

Mauritanian Students Spoken Chinese Vocabulary Acquisition

Guo Fuliang, Bneiyeck Mohamedou*

College of Literature, Hebei University, Baoding, China

Abstract In teaching a second language, vocabulary is the essential component that constitutes a language, and vocabulary teaching is an essential part of Chinese language teaching. Teaching Chinese as a second language in Mauritania plays a vital role in developing the cultural exchange between China and Mauritania. The author will conduct quantitative research within the specific context of learning Chinese oral vocabulary for Mauritanian students. This paper analyses the new Chinese spoken vocabulary and explores the new Chinese spoken vocabulary from three aspects: definition, characteristics and provide some suggestions in the teaching Chinese as the second language. It devotes to investigating the misuse of the spoken Chinese vocabulary by Mauritanian Arabic speakers, to improve their oral vocabulary system.

Keywords Chinese vocabulary teaching, Mauritania Students, Spoken adverbs acquisition

1. Introduction

New spoken Chinese vocabulary exists in spoken language. It has complex forms and diverse meanings. It is challenging to integrate Chinese textbooks systematically. Moreover, modern Chinese spoken vocabulary and written vocabulary often overlap. Splitting them into two is hard. Therefore, it has become a problematic point for Mauritanian students to learn Chinese.

Chinese and Arabic belong to two major language systems that are very different, especially in terms of vocabulary and grammar. Therefore, for Mauritanian students, it is more difficult to master spoken Chinese adverbs. This paper summarizes the definition of oral vocabulary, analyzes the characteristics of modern Chinese spoken vocabulary, and explains the acquisition of spoken Chinese adverbs by Mauritanian learners. This study proposes a few suggestions to Mauritanian Chinese learners to master the characteristics of spoken Chinese vocabulary and distinguish between spoken and written words and use them correctly in different contexts. In modern Chinese the use of spoken adverbs is very high, the internal word formation is diverse, and the pragmatics are flexible.

For learning Chinese as a second language needs to develop some speech skills and learn the grammar system. In order to learn Chinese language better, one has to know how

to use spoken Chinese adverbs correctly, which is a significant problem faced by Mauritanian Chinese learners. This paper points out the misunderstandings of the use of Chinese spoken adverbs by Mauritanian Chinese learners and summarizes the problems they may encounter while learning new spoken Chinese adverbs.

For Chinese teachers, the main task of Chinese spoken vocabulary acquisition is to enable Mauritanian students to understand the characteristics of common and uncommon exclusively spoken Chinese words and their meanings, and to avoid unfavourable translation of Arabic vocabulary meanings, which affects students' learning effects and interest.

This paper mainly studies the acquisition of spoken Chinese adverbs by Mauritanian students and draws their learning rules. The Modern Chinese Dictionary (seventh edition) has a total of 26 spoken adverbs: (死活、Sǐhuó “anyway”、着呢 Zhene “Deep expression”、撑死 Chēngsǐ “Indicates the maximum limit”、成天 Chéngtiān “all the time”、成年 Chéngnián “all year”、老是 Lǎo shì “always”、赶明儿 Gǎnmíng er “wait for tomorrow”、成总儿 Chéng zǒng er “in large amounts”、怪 Guài “Very”、横竖 Héngshù “Anyway”、见天儿 Jiàntiān er “Evry day”、活脱儿 Huótuo er “Very similar”、挨个儿 Āigè er “Everyone lined up”、成宿 Chéng xiǔ “the whole night”、花插着 Huāchāzhe “cross”、贵贱 Guìjiàn “in any case”、花搭着 Huā dāzhe “interspersed”、打趸儿 Dǎ dǔn er “to buy wholesale”、打总儿 Dǎ zǒng er “Combine the things that are divided into several times into one”.

This research provides a reference for Mauritanian spoken Chinese vocabulary acquisition, teaching materials for Mauritanian locals and translation related work. The healthy development of Chinese language acquisition in Mauritania

* Corresponding author:

2591580310@qq.com (Bneiyeck Mohamedou)

Published online at <http://journal.sapub.org/linguistics>

Copyright © 2019 The Author(s). Published by Scientific & Academic Publishing

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution International

License (CC BY). <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

has played a significant role in the bilateral relation of China and Mauritania, hence this study will serve as a valuable addition to the literature in the field.

