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CHIPROT – Chinese prosodic transcription

abstract

This paper introduces prosodic transcription, designed primarily for L2 teaching purposes. It was designed as a tool for transcribing utterances of colloquial speech style delivered in natural tempo. The system was initially inspired by the system of prof. Oldřich Švarný (1910 - 2011) whose roots can be tracked back to the 1960s. Švarný used it to transcribe a large corpus of example sentences pronounced by native Beijing speakers. These appear in a series of his textbooks, as well as in the four-volume dictionary of Chinese morphemes (1998-2000). **CHIPROT** is based on somewhat different phonological analysis of Chinese stress (see Třísková 2019, SPG No.2). It is computer-friendly (while Švarný's transcription was typewritten), simple, graphically iconic and intuitive. It is supposed not only to be easily “digestible” for Chinese language learners, but also usable for teachers who could actively transcribe example sentences themselves. CHIPROT has been designed and step by step improved in the course of more than 10 years, and widely discussed with both colleagues and students. It has been tested in the process of teaching – my courses of Mandarin prosody (Charles University Prague). Tentative version of CHIPROT was introduced in my talk at CUHK, Hong Kong, June 2018. Final version appears for the first time in the textbook Hana Třísková: *Speak Mandarin in a “haoting” way: prosody of colloquial Mandarin* (in Czech). Prague: Academia Publishing House (in print).

The features labelled by CHIPROT are:

1. **degree of prominence** of particular syllables (four categories: *ma*, *mā*, *mǎ*, *Mǎ*)
2. prosodic units of two levels: **prosodic words and prosodic phrases**

Example (*Integrated Chinese IV.*, p. 322):

我原来还怕自己适应不了这儿的生活。听了你们的话，我放心多了。



Wǒ yuánlái hái pà zìjǐ shìyìng bù liǎo zhèr de shēnghuó. Tīng le nǐmen de huà,
wǒ fàngxīn duō le.

*Wǒ-yuánlái // hái pà zìjǐ SHìyìng-bù-liǎo zhèr-de shēnghuó. Tīng-le nǐmen-de huà //,
wǒ-fàngxīn DUŌ-le.*

H.T., March 3, 2021