

Cantonese and Mandarin

歡迎

These are two of the several dialects spoken by people from a Chinese background. There is only one written form of Chinese. Chinese characters are formed by strokes, which derive from pictorial, ideographic, abstract or onomatopoeic sources.

Script

- Chinese can be written in vertical (traditional) or horizontal form.
- Chinese script does not distinguish between upper and lower case letters.
- Punctuation is similar apart from full stops and speech marks .

Sentence structure and word order

- The basic word order in a sentence is not fixed e.g. for Subject(S), Verb(V) and Object(O):- possibility of S-O-V , S-V-O or O-S-V.
- Post positions are used instead of prepositions.

Nouns and pronouns

- There is no definite or indefinite article before the noun.
- The third person pronoun is the same for masculine and feminine.

Verbs

- There are different ways to represent time although there are no tenses. Time or adverbs are used to indicate the past, present or future.
- In writing a story, phrases are used once at the beginning of a story to represent that it happened in the past. The whole passage or story is then written in the present tense.
- The verb component of a sentence can consist of one, two or three parts.

Typical errors

- Leaving out articles before a noun, e.g., "...he give me book...".
- Using personal pronouns instead of personal adjectives, e.g., "...he family comes to England...", instead of "...his family comes to England...".
- Omitting the auxiliary verb, e.g., "...she go to shop...", instead of "...she goes shopping..." or "...he read book now...". instead of "...he is reading a book...".
- Inappropriate word order, e.g., "...he in hall has lunch...", instead of "...he has his lunch in the hall...".
- Inappropriate use of no, e.g., "...he no come to school...".