The limitations of this study are mainly reflected in the fact that the subjects are limited to students with intermediate Chinese proficiency and many corpora are collected through the Internet. Therefore, future research will focus on the high-level Chinese Mauritanian students, and focus on the spoken Chinese adverbs errors that occur in the process of using Chinese vocabulary.

2. Theoretical Background

Spoken vocabulary learning is an integral part of language acquisition. Therefore, Chinese language researchers pay more attention to the study of spoken vocabulary learning. "Spoken vocabulary learning is the core problem of language acquisition". (Laufer, 1986), and (McLaughlin, 1978). From the perspective of linguistic psychology, spoken vocabulary is the driving force of speech production. "In Singapore high school 57% of students' reading ability can be explained by the ability of words and idioms to recognize" (Xièshì yá, sūqǐzhēn 1992). "vocal teaching should be in a central position in reading" (Liu Yuhao 2000). These all indicate that vocabulary plays the most critical role in the process of speaking and writing a language learning.

According to psycholinguistics listening and reading are receptive, speaking and writing are productive. Psycholinguistics believes that speech activities include listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Listening and reading are receptive, and speaking and writing are productive. Mauritanian Chinese learners are not as good in mastering spoken words as they are in written words.

Levelt (1989) thinks that the oral discourse production model is composed of three parts, namely: concept formation mechanism, formal synthesis mechanism and vocalization mechanism. The concept formation mechanism plays a role in the concept formation stage. At this time, the speaker forms the proposition content of the discourse information according to his existing encyclopedia knowledge, context knowledge and textual knowledge. This pre-language information content is converted into a discourse plan (i.e., a speech plan) in the form of a formal synthesis mechanism, which is performed by selecting the correct term and applying grammar and phoneme rules. The final vocalization mechanism converts the speech plan into the actual discourse. Chen Huiyuan and Wu Xudong (1998) consider that the writing mode based on the Levelt model is also composed of three mechanisms: concept formation mechanism, formal synthesis mechanism and writing mechanism. It is because the cognitive process of writing and speaking is similar.

Shi Ling (1998) concludes the dynamic study of adult students from speaking to writing, saying that speaking and writing are closely related. The former is a kind of communicative activity by students expressing their own opinions and statements about the opinions of others. The

latter is an internal social discourse in the form of text.

Ma Guanghui and Wen Qiufang (1999) believe that spoken language has a direct influence on the written language, and the improvement of spoken language contributes to the improvement of written language.

3. Research Methodology

Scientific research methods and sufficient research materials are prerequisites for safeguarding research conclusions. Mr Ji Xianlin is of the opinion that "the research method is a fundamental problem, no matter how much material is collected, if the method is not correct, then the material is meaningless". This paper has used a mixed methodology research approach to explore the Chinese spoken adverbs through different angles. Different research techniques have been used to collect the data, which are enumerated as under:

In the first part, two years of final exam papers, i.e. 2016 and 2017, of the students of Nouakchott University, Mauritania, have been collected and analyzed to see the students' ability to use spoken Chinese adverbs, and sort out the related issues.

Second, through online survey, Mauritanian Chinese learners were asked several questions about spoken Chinese adverbs to check whether they could use them correctly or not, and what kinds of mistakes did they make, if any. This method examines the understanding of spoken adverbs by the learners. Although some spoken Chinese adverbs are rarely seen in daily life Chinese communication and Chinese classroom materials, but we cannot ignore the importance of these spoken adverbs.

Third, is the participant's observation Method. Through the online survey participants were observed for their language use. The survey was distributed to the participants through social media platforms, including QQ, Facebook messenger, Wechat, Whatsapp and other social media software.

3.1. Research Questions

This study addresses the following questions:

- Can Mauritanian Chinese language learners, who have Arabic language background, distinguish between the spoken and written words in the use of Chinese vocabulary?
- Is there a significant difference in the use of the two vocabularies?
- Do Mauritanian Chinese learners master the usage of spoken Chinese adverbs? How?

3.2. Research Tools

There are only twenty six spoken adverbs in Chinese that can be used in speaking, they cannot be used in writing. In Chinese they are called "完全口语副词" literally means "Complete Spoken Adverbs". These adverbs are present in

the Dictionary of Modern Chinese Seventh Edition. The specific task is to ask students to choose the correct spoken words and to examine students' ability to understand and use complete spoken words.

3.3. Data Collection and Analysis

This study focus on Chinese complete spoken adverbs. The questionnaire survey is divided into two types to examine the students' acquisition and usage of those spoken adverbs.

