

## Unit 8: I Understand Chinese

### Part I: Listen and Learn

#### 1.

Wǒ shì Zhōngguó rén,  
I am a Chinese.  
我是中國人，

huì shuō Zhōngguó huà,  
(I) can speak Chinese.  
會說中國話，

yě huì shuō Yīngyǔ.  
(I) also can speak English.  
也會說英語。

Wǒ tīng de dǒng Yīngyǔ.  
I can understand English.  
我聽得懂英語。

Wǒ hái huì shuō yídiǎnr Rìyǔ,  
I also can speak a little Japanese.  
我還會說一點兒日語。

Kěshì wǒ Rìyǔ shuō de bú tài hǎo.  
but I don't speak it very well.  
可是我日語說得不太好。

Yàoshì shuō de tài kuài, wǒ jiù tīng bu dǒng.  
If (someone) speaks too fast, then I don't understand.  
要是說得太快，我就聽不懂。

#### 2.

John shì Měiguó rén.  
John is an American.  
John 是美國人。

Tā huì shuō Zhōngwén.  
He can speak Chinese.  
他會說中文。

Tā Zhōngwén shuō de bú tài kuài,  
He doesn't speak Chinese very fast.  
他中文說得不太快，

kěshì shuō de bú cuǒ, hěn liúli.  
But he speaks very well, very fluently.  
可是說得不錯，很流利。

Fāyīn hěn biāozhǔn.  
(His) pronunciation is very good (standard).  
發音很標準。

Xiànzài tā hái zài xué Zhōngwén, yīnwèi tā xiǎng dào Zhōngguó qù.  
Now he is still learning Chinese, because he wants to go to China.  
現在他還在學中文，因為他想到中國去。

Tā xiǎng dào Zhōngguó qù zuò shēngyì.  
He wants to go to China and do business (there).  
他想到中國去作生意。

### 3.

A: Nǐ huì shuō shénme wàiyǔ?  
A: What foreign languages can you speak?  
A: 你會說什麼外語？

B: Wǒ huì shuō yìdiǎr Fáyǔ, kěshì shuō de bù<sup>1</sup> hǎo.  
B: I can speak a little French, but I can't speak it well.  
B: 我會說一點兒法語，可是說得不好。

A: Fǎguó rén shuō huà, nǐ tīng de dǒng ma?  
A: (When) French people speak, do you understand?  
A: 法國人說話，你聽得懂嗎？

B: Yàoshi shuō de màn, wǒ tīng de dǒng,  
B: If (they) speak slowly, I understand.  
B: 要是說得慢，我聽得懂，

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<sup>1</sup> bù (not) is the original form. It becomes bú before a four tone as in búhuì.

B: shuō de kuài, jiù tīng bù dǒng.  
 B: (if they) speak fast, then (I) don't understand.  
 B: 說得快，就聽不懂。

A: Fáyǔ, 'How do you do?' zénme shuō?  
 A: (In) French, how do you say 'How do you do?'  
 A: 法語 'How do you do?' 怎麼說？

B: 'How do you do?' Fáyǔ shì 'Bonjour.'  
 B: 'How do you do?' (in) French is 'Bonjour.'  
 B: 'How do you do?' 法語是 'Bonjour.'

A: Nǐ de fāyīn hěn biāozhǔn.  
 A: Your pronunciation is very good (standard).  
 A: 你的發音很標準。

B: Nǎlǐ, shuō de hái bù hǎo.  
 B: No, I don't speak it well yet.  
 B: 哪裡，說得還不好。

#### 4.

A: Nǐ huì shuō Zhōngwén ma?  
 A: Do you speak Chinese?  
 A: 你會說中文嗎？

B: Huì shuō yidiǎr, bú tài hǎo.  
 B: (I) can speak a little, but not very well.  
 B: 會說一點兒，不太好。

A: Nǎlǐ, nǐ shuō de hěn hǎo, hěn biāozhǔn.  
 A: You speak it very well, (the pronunciation is) very good.  
 A: 哪裡，你說得很好，很標準。

B: Bùxíng bùxíng. Hěn duō huà hái tīng bu dǒng.  
 B: Not really. (I) still can't understand many words.  
 B: 不行不行。很多話還聽不懂。

A: Wǒ shuō huà nǐ tīng de dǒng ma?  
 A: Do you understand what I am saying?  
 A: 我說話你聽得懂嗎？

B: Nǐ shuō de màn, wǒ dǒng, yàoshì shuō de kuài, jiù bú tài dǒng.

B: You speak slowly, I understand. If (you) speak fast, then (I) don't understand.

B: 你說得慢，我懂，要是說得快，就不太懂。

A: Nǐ juéde Zhōngwén nán bu nán?

