

ANALYSIS OF L2 LEARNERS' KNOWLEDGE OF PERFECTIVE LE IN MANDARIN

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This study examines L2 Chinese learners' knowledge of the perfective marker LE in Mandarin Chinese. More specifically, it investigates if learners at the intermediate level have acquired the necessary metalinguistic knowledge that governs LE use. The study addresses three research questions: First, when making errors, do L2 learners mostly oversupply or undersupply LE? Second, do L2 learners have the metalinguistic knowledge that certain verb types require the use of LE, while others do not allow it? Third, how do heritage speakers and Chinese Foreign Language (CFL) learners differ in their use of perfective LE? Thirty-two students studying Mandarin Chinese at a large American university participated in the study by completing a fill-in-the-blank task in which they were instructed to add LE to a text wherever they thought was necessary. The results indicate that in a fill-in-the-blank task using perfective LE, intermediate-level CFL learners have a greater problem with undersupplying LE than with oversupplying it. Verb type has a main effect on learners' LE use because they have not fully acquired the metalinguistic knowledge about the interaction between lexical aspect and grammatical aspect. Furthermore, heritage speakers perform better than non-heritage learners in the use of perfective LE. This study highlights the importance for CFL teachers to give explicit instruction on how certain verb types favor or disfavor the use of LE.

INTRODUCTION

This study attempts to examine L2 Chinese learners' knowledge of the perfective marker LE in Mandarin Chinese (hereafter Chinese). LE marks the perfective aspect of a verb and has traditionally been considered by researchers and Chinese instructors alike as one of the most difficult grammatical structures to learn due to its high usage and easy confusion with the English past tense. In a classroom setting, it is a common practice to teach LE to L2 learners at an early stage, usually during the first year of instruction. However, it remains to be seen if learners at an intermediate level have acquired the necessary metalinguistic knowledge that governs LE use. More specifically, it is still unclear if learners understand that different verb types favor or disfavor the use of LE, as native speakers do.

Many previous studies have focused on the L2 acquisition of perfective LE, including Teng (1999), Wen (1995, 1997), Yang, Huang & Sun (1999, 2000), and Ke (2005). Regarding the relationship between LE use and verb types, Duff and Li's (2002) study is the most comprehensive study so far on this topic and is the chief inspiration for the current project. This study aims to verify some of their findings through a quantitative experiment designed to

test learners' accuracy in using perfective LE. It also expands on their study by including heritage speakers in the experiment and comparing their performance with that of non-heritage learners. This paper will first provide the theoretical background on this topic, and then introduce the methodology used in the experiment and how data analysis was conducted. Results will be reported and discussed according to specific research questions, and possible pedagogical implications will also be addressed.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The Chinese perfective aspect marker LE is one of the most important and yet challenging grammatical features for learners of CFL. Chinese does not mark tense on verbs, which is commonly observed in many other languages such as English. Instead, time reference can be directly conveyed by temporal adverbials without any verbal conjugations. However, aspect is marked and plays a unique role in the Chinese temporal system. Unlike tense, which is concerned with the relationship between time of speech and time of event, aspect describes different stages of a single event, such as beginning, continuation, or completion.

There are two types of aspect: lexical aspect and grammatical aspect. Lexical aspect is inherent in the lexical item and describes innate characteristics of the situation, while grammatical aspect is usually marked explicitly by linguistic devices such as auxiliaries or inflectional morphology. In Chinese, two major categories of grammatical aspect are present – perfective and imperfective. The perfective aspect includes two markers – LE indicating bounded perfective and GUO denoting experiential perfective. This viewpoint represents an external view of the situation as a whole without reference to its internal structure. There are three imperfective markers – ZAI for progressive, ZHE for stative/durative, and NE for progressive, which provide an internal view of the inner constituency of the situation without regard to the situation's initial or final boundaries. These are summarized in Table 1 below, adopted from Duff and Li (2002).