The sample of the study questionnaire consisted of 100 Mauritanian students who have studied the Chinese language for more than two years and less than four years. Eighty valid questionnaires were returned.

4. Mauritanian Students Modern Chinese Oral Adverbs Acquisition

4.1. Definition of Modern Chinese Oral Vocabulary

Mr Zhao Yuanren once pointed out in *"Grammar Of Spoken Chinese"*¹ that (spoken Chinese refers to the Beijing dialect in the middle of the 20th century). In *"Spoken Chinese,"* Mr Wang Fangzhi pointed out that (spoken Chinese refers to the spoken language of the Han nationality (汉族 Hànzú), which is widely used in Chinese people's daily life²). When studying the vocabulary level of spoken and written language, Wang Fusheng pointed out that, (the correct distinction between spoken vocabulary and written vocabulary not only reflects a person's level of Chinese but sometimes even directly affects the communicative effect). Shao Yuji and Feng Shouzhong believe that modern Chinese spoken words refer to words that are often used in modern Chinese spoken language, have significant differences from written vocabulary, and can express spoken language features. They also divide spoken vocabulary into complete spoken words and incomplete spoken words. A completely spoken word refers to a word whose meanings are all spoken, mostly Disyllabic or polysyllabic. Incomplete oral words refer to words that are suitable for use in both written and oral languages, mainly monosyllabic words. Some of the meanings of incomplete oral words are not all semantic mouth items, and sometimes only one of several semantic items is a port semantic item. For example, (翻) "turn", there are seven meanings, only one its has oral sense.

4.2. Characteristics of Chinese Oral Vocabulary

(一) Characteristics Of Chinese Tone

a\ Disyllabic and Polysyllabic

A monosyllabic word is a word composed of one syllable and expresses a specific meaning, such as (妈、Mā), (把、Bǎ), and a Disyllabic word is a word composed of two

syllables, such as (挨宰、Ái zǎi), (脆生、Cuìshēng). According to the "Modern Chinese Dictionary" (seventh edition), 131 oral monosyllabic words are accounting for 13.1% of the total which two monosyllabics are oral adverbs: (旋、Xuán), (怪、Guài) accounted for 0.21% of the total. The number of Disyllabic spoken words is 656, accounting for 65.7% of the total.

The "Modern Chinese Dictionary" (seventh edition) also includes 212 polysyllabic words accounting for 21.2% of the total, which 12 polysyllabic words are oral adverbs above the Polysyllabic, accounting for 1.20% of the total. Disyllabic words and Polysyllabic words are far more than monosyllabic words, taking absolute advantage, quantity, and ratio, for example:

Table 1. "Modern Chinese Dictionary" (seventh edition) standard <oral> words

	Quantity	Proportion (%)	Number of Adverbs	Proportion of Adverbs (%)
Monosyllabic	131	13.113	2	0.21
Disyllabic	656	65.66	12	1.20
Polysyllabic	212	21.22	12	1.20
Total	999	100	26	2.61

a/ Natural tone (轻声) and Rhotic accent (儿化)

Natural tone and Rhotic accent in modern Chinese oral vocabulary can reduce the solemnity of words and make the style more intimate and random. It is in line with the characteristics of modern Chinese spoken language. Therefore, modern Chinese spoken words are more Natural tone and rhotic tone. In Chinese spoken language, in general, we said: "打价儿 Dǎ jià ér" with the Rhotic tone (儿), in English, means: (bargain; haggle over the price), but In Chinese written language we write "打价 Dǎ jià", and we delete The rhotic tone (儿 ér). Chinese oral vocabulary is mostly using Natural tone. There are some words, such as "摆设 Bǎishè", "人家 Rénjiā" and "煎饼 Jiānbǐng". Depending on the context, the speaker can use Natural tone or non-natural tone. Table 2 shows the number and proportion of Natural tone and Rhotic Tone in Modern Chinese Dictionary (seventh edition):

Table 2. Number and proportion of Natural tone and Rhotic Tone

	Quantity	Porportion%	N.adv	P.Adv	Example
Natural tone	352	62.86	16	2.857%	不光、大油
Rhotic tone	208	37.14	10	1.785	干敏儿, 打盹儿
Total	560	100	26	4.642	

According to the Modern Chinese Dictionary (seventh edition), there are 352 words are Natural tone, and 208 words are Rhotic tone, accounting for 62.86% and 37.14% of the total.

