RGC Ref. No.:
UGC/FDS11/H03/14
(please insert ref. above)

RESEARCH GRANTS COUNCIL
COMPETITIVE RESEARCH FUNDING SCHEMES FOR
THE LOCAL SELF-FINANCING DEGREE SECTOR

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT SCHEME (FDS)

Completion Report
(for completed projects only)

Submission Deadlines:	1. *Auditor's report with unspent balance, if any: within six months of the approved project completion date.*
	2. *Completion report: within 12 months of the approved project completion date.*

Part A: The Project and Investigator(s)

1. Project Title

Contextual Analysis of Chinese Language Teachers' Judgement on Student Writing:

An Exploratory Study in Hong Kong

2. Investigator(s) And Academic Department(s) / Unit(s) Involved

Research Team	Name / Post	Unit / Department / Institution
Principal Investigator	Prof Ho Man-koon	Dean, School of Humanities and Languages, Caritas Institute of Higher Education
Co-Investigator(s)	Leung Sze-ming	Vice-President (Administration), Caritas Institute of Higher Education
Others		

3. Project Duration

	Original	Revised	Date of RGC / Institution Approval *(must be quoted)*
Project Start Date	November 1, 2014		
Project Completion Date	April 30, 2017	October 31, 2017	Institution Approval granted on March 21, 2017
Duration *(in month)*	30 months	36 months	Institution Approval granted

			on March 21, 2017
Deadline for Submission of Completion Report		31 Oct 2018	

Part B: The Final Report

5. **Project Objectives**

    5.1   Objectives as per original application

        To provide a detailed account and analysis of the following:

- the marking styles and strategies of Chinese language teachers in Hong Kong secondary schools;
- the contextual and cultural factors affecting their marking behavior and scoring decision; and
- the similarities and differences between the composition marking practices employed by Hong Kong Chinese language teachers and those of English language teachers documented in local and overseas research literature.

    5.2   Revised objectives: None

        Date of approval from the RGC: N/A

        Reasons for the change: N/A

5.3   Realisation of the objectives
       (Maximum 1 page; please state how and to what extent the project objectives have been achieved; give reasons for under-achievements and outline attempts to overcome problems, if any)

The following table illustrates how and the extent to which the project objectives have been achieved:

	Item	Estimated Completion Date
1.	Transcribe the following into text files: o Interview scripts of teachers in Schools A & B o Think-aloud Protocol scripts of teachers in School A & B o Interview scripts of student participants and their parents in Schools A & B	Completed
2.	Based on the coding scheme especially designed for this project, the text scripts from the two schools would be divided up into units of analysis based on different themes for future comparison, analysis and discussion	Completed
3.	Invite School C to participate in this research project	Completed
4.	Interviews with teacher participants in School C	Completed
5.	Phone interviews with student participants and their parents	Completed
6.	To continue transcribing the following into text files: o Interview scripts of teachers in School C o Think-aloud Protocol scripts of teachers in School o Interview scripts of student participants and their parents in School C	Completed
7	Construction of case studies	Completed

5.4 Summary of objectives addressed to date

Objectives *(as per 5.1/5.2 above)*	Addressed *(please tick)*	Percentage Achieved *(please estimate)*
1) to examine the marking styles and strategies of Chinese language teachers in Hong Kong secondary schools	✓	100%
2) the contextual and cultural factors affecting their marking behavior and scoring decision	✓	100%
3) the similarities and differences between the composition marking practices employed by Hong Kong Chinese language teachers and those of English language teachers documented in local and overseas research literature	✓	100%

6. Research Outcome

6.1 Major findings and research outcome
(Maximum 1 page; please make reference to Part C where necessary)

Findings of this local Chinese writing study revealed that in the process of composition marking, participating teachers mainly adopt three categories of strategies: namely, interpretation strategies, judgment strategies and problem-solving strategies. Interpretation Strategies may be divided into "reading focus" and "meaning construction focus". In addition to the scoring goal judgment strategies suggested in studies on English composition rating, this study also indicated that Chinese language teachers tend to make use of pedagogical goal and interpersonal goal judgment strategies to arrive at verbal and written evaluation. It is worth mentioning that English teachers' judgment strategies in the past literature were mostly led by the scoring scale. In this Hong Kong study, the participating Chinese teachers used comparatively less scoring scale as a judgment strategy. Instead, they made frequent use of praises, giving positive comments first, then negative comments, etc. Such interpersonal goal judgment strategies are not found in past literature on English composition rating.