A: Do you feel that Chinese is difficult or not?

A: 你覺得中文難不難？

B: Duìbuqǐ, wǒ méi tīng dǒng, qǐng nǐ zài shuō yíbiàn, hǎo bu hǎo?

B: I am sorry, I didn't understand. Please say it once more, OK?

B: 對不起，我沒聽懂，請你再說一遍，好不好？

A: Wǒ shuō Zhōngwén nán bu nán?

A: I said: 'Is Chinese difficult?'

A: 我說中文難不難？

B: Kǒuyǔ bú tài nán. Xiě zì hěn nán.

B: Spoken Chinese is not too difficult, writing characters is very difficult.

B: 口語不太難。寫字很難。

## 5.

A: Nǐ rènshi bu rènshi Zhōngguó zì?

A: Do you read (recognize) Chinese characters?

A: 你認識不認識中國字？

B: Wǒ zhǐ rènshi jǐ ge Zhōngguó zì, Zhōngguó zì tài nán xiě.

B: I only recognize some Chinese characters. Chinese characters are too hard to write.

B: 我只認識幾個中國字，中國字太難寫。

A: Shìde, hěn nán, hěn duō. Zhè ge zì nǐ rènshi ma?

A: Yes, very hard. (there are) many (characters). (Do you) recognize this character?

A: 是的，很難，很多。這個字你認識嗎？

B: Zhè ge shì 'hǎo'.

B: This one is 'good'.

B: 這個是“好”。

A: Nà ge ne?

A: How about that one?

A: 那個呢？

B: *Bú rènshi. Shì shénme zì?*

B: No, (I) don't understand. What character is it?

B: 不認識。是什麼字？

A: *Zhè ge zì shì 'guó', 'guójiā' de 'guó'.*

A: This character is 'guó', 'guó' as in 'guójiā'.

A: 這個字是"國", "國家"的"國"。

B: *Duibuqǐ, 'guójiā' shì shénme yìsi?*

B: Excuse me, what does 'guójiā' mean?

B: 對不起，"國家"是什麼意思？

A: *'guójiā' jiù shì 'country' de yìsi.*

A: 'guójiā' means 'country'.

A: "國家"是'country'的意思。

B: *Duibuqǐ, nǐ shuō de tài kuài, wǒ méi tīng dòng, qǐng nǐ zài shuō yíbiàn.*

B: Sorry, you speak too fast. I didn't understand. Please say it one more time.

B: 對不起，你說得太快，我沒聽懂，請你再說一遍。

A: *Wǒ shuō zhè ge zì shì 'guó', 'guójiā' de 'guó'. Yīngwén shì 'country' de yìsi.*

A: I said: " this character is 'guó', 'guó' as in 'guójiā. (In) English it means 'country'.

A: 我說這個字是"國", "國家"的"國"。英文是'country'的意思。

B: *Xièxie.*

B: Thank you.

B: 謝謝。

A: *Bú kèqi.*

A: Not at all.

A: 不客氣。

## Part II: Utterances and Notes

- Hànyǔ, Zhōngwén are synonyms.
- 'tīng de dǒng' is a 'V (de) resultative' pattern which can be used to express the ability. There is no counterpart in English. It means: listen and understand. So 'tīng bu dǒng' means that although someone listened, he can't understand.
- 'kěshì' means 'but'
- 'yàoshì...jiù...' is a pair of conjunction words which indicates the condition: If... then...

Examples:

Yàoshì tā shuō de kuài, wǒ jiù tīng bu dǒng.  
If he speaks fast, then I can't understand.

Yàoshì tā shuō de màn, wǒ jiù tīng de dǒng.  
If he speaks slowly, then I can understand.

- 'hái' in 'Tā hái zài xué Zhōngwén.' means an event is still going on: He is still learning Chinese. Note that 'hái' may mean different things in different contexts. In 'Nálí, shuō de hái bù hǎo', 'hái' means 'not yet'.
- 'jǐ' in 'Wǒ zhǐ rènshi jǐ ge zì.' means several, some, e.g. jǐ ge rén (several people), jǐ ge zì (several characters).
- Tā xiǎng dào Zhōngguó qù zuò shēngyì. Pay attention to this construction: dào ... qù

Examples:

dào New York qù	go to New York
dào Fǎguó qù	go to France

- Pay attention to the difference among the following phrases:

tīng bu dǒng	can't understand
tīng de dǒng	can understand
méi tīng dǒng	didn't understand

- '...shì ... de yìsi' means: ... is the meaning of ...