Through analysis, Disyllabic, Polysyllabic, Natural Tone, and rhotic tone are typical features of modern Chinese oral

¹ Mr. Zhao Yuanren. Grammar of Spoken Chineser.h. Commercial Press, 1965

² Mr. Wang Fangzhi. Shanxi Education Press, 1990.12

vocabulary. The obvious Disyllabic and Polysyllabic do not only appear in modern Chinese spoken vocabulary, but modern Chinese vocabulary as a whole also shows such a trend. In Chinese we use The Disyllabic and Polysyllabic for two roles, one is to avoid ambiguity in the existence of a large number of homophones, affecting daily communication, and the second is to conform to the ethnic group of Han (汉族 Hànmínzú) pursuit of pairwise psychology. The Disyllabic words and Polysyllabic words are readable. The Natural tone and Rhotic tone phenomenon used also to distinguish homonyms, distinguish words and phrases, or distinguish between parts of speech to avoid the occurrence of ambiguity. In the Arabic language there is also Natural tone, its role is to enhance the temperament of the language, and sometimes to avoid the mistakes made by the unknown. There is no Rhotic tone in Arabic, and it is difficult for Mauritanian students who are native Arabic speakers to understand the Chinese Rhotic tone.

(二) Grammatical Characteristics of Chinese oral words

The vocabulary of modern Chinese spoken vocabulary covers a wide range of terms, including almost nouns, verbs, adjectives, numerals, quantifiers, adverbs, conjunctions, auxiliary words, prepositions, and so forth. In Chinese vocabulary, spoken Nouns include: (岁数 Suìshù、块儿 kuàier), oral Verbs include: (挨个儿 Àigè'er、打表 dǎbiǎo)、oral Adjectives: (邪乎 Xiéhū、黑不溜秋、, hēibuliūqiū), Typical classifier: (毛 Máo、块儿 kuàier) 'unit of RMB' auxiliary words: (得 Dé、着 zhe)、 prepositions: (让 Ràng、跟 gēn), etc. In the Chinese Language, There are 26 oral adverbs, of which there are 4 modal adverbs (死活 Sǐhuó、横竖 héngshù、贵贱 guìjiàn、压根儿 yàgēner), 4 adverbs of degree (着呢 Zhene、撑死 chēngsǐ、怪 guài、不光 bùguāng), and 7 adverbs of time (成天 Chéngtiān、成年 chéngnián、赶明儿 gǎnmíng'er、见天儿 jiàntiāner、成宿 chéngxiǔ、旋 xuán、临了 línliǎo), One Frequency adverb (老是 Lǎoshì), 3 scope adverb (打总儿 Dǎzǒng'er、打趸儿 dǎdǔn'er、成总儿 chéngzǒng'er) 7 modal adverbs (活脱儿 Huótuo'er、挨个儿 āigè'er、花插着 huāchāzhe、花搭着 huādāzhe、挨班儿 āibān'er、挨次 āicì、接茬儿 jiēchá'er).

5. Mauritanian Students' Chinese Complete Oral Adverbs Mastering

This study focus on Chinese complete oral adverbs. The questionnaire survey is divided into two types to examine the students' acquisition and usage of those oral adverbs.

Figure 1 shows the acquisition of common oral adverbs by Mauritanian students. The survey shows that most of the Mauritanian students have a good acquisition of common spoken adverbs, and the correct rate of word selection has reached more than 40%.

The researcher has chosen 16 common adverbs in the Chinese language such as: “死活 Sǐhuó、横竖 héngshù、贵贱 guìjiàn、压根儿 yàgēner、着呢 Zhene、撑死 chēngsǐ、怪 guài、不光 bùguāng、成天 Chéngtiān、成年 chéngnián、赶明儿 gǎnmíng'er、见天儿 jiàntiāner、成宿 chéngxiǔ、临了 línliǎo、老是 Lǎoshì)、挨个儿 āigè'er”, and so on". It was examined, given three options interpreted according to the meaning of words in a sentence so that students can choose one of those options.

The term “死活 Sǐhuó” means no matter and anyway “83.3% of the students choose the correct answer, and 16.7% of the students thought that it has the meaning of death”. 67.7% of the students think that the term “撑死 chēngsǐ” means the maximum limit, and 33.3% of students think it has the meaning of “almost”.

75% of the students answered the term correctly “见天儿 jiàntiāner”(which means every day) and 16.7% of them think that it has the meaning of “every time”, but 8.3% think that “seeing” is the meaning of “见天儿 jiàntiāner.