This study further showed that in encountering difficulties during composition marking, teachers may adopt problem-solving strategies such as "re-reading", "pausing", "delaying", "questioning", "simplified correction", and "ignoring". Even though these strategies may not have been able to completely solve teachers' problems in interpreting, correcting and scoring encountered in the marking process, this study has however brought to light the strengths and weaknesses in teachers' strategy adoption, and that is worthy of our attention, in particular school management and teacher raining professionals, so that in the future they may pay more attention to composition marking and strategy adoption in planning and designing teacher education and training programmes.

Apart from teachers' experience, other factors that actually govern and influence teachers' adoption of strategies were identified in the study. Such factors include: school policy on the deadlines for returning marked compositions to students; teachers' beliefs on feedback; teachers' view about students' ability in correcting their own errors; students' motivation in writing; prior writing knowledge/skills have been taught in classes and post-marking follow-up teaching and learning arrangement etc. These factors largely correspond to findings from past research studies on composition commenting and error correction.

6.2 Potential for further development of the research and the proposed course of action
(Maximum half a page)

The current study is exploratory in nature, and as such it has its limitation and calls for follow-up research. Research work conceived as continuation of this study may wish to replicate its design, or adopt a different research design and methodology, to further explore the strategy adoption of Chinese language teachers for their composition marking under different circumstances. Our proposal is as follows:

(1) Participants

For instance: comparing composition marking strategies by Chinese language teachers from schools with different cultural backgrounds (ones with established feedback/correction policy against ones without); teachers supporting students from diverse mother tongue backgrounds (teaching L1 Chinese students against teaching L2 Chinese students); and teachers with rich teaching experience against student teachers – the results generalised from these findings may differ from the ones in the current study.

(2) Research Methodology

Research in classroom composition marking strategies may be applied in longitudinal studies. Another alternative is ethnography study. One may consider tracking the development path of participating teachers over a long period of time to identify changes in their marking strategies, for example, by inviting teachers to do a 'think aloud' at half-year intervals from the commencement of their teaching career, followed by class observations and interviews, to observe whether and what changes in their strategies are taking place, so as to examine at the same time the internal and external factors that shape their marking strategies.

(3) Research Topic

The present study has conducted a preliminary exploration of the relationship between composition marking strategies and their adoption in the process. This study has not explored the relationship between the adoption of strategies and the quality of the marking. On-coming researchers may wish to undertake follow-up work in this direction.

7. **Layman's Summary**
(Describe <u>in layman's language</u> the nature, significance and value of the research project, in no more than 200 words)

Marking (including commenting, correcting and scoring) student composition is an important daily task for language teachers, taking up a lot of their time and energy. The current study attempts to explore Chinese language teachers' marking strategy adoption by using 'think aloud' method, supplemented by semi-structured interviews. Attempt is also made to find out factors affecting their adoption of strategies in the marking process.

Given that the existing literature on the adoption of composition marking strategies is lacking, the findings of this Chinese writing study, despite its limited scale, have opened avenues for this under-research area. Theoretically, this study has consolidated the findings derived from related studies by English writing teachers and raters, to develop a preliminary analytic framework for analysing Chinese language teachers' adoption of strategies in the classroom marking process, opening up a point of departure for researchers conducting future studies of similar nature. Pedagogically, the differences and similarities in adoption of strategies as revealed by the participating teachers in this study, as well as the factors influencing adoption of strategies as brought to light by this study, will be able to contribute specifically to teacher training of language teachers in the context of classroom writing assessment.

