

# ONLINE CHINESE COURSES, AN EVALUATIVE STUDY DURING THE FIRST CORONAVIRUS LOCKDOWN IN LEBANON

**Xu YANG** *Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth*

## **Abstract**

The aim of this study is to objectively analyze the provision of online Chinese courses during the Coronavirus lockdown in Lebanon, concerning its success and its disadvantages. Offering online courses is a new challenge for both Chinese teachers and learners; therefore, after around eight weeks of online courses, we put a questionnaire online addressed to the adult Chinese learners in Lebanon in order to investigate the results of the Chinese online courses.

Quantitative research method was used to collect the data. After analysis, the success points have been found: the online Chinese courses are more effective to train students' reading, listening and speaking skills; online Chinese courses can build a stronger emotional link between teachers and students. The disadvantages are problems which need to be solved in future online Chinese courses, such as how to teach the writing of Chinese characters in distant education model and how to present new knowledge in a more teacher-student interactive way.

Based on the teaching experience and the statistics, the researcher then proposed methods for the further improvement of the online Chinese courses. Both teachers and students should clearly understand the difference between traditional Chinese courses and online Chinese courses; teachers should adjust Chinese language learning steps and aims to make them more suitable for online courses; students should fully use the advantage of high-technology. Coronavirus is a disaster, but it could be turned into an opportunity to improve online Chinese teaching if teachers and students can join their efforts.

**Keywords:** Coronavirus lockdown, Online Chinese courses, pedagogical skills, advantages of high-technology, opportunity.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Coronavirus has become a universal trouble at the beginning of 2020, it prevents people from being gathered in all aspects. Luckily, internet has become a useful tool to connect everyone to work and to study. The Ministry of Education in Lebanon announced to close all schools and institutes from the 2<sup>nd</sup> of March because of the coronavirus pandemic. Therefore, Chinese language courses were transferred to an online teaching platform to give the students an opportunity of learning while the nation fights against coronavirus pandemic.

At the end of May 2020, after at least five weeks of launching Chinese lessons, it was time for teachers to hear the reactions and opinions of the students. Research was conducted among Chinese adult learners in Lebanon. The aim of this research was to find the advantages and disadvantages of online Chinese courses during the coronavirus lockdown in Lebanon.

The main research problem of this study was to examine the efficiency of online Chinese courses in Lebanon from the students' point of view. The results could lead to propose methods on how to improve these courses. The Quantitative research methodology has been applied.

Chinese is a language that uses symbols and the pedagogical skills of teaching Chinese in a traditional class have given the same importance to these four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing, with a supplementary aim, which is the graphology of Chinese characters. At the same time, we have to emphasize that the Chinese classes in Lebanon have always been **student-oriented**. Here is table1 to show the lesson plan and aims for adult Chinese learners in Lebanon from different levels.

**Table 1**

	Teaching plan	Language goals	Exam goals
Pre-beginners (hours 20)	<i>New Chinese Reader I</i> Lesson 1-5	1. Learning Chinese pronunciation alphabet (pinyin); 2. Learning four tones; 3. Reading and writing basic Chinese characters	
Beginners (80 hours)	<i>New Chinese Reader I</i> Lesson 6-14	1. Learning basic sentence structures; 2. Using basic grammar;	Prepare for HSK3 <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> HSK exam: Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi, Standard Chinese proficiency exam for foreign Chinese learners, six levels totally.

Intermediate learners (200 hours)	<i>New Chinese Reader II</i> Lesson 15-24	1. Expressing themselves in Chinese; 2. Writing and reading emails in Chinese; 3. Communicating in Chinese	Pass HSK3 and HSK4
Advanced learners (more than 200 hours)	<i>New Chinese Reader II</i> Lesson 25,26 Other professional materials	1. Stating opinions clearly; 2. Understanding customary expressions in Chinese; 3. Understanding news and documents in Chinese	HSK5 and HSK6

Online Chinese courses were a must choice to be the alternative method of learning Chinese when traditional courses could not be taken. Before the Coronavirus lockdown, more than four weeks of traditional Chinese courses had already been taken, so all the teachers would continue their teaching plan of the semester via online courses.

However, many activities in traditional courses cannot be taken through an internet platform. Table 2 lists the differences about class activities between online Chinese courses and traditional Chinese courses.

Class activities	Dictation	Prese- ntation	Writing Chinese characters	Role- play	Listening training	Class recording	Teaching material sharing
Online Chinese course	no	yes	no	no	yes	yes	yes
Traditional Chinese course	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	no

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Worldwide Chinese teachers and scholars for a long time have put their attention into the study of pedagogical skills for traditional Chinese courses. Each year, thousands of Chinese teachers leave home for remote corners around the world in order to provide the traditional face to face Chinese language courses to foreign students. There is not enough study and research nor online course practice available as references for this study.