Aspect	Marker	Meaning	Example
Perfective	LE	Bounded, perfective	Ta kan-LE yi ge dianying He see-LE a movie 'He saw a movie.'
	GUO	Experiential	Ta kan-GUO neige dianying He see-GUO that movie 'He has seen that movie.'
Imperfective	ZAI	Progressive (foregrounded)	Ta ZAI kan dianying He ZAI watch movie 'He is watching a movie.'
	ZHE	Stative, durative (background) progressive situation (esp. in writing)	Ta kan-ZHE dianshi chifan He watch-ZHE TV eat rice 'He ate while watching TV.'
	NE	Progressive (in colloquial speech) durative	Wo (ZAI) chifan-NE I (ZAI) eat rice-NE 'I am eating.'

Table 1: Grammatical Aspect Markers in Mandarin Chinese

The present study focuses on LE – the perfective aspect marker, which is the one acquired earliest by L1 speakers (Erbaugh, 1978, 1982), but also the most challenging one in L2 acquisition (Duff & Li, 2002; Yang et al., 1999). Li and Thompson (1981) emphasize that LE indicates boundedness, not completion, and that it does not indicate a past temporal reference. Rather, the use of LE is strongly associated with the lexical aspect of verbs, which involves the inherent temporal meanings of a verb denoted by punctuality, telicity and dynamism. Vendler (1957) proposed a classification of four lexical aspects: achievement, accomplishment, activity, and state. The relationship between these categories and the verbal features is best represented in Table 2, adopted from Andersen (1991). Li and Bowerman (1998) proposed six different categories of lexical aspect in Chinese, adding semelfactives and mixed telic-stative verbs to the original list. Either way, regarding the use of perfective LE, it should be noted that the closer a verb is to the achievement end of the continuum, the more perfective, and the more likely it should be marked with LE in Chinese (Duff and Li, 2002).

	State	Activity	Accomplishment	Achievement
Punctual	-	-	-	+
Telic	-	-	+	+
Dynamic	-	+	+	+

Table 2: Semantic Features for the Four Categories of Inherent Lexical Aspect

Previous research has been conducted on the acquisition of perfective LE in both L1 and L2 learners. Erbaugh (1978, 1982) studied the acquisition of LE in L1 child language and found (a) the early emergence of the perfective aspect marker LE compared with other aspect markers, and (b) the most fundamental aspect marking was in showing the change of state at the sentence-final position. In the first systematic study of the complex interplay of aspect and verb semantics, Li (1990) found that children had knowledge of the relationship between aspect and verb semantics: they tended to associate telic verbs with perfective aspect marker.

In L2 acquisition research of the perfective LE, Teng (1999) and Wen (1995, 1997) investigated the acquisition order of LE at two syntactic positions: post-verbal LE and sentence-final LE. Their results were contradictory: Wen (1995) found that learners acquired the post-verbal LE before the sentence-final LE, while Teng (1999) found that sentence-final LE was acquired first. Yang et al. (1999, 2000) were interested in the effect of syntactic structures and verb types on the acquisition of LE and its underuse. Their findings indicate that learners made no mistakes in using LE with

accomplishment verbs or achievement verbs since these two types of verbs denote a temporal endpoint. They also found sentence structure-related restrictions in using LE: for example, no LE could be used in an attributive clause or an adverbial clause. Ke (2005) did a survey of acquisition patterns of 19 Chinese grammatical features, in which LE was included. The author compiled all the patterns in association with LE that exist in the commonly used textbooks and grammar books in the United States, which came to a total of 10 patterns. One of his findings was a linear correlation between the acquisition of LE and the instructional level of learners: learners at higher instructional levels have better mastery of LE than those at lower instructional levels.

Duff and Li (2002) investigated the differences between non-native speakers of Mandarin Chinese (NNSs) and native speakers (NSs) in the use of perfective LE and found different behavior patterns between the two groups. NSs use LE far more frequently and correctly in both obligatory and optional contexts than NNSs do. NNSs tend to undersupply LE in their oral narratives in obligatory contexts, but tend to oversupply it with certain stative and non-perfective activity verbs. NSs are more inclined to supply LE with verbs with quantified objects (VQOs) and resultative verb compounds (RVCs). Furthermore, NSs produced a wide range of perfective verbs to which LE was attached, including accomplishment/achievement verbs, VQOs and RVCs, while NNSs' production of these verbs was very limited. The researchers also found L1 transfer from the English past tense to be a major reason for learners' errors.