Part C: Research Output

8. **Peer-Reviewed Journal Publication(s) Arising <u>Directly</u> From This Research Project**
   (Please attach a copy of the publication and/or the letter of acceptance if not yet submitted in the previous progress report(s).   All listed publications must acknowledge RGC's funding support by quoting the specific grant reference.)

The Latest Status of Publications				Author(s) *(denote the corresponding author with an asterisk*)*	Title and Journal / Book *(with the volume, pages and other necessary publishing details specified)*	Submitted to RGC *(indicate the year ending of the relevant progress report)*	Attached to this Report *(Yes or No)*	Acknowledged the Support of RGC *(Yes or No)*	Accessible from the institutional repository *(Yes or No)*
Year of Publication	Year of Acceptance *(For paper accepted but not yet published)*	Under Review	Under Preparation *(optional)*						
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9. **Recognized International Conference(s) In Which Paper(s) Related To This Research Project Was / Were Delivered**
   (Please attach a copy of each conference abstract)

Month / Year / Place	Title	Conference Name	Submitted to RGC *(indicate the year ending of the relevant progress report)*	Attached to this Report *(Yes or No)*	Acknowledged the Support of RGC *(Yes or No)*	Accessible from the institutional repository *(Yes or No)*
August 2016/ Fukuoka, Japan	"Chinese Language Teachers' Composition Marking Strategies: A Pilot Study in Hong Kong"	The international conference on the globalization of second language acquisition and teacher education	Last report (2017)	No	Yes	No

October 2016/ Taipei	"Correcting every conceivable mistake in the making process – Is that the right way to go about making composition? Two cases in Hong Kong"	2016 International Symposium on Education and Psychology	Last report (2017)	No	Yes	No
January 2017/ Bangkok, Thailand	"Error Correction in Chinese Writing Classrooms: Whose Responsibility is it?"	2017 International Symposium on Teaching, Education and Learning	Last report (2017)	No	Yes (Recipient of Excellent Paper Award)	No

10. Whether Research Experience And New Knowledge Has Been Transferred / Has Contributed To Teaching And Learning
(Please elaborate)

The research team received the Excellent Paper Award at the 2017 International Symposium on Teaching, Education and Learning. The award winning paper titled "Error Correction in Chinese Writing Classrooms: Whose Responsibility is it?" has attempted to investigate the use of symbol correction strategies by Chinese writing teachers in the Judgment stage of the marking process. The findings showed that there is still a lot of room for improvement for writing teachers in adopting symbol correction strategies, as most of them shouldered all correction responsibilities on themselves and have not been able to make effective use of coded and focused correction symbols to guide students to correct their own grammatical errors or language errors. Such kind of proofreading-based correction model not only did not relieve teachers' marking workload, it actually posed a question mark on the effectiveness of their teaching and students' learning, an issue that needs to be further explored in the future research, with clear implication for teacher development and training.

11. Student(s) Trained
(Please attach a copy of the title page of the thesis)

Name	Degree Registered for	Date of Registration	Date of Thesis Submission / Graduation
Nil			

12. Other Impact
(e.g. award of patents or prizes, collaboration with other research institutions, technology transfer, teaching enhancement, etc.)

13. Public Access Of Completion Report

(Please specify the information, if any, that cannot be provided for public access and give the reasons.)

Information that Cannot Be Provided for Public Access	Reasons
Nil	

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FACULTY DEVELOPMENT SCHEME (FDS)

Completion Report - Attachment
(for completed projects only)

RGC Ref. No.: UGC/FDS11/H03/14

Principal Investigator: HO Man Koon

Project Title: Contextual Analysis of Chinese Language Teachers' Judgement on

Student Writing: An Exploratory Study in Hong Kong

Statistics on Research Outputs

	Peer-reviewed Journal Publications	Conference Papers	Scholarly Books, Monographs and Chapters	Patents Awarded	Other Research Outputs (Please specify)
No. of outputs arising directly from this research project [or conference]	0	3	0	0	0