Examples:

hǎo shì good de yìsi ('hǎo' means good)  
bù hǎo shì bad de yìsi ('bù hǎo' means bad)

### Part III: New Sentence Modules

#### 1. I (don't) speak X language very well, fast...

Wǒ	Zhōngwén Yīngyǔ Fáyǔ Rìyǔ	shuō de	màn bú tài kuài hěn kuài tài kuài bú tài hǎo bù hǎo bú cuò hěn biāozhǔn <sup>2</sup> hěn liúlì
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#### 2. My pronunciation in X language is ...

Wǒ de	Zhōngwén Yīngyǔ Fáyǔ Rìyǔ	fāyīn	fāyīn hěn biāozhǔn fāyīn bú tài hǎo bú tài biāozhǔn
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#### 3. If... then...

Yàoshì	nǐ shuō de màn Zhōngguó rén shuō de kuài	wǒ jiù	tīng de dǒng tīng bu dǒng bù dǒng bú tài dǒng
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#### 4. Because he plans to ...

yīnwèi tā xiǎng dào	Zhōngguó Riběn Fǎguó Shànghǎi	qù	zuò shēngyì xué Zhōngwén gōngzuò
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<sup>2</sup> ‘shuō de hěn biāozhǔn’ means that one speaks with a good pronunciation, without any accents.

**5. I am sorry, I didn't... Could you please say it again?**

Duì bu qǐ

wǒ méi yǒu tīng dǒng wǒ bù dǒng wǒ bú tài huì shuō Zhōngwén
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qǐng nǐ zài shuō yíbiàn, hǎo bu hǎo?

**6. How to say in...? What does ...mean?**

XXX

Zhōngwén Yīngwén Fáyǔ
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zénme shuō? shì shénme yìsi? shì ..... de yìsi
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## Part IV: Practice Makes Perfect

### *How to say the following phrases? Please speak out!*

can listen and understand, listen and cannot understand  
 speak very well, do not speak very well  
 speak very fluently, do not speak very fluently  
 speak very fast, do not speak very fast  
 speak very slowly, do not speak very slowly  
 speak too fast, speak too slowly  
 pronunciation is very good, pronunciation is not very good  
 want to go to China, want to go to Japan, want to go to California, want to go to Shanghai  
 want to go to China to study Chinese, want to go to Beijing to do business  
 if... then..., if speak slowly, then understand, if speak too fast, then don't understand  
 how to say ...  
 how to say ... in English, how to say ... in Chinese  
 to feel, difficult or not,  
 do you feel that Chinese is difficult or not  
 do you feel that Japanese is difficult or not  
 do you feel that Russian is difficult or not  
 please say it again  
 to recognize, do not recognize, do not recognize Chinese characters  
 difficult to write, difficult to speak, difficult to learn  
 what's the meaning?  
 it is the meaning of ...

### *Answer the following questions based on your own situation. Please be sure to give real answers.*

Nǐ huì shuō Zhōngwén ma?  
 Wǒ shuō Zhōngwén, nǐ tīng de dǒng ma?  
 Yào shì wǒ shuō de hěn kuài, nǐ tīng de dǒng tīng bu dǒng?  
 Nǐ Zhōngwén shuō de hěn biāozhǔn.  
 Nǐ rènshi bu rènshi Zhōngguó zì?  
 Nǐ huì bu huì xiě Zhōngguó zì?  
 Zhèi ge zì nǐ rènshi bu rènshi?  
 Zhōngguó zì nán bu nán xiě?  
 Zhōngguó zì hěn duō ma?  
 Nǐ juéde Zhōngwén nán bu nán?  
 Nǐ xiǎng dào Zhōngguó qù ma?  
 Nǐ xiǎng dào Zhōngguó qù zuò shénme?  
 Nǐ hái huì shuō shénme wàiyǔ?  
 Zàijiàn, ... yǔ zénme shuō?  
 Duìbuqǐ, qǐng nǐ zài shuō yíbiàn.  
 'Guójiā', Yīngwén shì shénme yìsì?  
 'Good bye' Zhōngwén zénme shuō?

***Now try to say something more about your study of Chinese.***

Please tell a Chinese friend what your name is, where you work. Tell him that you are learning Chinese now. You want to go to China to do business. Now you can speak a little Chinese. Some words you don't understand yet. If Chinese people speak too fast, you don't understand. You only know (recognize) some characters, but you don't write (use 'zhǐ rènshi jǐ ge zì, kěshì bù huì xiě...'). You feel that spoken Chinese is not that difficult. Characters are too difficult. There are too many characters. You also feel (yě juéde) that spoken Chinese is not as difficult as Russian. Tell your friend what foreign languages you can speak. Also tell him that your Chinese instructor is a Chinese and he is from Shanghai. He lives in Davis now. His wife also works in Davis. She is also a teacher. He has a son and he works in Ohio. He teaches very well.