

## On-site Education of Practical Language for Area Studies

### Report in 2011

——Botswana, University of Botswana, Gaborone, (1 Sep. 2011–30 Jan. 2012)——

Year of Enrollment: 2011

Graduate School of Asian and African Areas Studies

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#### On my research theme

I was supposed to do some research on Bushman children. However, after arriving in Gaborone, I was surprised by the large number of China shops and the impact they carried. Therefore, I decided to study the following topic.

Since 1990s, the number of China shops became increased from the cities to suburban in Botswana. It undoubtedly carried more job opportunities to, and provided cheaper daily needs for local people. On the other hand, they were also criticized that their local market was occupied by the outsiders. Even Botswana government has recently presumed the existence of China shops as an obstacle to the development of local industries, and thus has tighten the regulation for establishing Chinese shops in Botswana.

So far, most of literatures on Chinese migrants in Africa are based only on statistical data rather than carrying out comprehensive analysis on those Chinese migrants. Moreover, no report about the process of migrating or the management of Chinese shops was so far observed.

Setting the Chinese migrants as the major object, this proposed study was ameliorated with the three objectives: exploring into the interaction between Chinese migrants and local people; describing the networks and competitive relations among Chinese; and finally delving into the livelihood of Chinese migrates in Botswana. This study will lead us to a deep understanding and a new perspective on the affect/impact of China shops in Africa.



Fig. 1- Goods displayed in China shop  
The summary of the training language

Fig. 2 – Cash desk in China shop

Setswana is a Bantu language, belonging to the Niger–Congo language family. It is until around 1833 an unwritten language and now, is represented in Latin characters. Nowadays, the majority of Setswana speakers can be found in Botswana, and in some parts of South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia.

#### Details of the language study training

Under the guidance of my language teacher, I had spent ten weeks (in total 65 hours) in Setswana language training course since the second week of September, 2011. According to the schedules, the course had basically five classes a week with the time limit of one to one-and-half hours for each class. We usually used English as the media language in the class. The language training includes learning basic pronunciation, greetings, composition of word and sentence, and applying them to particular situations. In the final class, I took a paper exam, which checked my understanding of the course materials.



Fig.3 – Learning Setswana language with my teacher in the class

Fig.4 – Snack time with my friends

In Gaborone, the capital of Botswana, most people commonly use English rather than Setswana. So, I seldom had chances to make practices what I learnt in the class. Since mid-October, I got a great opportunity to do that because one of my Tswana friends wanted to share an apartment with me. And thanks to her, I could make

practices of daily usage of Setswana. By recording her pronunciation, a native-speaker of Setswana, I, myself learnt a lot of vocabulary. Moreover, in order to improve my writing skill, I asked for her help to check what I wrote in Setswana.

#### About the impressive experience during the training period

During my stay in Botswana, I usually went to the University of Botswana with two students studying in the same university. They are so kind, and not only helped me take bus with great patient, but also taught me the places to go shopping. Moreover, on a rainy day, they worried about me, and thus drove their car to the bus station to pick me up. Without such good friends, I would have never been able to complete my language training in such a peaceful and joyful way.

I was pleased getting a great chance to contact a lot of local people when I commute to the university, and I was very thankful to them from my deepest heart. Some of the bus drivers remembered me very well, and would greet me even when they are on their way. I usually memorized the word list of Setswana in the bus, and many passengers sitting next to me corrected my mistakes in pronunciations and gave encouragement to me to carry on the study of Setswana. Although Setswana is a difficult language for me, thanks to the friendship and encouragement provided by Batswana, I felt very pleased and very proud of learning Setswana.

#### Achievement level of the target and the reflection point

Because Setswana is very different from any other languages I have learnt, it was a big challenge for me to memorize those words and grammar. I was indebted to my Setswana teacher for her great patience on me; otherwise I am sure I couldn't acquire a certain level of Setswana language within two and half months. Now, I am able to communicate with people in daily Setswana dialogue and read books written for elementary students.

Besides, I also feel some regrets that I cooled down my zest after I finished my language course. In Gaborone, even when I spoke to local people in Setswana they would reply me in English. Consequently, I ended up relying on English when I made the interview among the local informants working in China shops. If I practiced Setswana continuously, I would have achieved a greater progress in speaking Setswana and have been able to explore the opinion of those rural people and elders, who have little English commands. In conclusion, I would like to take such kind of experiences as a lesson for preparing my next field research full-heartedly.