Jin and Hendriks (2005) tested the Aspect Hypothesis in L1 and L2 acquisition of Chinese and found that L1 and L2 Chinese learners behave more or less in the same way: lower level learners will start using the perfective LE with achievement/accomplishment verbs first and then spread it to activity/state verbs. L1 interference was also observed in the L2 data and telicity seems to play a more important role in L1 acquisition of the aspect markers.

All these previous studies on the acquisition of LE by CFL learners have provided much valuable insight, but they have also raised some questions. Several studies have used L1 transfer from English past tense to account for learners' errors in oversupplying LE, but they have not agreed on what causes them to undersupply LE. Because English requires all past tense verbs to be marked, L1 transfer cannot be the reason if learners tend to undersupply LE rather than overusing it. Furthermore, studies have repeatedly shown that certain verb types, such as accomplishment/achievement verbs, verbs with quantified objects, and resultative verb compounds, strongly favor the use of perfective LE and native speakers possess such metalinguistic knowledge to make the right judgments. However, it remains to be seen if CFL learners have similar knowledge about the interaction between the use of LE and verb types. If they do not, it could potentially explain their undersupply of LE in obligatory contexts. In addition, no study so far has looked at the use of LE by heritage speakers of Chinese and compared their

performance with that of CFL learners. If heritage speakers outperform CFL learners in using perfective LE, it could be due to the fact that they have some of the metalinguistic knowledge regarding LE that is not taught in the CFL classroom. The present study investigates L2 learners' knowledge of perfective LE using a fill-in-the-blank task and will address the following research questions:

1. When making errors, do L2 learners mostly oversupply or undersupply LE?
2. Do L2 learners have the metalinguistic knowledge that certain verb types require the use of LE, while others do not allow it?
3. How do heritage speakers and CFL learners differ in their use of perfective LE?

METHOD

Participants

Thirty-two students at a large research university in the American Southwest participated in the study. All of them were taking Chinese 202 at the time of the study and had taken at least three semesters of Chinese either at the University or elsewhere. This instructional level is normally considered intermediate in comparison with the beginner level (100 level courses) and the advanced level (400 level courses). Intermediate level students were chosen for this study because they had learned perfective LE at least one year prior to the time of the study and should have the necessary knowledge that governs LE use. Another consideration lies in the nature of the task, which requires the participants to know a certain amount of vocabulary words. Students of higher proficiency levels were not chosen because this study aims to examine learners' metalinguistic knowledge of LE, not their ability to produce LE in oral contexts. Thus more advanced productive competence is not necessary. Among the 32 participants, 25 were non-native speakers (NNSs), and 7 were heritage speakers (HSs). All participants speak English as their first language; heritage speakers also use Chinese to some extent at home.

Test Instrument

Participants were invited to complete a fill-in-the-blank task during their regular class time, in which they were given the test paper containing a Chinese text named "A Trip to Beijing." They were instructed to add LE to the text wherever they thought was necessary, and they had 20 minutes to finish the task. The text included no LE and had 50 blanks for them to fill in. All the blanks were at a post-verbal position and were designed to elicit 17 appropriate LE uses from the learners. In other words, out of the 50 positions, learners were supposed to add LE to 17 of them, while leaving 33 empty. In order to ensure the internal reliability of the test, an independent rater and the researcher, both native Chinese speakers, took the test separately and were able to reach a 100% inter-rater agreement on the correct answers. This allows

the present study to avoid having a third “optional” context, as was included in Duff and Li (2002). In the following analysis, the 50 positions were divided into 6 different categories following Duff and Li’s (2002) categorization of verb types: accomplishment/achievement verbs, RVCs, and VQOs, all of which require the use of LE; and stative verbs, “say” or “think” verbs, and verbs in non-perfective situations, all of which disallow LE. The distribution of verbs into these six categories is presented in Table 3.