The word “怪 guài” has different meanings, but in spoken language, it is generally used as a degree adverb to mean “very” and “very much”. In this study investigation, 66.7% of the students have chosen “very” as an answer for this question, 25% think it means “no”, and 8.3% think it means “all.”

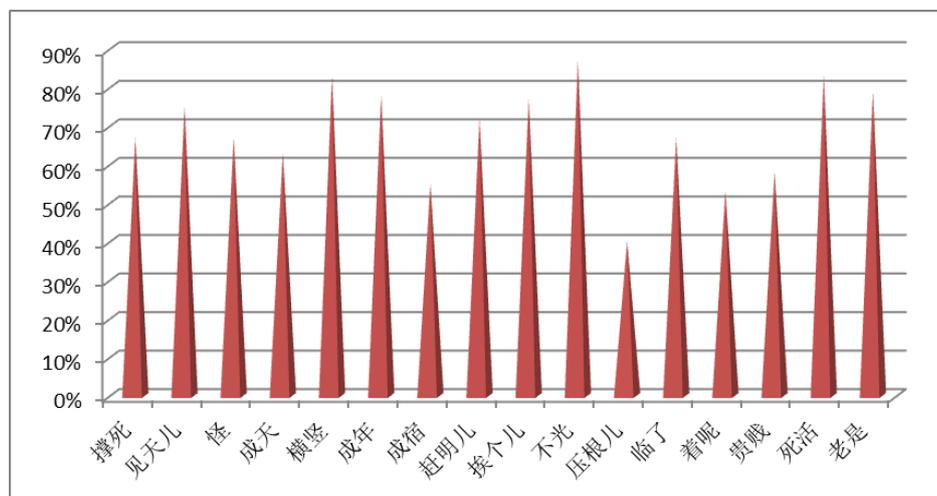


Figure 1. Mauritanian students common complete spoken adverbs Mastering rate

Mauritanian Chinese learners understand the word “横竖 héngshù”, 83.30% of them answered correctly, which means “anyway”, and 16.7% chose the word “but” as an answer. For the adverb of “赶明儿 gǎnmíng er”, 72.20% of the students understand that it means ‘will wait until tomorrow’, 14.4 % thinks it is ‘early’, and 13.4% chooses the word to hurry’. The term “成年 chéngnián”, 78% of Mauritanian students think that means “yearly” and 18% of them think it has the meaning of “infancy” and 4% choose “every year”. For the word “成天 Chéngtiān”, 63.30% of students choose the correct answer with was the phrase “all the time”, and 36.7% of students choose the word ‘daily’ as the answer.

The word “临了 línliǎo” means: To the end, 67% of students choose the correct answer, and 30% of students they do not Answer the questions, and that explain they did not understand the meaning.

For the term “成宿 chéng xiǔ” in the survey, 55% of the students chose “all night”, while 45% of the students thought

that “成宿 chéng xiǔ” means ‘next year’. The survey also included the adverb “老是 Lǎo shì”, 79% of Mauritanian students think it means (always), 21% of students think it means (general), and the acquisition of other words is shown in Table 1.

These spoken adverbs are more common in spoken Chinese, and some even appear in textbooks. Students have more opportunities to contact, so Mauritanian students also can easier learn these adverbs.

The questionnaire also surveyed ten unusable spoken adverbs in the Modern Chinese Dictionary (seventh edition) such as 打总儿 Dǎ zǒng er、打趸儿 dǎ dùn er、成总儿 chéng zǒng er、活脱儿 Huótuō er、挨个儿 āigè er、花插着 huāchāzhe、花搭着 huādāzhe、挨班儿 āi bān er、挨次 āi cì、接茬儿 jiēchá er、旋 xuán.

The results of the survey are shown in Figure 2.

