

Lucas Yoder**Majors:** Applied Linguistics / Chinese**Mentor:** Lynn Santelmann, Ph.D., Applied Linguistics Dept.**University:** Portland State University**Project Title:** The acquisition of relative clause structures in Mandarin Chinese by English L1 speakers**Abstract:**

In English, relative clauses follow the noun they modify, while in Mandarin they precede it. The structural differences between these languages is problematic, as they suggest English L1 learners cannot transfer English syntax in learning, but instead must acquire Mandarin syntax. How second language learners acquire a markedly different syntax may have an impact on the study of second language acquisition, particularly to the role of Universal Grammar.

My research will collect samples from 1st and 2nd year English L1 students of Mandarin and quantify errors/correct usage made by learners understanding and producing these structures. Combined with a qualitative analysis, this will provide insight as to whether they acquired the structures, the types of strategies used, and UG's role in acquisition. The end result will be to better understand the problematic syntactic structure acquisition process between languages from different families, and apply this understanding to existing theories in the field.