Verb Type	Abbreviation	Number of Tokens	Verbs (listed only once if repeated)
Accomplishment/achievement verbs	AA	5	去(go) 到(arrive)
Resultative Verb Compounds	RVC	3	坐上(get on) 准备好(prepare) 喝完(finish drinking)
Verbs with Quantified Object	VQO	9	停一个晚上(stop for one night), 睡五个小时(sleep for five hours), 吃两顿饭(have two meals), 看一个电影(watch one movie), 点一杯咖啡(order one cup of coffee), 点一杯茶(order one cup of tea), 换一杯茶(exchange for one cup of tea), 坐一个小时(sit for an hour), 打一个电话(make one phone call)
Stative Verbs	Stat	4	高兴(happy) 累(tired) 饿(hungry)
“Say” or “think” verbs	ST	7	问(ask), 说(speak), 觉得(feel), 告诉(tell)
Verbs in non-perfective situations	NonP	22	Not listed

Table 3: The distribution of Verb Types in the Test Instrument

Verbs in the “NonP” category were not listed because in these situations the non-use of LE was not due to the lexical aspect of verbs, but to the grammatical aspect of the sentence, thus the verbs in this case were irrelevant in determining LE use. Due to practical difficulties, each verb type had uneven numbers of tokens; therefore it was necessary to adopt statistical methods to assist with the coding and analysis of the data. The complete test instrument is provided in the appendix.

DATA ANALYSIS

After participants’ test papers were collected, the researcher counted their answers and calculated the accuracy rates in percentages for each verb type in order to find out if the verb type is a significant factor in predicting learners’ performance in the use of LE. A mixed ANOVA - with verb type as a within-subjects variable and language background (NNS or HS) as a between-subjects variable - was performed on the data to ensure that the analysis was

reliable. The results will be reported in the following section in relation to the proposed research questions.

Results

Table 4 shows participants’ accuracy rates for each verb type, from which two trends can be observed: first, learners’ accuracy rate for verb categories AA, RVC, and VQO, which require the use of LE, is significantly lower than their accuracy rate for verb categories Stat, ST and NonP, which do not allow LE. This indicates that learners were rather conservative in adding LE to the text, making more errors where LE was obligatory than where LE should not be used. In other words, they seemed to have a greater problem with undersupplying rather than oversupplying LE. Second, participants’ accuracy rates vary significantly between verb types, indicating that verb type is a strong factor in determining how well learners would perform the task of adding LE to a written text. This was confirmed by the statistical analysis. A mixed ANOVA with verb type as a within-subjects variable with 6 levels (AA, RVC, VQO, Stat, ST and NonP) yielded a main effect of verb type ($F(5, 150) = 10.182, p < .001$). Pairwise comparisons indicate that the difference lies with the AA type, on which participants performed significantly worse than any other category ($P < .001$); no significant difference was found between other verb types.

Verb Type	AA	RVC	VQO	Stat	ST	NonP
Accuracy	44%	58%	67%	84%	77%	84%
obligatory/ungrammatical		59%			82%	

Table 4: Accuracy Rates between Verb Types

In terms of the difference in performance between NNSs and HSs, a mixed ANOVA with language background as a between-subjects variable with two levels (NNS and HS) yielded a main effect of language background ($F(1, 30) = 4.549, p < .05$). This indicates that HSs were overall more accurate than NNSs in this task.

A potential verb type x language background interaction was not found to be significant ($F(5, 150) = .686, p = .635$). However, a graph generated to illustrate the interaction confirms that both groups (HS and NNS) had their worst performance with the AA verb type, as shown in Figure 1.