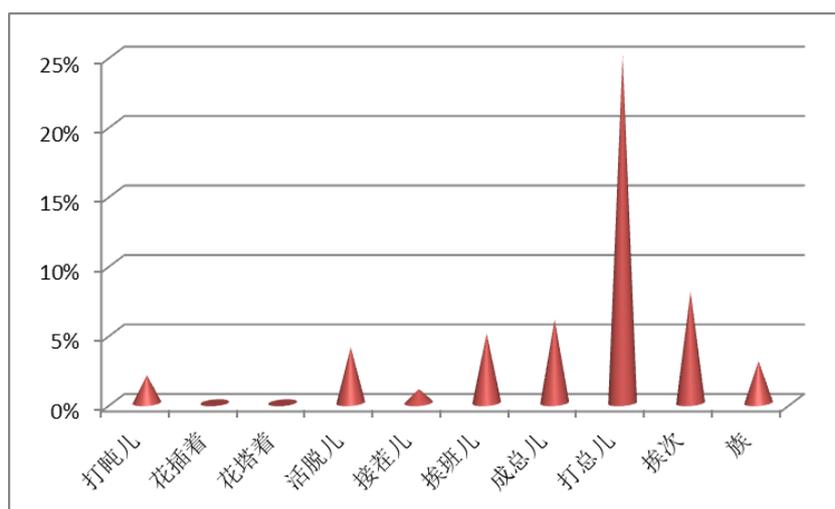


Figure 2. Show Mauritanian students Uncommon complete spoken adverbs mastering rate

The survey asked students to select a complete spoken word from a group of words to examine Mauritanian students' understanding of complete spoken adverbs and found that most students has limited knowledge about this group of words, only the word“打总儿” its correct rate exceeds 20%, the correct rate of other words was below 10%, and some even zero.

Although some oral and written words in the Chinese language are entirely different, it is difficult for Mauritanian students to distinguish between both types of words. The main reason for this problem is the differences between modern Arabic spoken and written words which are very small, and most of the words can be used in both written and spoken language.

6. Conclusions

The Modern Chinese complete oral adverbs cannot easily enter Chinese textbooks for Mauritanian students. Because they have very oral meaning in Chinese vocabulary.

Therefore in daily oral communication with the foreigners, Chinese native speakers always avoid the usage of complete oral vocabulary. These factors have reduced the chances for Mauritanian students to understand and use these orals words.

There is no significant difference between Arabic spoken and written words. So Mauritanian students are habitually compared with their native language when they learn Chinese Vocabulary. They first translate Chinese words into Arabic words, then according to Arabic grammatical features and pragmatic habits. The acquisition and use of the term lead to bias. For example, “死活 Sǐhuó anyway” in Chinese is a complete oral adverb, and the corresponding word in Arabic is (hatta Almamatt (حتى الممات)). This Arabic word can be used both in spoken and written, which makes Mauritanian Chinese learners ignore their oral characteristics in Chinese. According to the survey, the Mauritanian students think that the frequency usage of oral adverbs is the most effective way of learning Chinese oral adverb. It can be inferred that the acquisition of other oral words should also be the same.

This research studied the use of spoken Chinese adverb communication strategies by more than 100 Mauritanian students through a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods.

This article describes the mastery of spoken adverbs in the process of Chinese acquisition of Mauritanian students from the perspectives of the whole and the individual and explores the influence of factors such as Chinese proficiency, mother tongue background and cognitive style on the choice of Mauritanian students to use communicative strategies. It provides useful suggestions for improving the spoken communication skills of Mauritanian students.

The survey tools of this study mainly used two oral communication strategy questionnaires designed by the author, interviews with Mauritanian students and the actual recording of the simulation session.

Our research has some understanding of the use of speaking strategies by Mauritanian students, and provides some inspiration for how to cultivate the speaking skills of Mauritanian students in teaching, mainly reflected in the following four aspects:

First, we must cultivate the awareness of the speaking techniques of Mauritanian students so that they can correctly understand the communicative strategy.

Second, strengthen the ability of Mauritanian students to use their communication strategies in spoken Chinese.

Third, we must conduct strategic teaching in a phased and focused manner.

Fourth, strategy teaching should be carried out simultaneously in textbook layout, language testing, and teaching methods. At the same time, this study also provides a reference for how we treat individual differences or personality traits of Mauritanian students.

REFERENCES

- [1] Chen Jiamin. Oral Chinese [M] Beijing: Publishing Beijing, 1984.
- [2] Fu Huaqing. Modern Chinese Vocabulary [M] Beijing University 1985.
- [3] Shao Yuji, Feng Shouzhong. Introduction to Modern Chinese [M] Beijing: China Social Sciences 2009.
- [4] Yao Dan. A Comparative Study of the Sixth Edition and the Second Edition of the Modern Chinese Dictionary [D]. Hebei University. 2015.
- [5] Song Wei. Brief Discussion. Chinese as a Foreign Language Oral word teaching: Journal of Hubei Second Normal University. 2008,07.
- [6] Wang Nan, foreign students' three-syllable oral idioms confusing and teaching strategies [D]. Shenyang Normal University. 2013.