> <p>班 bān ◇ (of school) class, grade ◇ (of airline) flight ◇ shift, duty, work</p>

Figure 5

The arrangement of data in this part of the book is largely self-explanatory and does not require any further comments.

### **Grammar Points**

Again, the arrangement of the material in this last part of the book is largely self-explanatory and does not require any further comment. The *Overview* in this part of the book lists all the important grammar points required for each HSK exam level (Figure 6 below; sample extract below is taken from the HSK 6 Grammar Point part in Volume III).

#### **Overview**

##### **Words and Phrases**

1. **Nouns:** 以来

##### **2. Verbs**

2.1 多亏

2.2 靠

3. **Adjectives:** 难免

##### **4. Adverbs**

4.1 便

4.2 根本

4.3 果然

4.4 忽然

4.5 简直

4.6 连忙

4.7 难怪

4.8 始终

4.9 勿

##### **5. Prepositions**

5.1 朝

5.2 趁

5.3 于

5.4 至于

6. **Conjunctions:** 以及

##### **7. Particles**

7.1 似的

7.2 所

##### **Sentences**

##### **8. Special Sentence Patterns**

8.1 Pivotal Sentences

8.1.1 令

8.1.2 派

8.2 Sentences of Comparison: A不如B  
(这么/那么) + Adjective

##### **Complex Sentences**

##### **9. Complex Sentences**

9.1 不但不/不但没有。。。, 反而。。。

9.2 Other Complex Structures I

9.2.1 宁可。。。, 也不/也要。。。

9.2.2 与其。。。, 不如。。。

9.3. Other Complex Structures II

9.3.1 假如。。。, 就。。。

9.3.2 万。。。, (就)。。。

9.3.3 (幸亏)。。。, 不然。。。

9.4 除非。。。, 不然。。。

9.5 哪怕。。。, 也/还。。。

##### **Fixed Structures**

10. **Fixed Structures:** 为。。。所

##### **Suggested Further Reading**

**Figure 6**

# 汉语水平考试

*Elementary 1 and 2*

HSK Levels 1 and 2



# 汉语水平考试

*HSK Level 1*



# 汉语水平考试

## 汉字

*Chinese Characters*