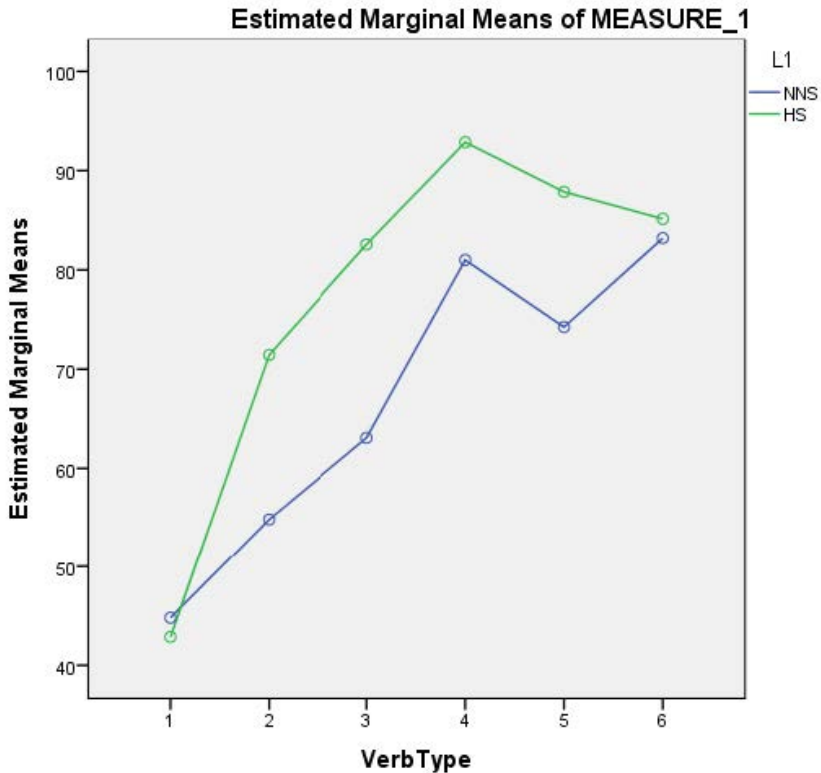


Figure 1: Interaction of Verb Type and Language Background in Learners' Performance

DISCUSSION

The present study found that CFL learners at intermediate level had a tendency to undersupply LE in a fill-in-the-blank task, rather than to oversupply it, which contradicts the findings of Duff and Li's (2002) study, where they found that their participants tended to oversupply LE in the written task, even though undersupplying seemed to be the main problem in their oral productions. They attributed this finding to the influence of L1 transfer from the English past tense – NNSs with lower proficiency would treat LE as the equivalent of the English past tense morpheme and add it to any descriptions of past situations. The participants in the current study did not seem to have the same problem – they consistently chose not to add LE where it was necessary, despite the nature of the task, which people traditionally believe would encourage learners to use the target grammar more than they usually would otherwise.

The explanations for this finding could be two-fold: first, learners in the present study might have displayed consistency in using LE in both oral and written tasks. Duff and Li (2002) found contradictory trends of LE use in the two tasks; the present study did not test learners' use of perfective LE in oral production, but a pilot study conducted by the researcher before this study attempted to use the "Pear Film"¹ to test individual learners' production of LE, only to find that the three learners who participated in the pilot study – all of them being from the same class as the participants in the present study – did not produce a single utterance of LE in their oral retelling of the story. If the finding from the pilot study could be taken to indicate that the use of LE had not registered in learners' interlanguage, then learners' undersupply of LE in the present study would be consistent with that result. Ke (2005) found a linear developmental trend in CFL learners' acquisition of LE and their proficiency level, so it is possible that the learners in the present study were at the stage where they had not fully acquired LE for production. Second, it is not uncommon for CFL teachers to give their students the explicit instruction that LE is NOT a past tense marker. In fact, an interview with the teachers of the participants revealed that they had both told their students repeatedly that they should not use LE as if it were a past tense marker, "I told them many times that Chinese does not have tense so they should not use LE like the English '-ed'," said one teacher. "They should know that." This type of explicit instruction is expected to raise learners' awareness and discourage them from using LE in a way that could be largely impacted by their L1. So it could be the case that learners in the present study were overly cautious about oversupplying LE to the point that they ended up avoiding it in certain obligatory contexts.

The results of the present study show that verb type has a main effect on learners' accurate use of LE in a written editing task, especially with the accomplishment/achievement verb type. This is surprising in many ways. Yang et al. (1999, 2000) found that their learners made no mistakes in using LE with accomplishment verbs or achievement verbs since these two types of verbs denote a temporal endpoint. Duff and Li (2002) also found that most of the NNSs' correct use of LE co-occurred with accomplishment/achievement verbs with quantified or specified objects. Jin and Hendriks (2005) confirmed that lower level learners will start using the perfective LE with achievement/accomplishment verbs first and then spread it to activity/state verbs. These studies, though different in focus, all point to an earlier and easier acquisition of using LE with accomplishment/achievement verbs. So why did the learners, NNSs and HSs alike, in the present study perform the worst in this category?

In order to answer this question, we need to examine the sentences that contain the accomplishment/achievement verbs used in the test instrument. The text included two such verbs – "去" (go) and "到" (arrive) – in five different contexts; these sentences are listed below with a number indicating their positions in the text:

7. 我 先 从 纽约 坐 火车 去 了 洛杉矶的
家。

I first from New York ride the train go LE Los Angeles' home

(I first went to my home in Los Angeles from New York by train)

11. 第二天 早上 九点 我们 到 了
北京。

the next day in the morning at 9 a.m. we arrive LE Beijing

(We arrived in Beijing at 9 a.m. the next morning).

28. 我们 就 一起 坐 爸爸的 车 去 了
旅馆。

we then together ride Dad's car go LE hotel

(We then went to the hotel together in Dad's car).

29. 到 了 旅馆。

arrive LE hotel

([We] arrived at the hotel).

36. 我 和 妈妈 就 一起 去 了 星巴
克。

I and Mom then together go LE Starbucks

(Mom and I then went to Starbucks together).

LE is used to mark a bounded event. Li and Thompson (1981) state that there are essentially four ways in which an event can be bounded: (a) by being a quantified event; (b) by being a definite or specific event; (c) by being inherently bounded because of the meaning of the verb; and (d) by being the first event in a sequence. Two of these four ways correspond with the two-verb types adopted in the present study: VQOs are perfective because they describe a quantified event, and AAs are perfective because the verbs are inherently bounded. However, learners in this study showed a significant difference in their accuracy using LE between these two categories ($P = .004$). In other words, they performed significantly better with VQOs than with AAs. This paper argues that this is because VQOs carry an easily identifiable cue that alerts learners of their perfectiveness, but AAs do not. VQOs contain a quantified object, which is usually expressed with a number and a measure word – which is understandably a much more salient linguistic cue than being “inherently bounded.” So it is possible that in the learners’ metalinguistic knowledge about perfective LE, “verbs with a quantified object are more

likely to be marked with LE” is one of the first and easiest rules that learners acquire. On the other hand, even native speakers have problems deciding if a verb “is inherently bounded” or “has a natural endpoint,” so it is reasonable to believe that for CFL learners, this is much more difficult to process than to recognize a verb with a quantified object. In general, the present study found that verb type is an important factor in affecting CFL learners’ use of perfective LE, but that, at least at the intermediate level, they need some obvious linguistic cues in order to access that knowledge. The perfectiveness of accomplishment/achievement verbs is therefore difficult for them to identify because of a lack of those cues.

No study in the past has specifically looked at heritage learners’ use of perfective LE. The current study shows that they are generally more competent than non-native learners in using LE in a written editing task. This result is not surprising since it is widely acknowledged that the interlanguage of heritage learners more closely resembles native speaker language than non-native learners’ interlanguage (Ke, 2005). This is usually due to the fact that heritage speakers have more exposure to the target L2 and have more opportunities to practice. The current study did not test heritage learners’ LE use in oral productions, but in the researcher’s own experience working with them, their production of LE also seems to be more accurate than that of non-native speakers. This study, though not conclusive due to the small group size, points to perfective LE as another aspect in CFL acquisition where heritage learners are more advanced than non-native learners.

CONCLUSION

The present study shows that in a fill-in-the-blank task using perfective LE, intermediate level CFL learners have a greater problem undersupplying LE than oversupplying it; verb type has a main effect on learners’ LE use but they have not fully acquired the metalinguistic knowledge about the interaction between lexical and grammatical aspect; heritage speakers are better than non-native speakers in the use of perfective LE.

It is difficult to draw meaningful conclusions about how the results of this study would apply pedagogically, due to the narrow scope of the experiment. However, it does seem rational to suggest that CFL teachers should explicitly point out why LE is required in a certain context, instead of simply saying “you should use LE when a situation is completed.” It is especially important for teachers to inform students that certain verbs innately require the use of LE while others do not allow it, regardless of the contexts. Explicit instruction that draws students’ attention to the interaction between lexical aspect and grammatical aspect is crucial in preventing errors in learners’ production of LE.

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Notes

¹ A six-minute film made at the University of California at Berkeley in 1975 and shown to speakers of a number of languages, who were asked to tell what happened in it. See Wallace Chafe (ed.), *The Pear Stories: Cognitive, Cultural, and Linguistic Aspects of Narrative Production*. Norwood, New Jersey: Ablex (1980).

APPENDIX

Test Instrument: A Trip to Beijing (了 Exercise)

Please add “了” to the following passage wherever you think is necessary.

去年我爸爸在中国工作__，所以我跟我妈妈想去__中国旅行__，这样可以去看看__爸爸，也可以看看__中国的名胜古迹。我先从纽约坐__火车去__洛杉矶的家，在那里跟我妈妈见面__，然后我们一起从洛杉矶坐上__去北京的飞机。我们在东京停__一个晚上，第二天早上九点我们到__北京。一出__机场，我们就看见__爸爸在出口等__我们。我很高兴__，马上跑过去__问爸爸好。爸爸问__我们：“你们累不累__？饿不饿__？”我说__：“不累也不饿__。我们在飞机上睡__五个小时的觉，吃__两顿饭，还看__一个电影。现在我就想看__北京！”爸爸说__：“那好，我们就走__吧！”我们就一起坐爸爸的车去__旅馆。到__旅馆，我看见__旅馆的一楼有__一个星巴克 (Starbucks)。我觉得__有一点儿渴，所以想去__喝__一杯咖啡。爸爸说__他不渴，我和妈妈就一起去__星巴克。在那里有__很多人，我点__一杯咖啡，妈妈不喜欢喝咖啡__，所以点__一杯茶。我平常很喜欢喝咖啡__，可是那杯咖啡不好喝，我就换__一杯茶。我们在那儿坐__一个小时，爸爸给我打__一个电话，他问__：“你们准备好__吗？我们还得去__看__北京！”我和妈妈都喝完__，所以我告诉__爸爸我们这就去找他。

English Translation

Last year my father worked in China, so my mother and I wanted to travel to China. Thus, we had the opportunity not only to visit my father, but also to see various places of interest in China. I first took the train from New York to our home in Los Angeles and met my mother there, and then together we got on a plane from Los Angeles to Beijing. We stopped in Tokyo for one night, and arrived in Beijing at 9 a.m. the next morning. As soon as we left the airport, we saw my father waiting for us at the exit. I was very happy, and immediately ran over to greet him. My father asked, “Are you tired, or hungry?” I said, “Neither. We slept for five hours on the plane, ate two meals, and watched a movie. Now I just want to see Beijing!” My father said, “All right then. Let’s go!” We went to the hotel together in my father’s car. After we arrived, I saw a Starbucks on the 1st floor of the hotel. I felt a little thirsty, so I wanted to have a cup of coffee. My father said he was not thirsty, so my mother and I went to Starbucks together. There were a lot of people there. I ordered a cup of coffee; my mother did not like coffee, so she ordered a cup of tea. I normally liked drinking coffee very much, but that cup was not good at all, so I switched to a cup of tea. We sat there for an hour. Then my father called me and asked, “Are you ready? We still need to go see Beijing!” My mother and I had both finished, so I told him that we would go find him right away.