However, there are some studies relating to applying high-technologies to overseas Chinese courses, which mainly discuss the use of Modern multimedia technology in traditional Chinese classes or the use of social media, such as: WhatsApp, Wechat, and QQ outside of Chinese classes to help the overseas Chinese learners practice their Chinese by communicating with their native-speaking peers (Chisoni & Mushanwe, 2015). There are also the studies discussing the use of different mobile applications to practice students' vocabulary, speaking and listening, pronunciation and business communication in Chinese as well as to prepare for the HSK exams.

From 2008 to 2018, there were a total of 33 studies published outside China which examine the use of technology in teaching Chinese as a second or foreign language; only five of them discuss web-conferencing technologies in Chinese course (Boning LYU & Xuedan QI, 2020). Among these five studies, only one study has considered online Chinese courses via web-conferencing. This study invited student teachers, who are postgraduate students, from a university from Chinese Taiwan and senior high school students from Hawaii to teach and learn Mandarin Chinese via web conferencing technology.

The study about the practice of online Chinese courses between a university in Chinese Taiwan and a senior high school in Hawaii is a more mature project launched every year since 2014 with certain training program and a small number of students (only 34 students joined the project in Hawaii). Most importantly, that study mainly discussed "preservice teacher training for online Chinese teaching"; it focuses on the teachers' side (Hsin, S.-C., Hsieh, C.-L., & Chang-Blust, L. 2017).

All of the studies published within China are written in the Chinese language. Some articles and studies also focus on the assistive role of high technology in learning Chinese, while other articles only state the importance of developing better online Chinese courses without providing any real online Chinese course practice or research.

This study mainly focuses on discussing the general conditions of the online Chinese courses in Lebanon, and mainly gets the information and feedback from students' side. This study particularly focuses on the disadvantages in the first period of online Chinese courses and proposes methods to improve that approach. Chinese language teaching in Lebanon is systematic and professional with continuous development; it is not just a project but a career. So, whether one is teaching in the traditional way or teaching online, work and study need to be done for the improvement of Chinese language education in Lebanon.

### **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

In the quantitative methodology, a questionnaire was used to collect data from adult Chinese learners. Since the aim of the research is to improve the efficiency of online Chinese courses in Lebanon, the opinions, strong and

weak points from students matter a lot for teachers to further adjust their lesson plan and teaching methods.

Because of the Coronavirus lockdown, the questionnaire was done online. The researcher published the questionnaire through Google form and invited the adult Chinese learners across Lebanon to answer it. Even though there is a limited number of adult Chinese learners in Lebanon, 106 students still joined the research and 105 effective answers were provided. In order to get the information objectively, all students remained anonymous, and each student could only answer the questionnaire once. The questionnaire focused on the general information about the students, their class performance when they were taking the online Chinese course, the difficulties met in the online Chinese courses, the results after taking the online Chinese courses, students' self-evaluation and the further expectation from students to future online Chinese courses.

The analysis of the responses for the questionnaire was done by the website automatically, in pie charts for each question. The researcher also compared and analyzed the responses for each question.

#### 4. STUDY RESULTS

The questionnaire received 105 effective responses, but some questions were not answered by all the respondents. The last question was open, and 42 students answered it. The results are listed as below.

Table3: Questions and answers

Questions	Answers and percent
1- What is your Chinese level? (103 responses)	A beginner (within 80 hours) (50.5%)
	B intermediate (from 80 hours to 140 hours) (29.1%)
	C high-level (from 140 hours to 180 hours) (11.7%)
	D advanced level (over 180 hours) (8.7%)
2- How old are you? (105 responses)	A from 13 to 18 (17.1%)
	B from 18 to 23 (47.6%)
	C from 23 to 28 (12.4%)
	D over 28 (22.9%)
3- How many students are there in your class? (105 responses)	A less than 5 (10.6%)
	B 5---10 (46.2%)
	C 10---15 (21.2%)
	D 15---20 (22%)

4- How long do you practice Chinese every week besides finishing your homework? (105 responses)	A I cannot finish my homework (9.6%)
	B I just finish my homework (23.1%)
	C around 1 hour per week (40.4%)
	D over 1 hour per week (26.9%)
5- While learning Chinese online, when do you open your microphone? (105 responses)	A I open the microphone all the time (47.1%)
	B when I need to answer questions (43.3%)
	C when I have questions (4.8%)
	D I never open my microphone (4.8%)
6- While taking online courses, how long does your teacher practice listening and speaking with you? (104 responses)	A never (5.8%)
	B less than 10 minutes (12.6%)
	C from 10 to 15 minutes (20.4%)
	D more than 15 minutes (61.2%)
7- While your teacher is explaining a new grammar notion or introducing new phrases, what do you usually do? (105 responses)	A follow my teacher and try to memorize (73.1%)
	B search in the book directly (17.3%)
	C use translation application to help (5.7%)
	D don't do anything (3.9%)
8- Do you use the new phrases and new grammar notions your teacher just explained in online courses? (105 responses)	A never (2.9%)
	B use them only when the teacher asks me to do so (50.9%)
	C use them when other students use them (8.5%)
	D use them proactively (37.7%)
9- What do you usually do when your teacher talks to or asks other students to answer the questions in online courses? (105 responses)	A don't care and do my own things (3.8%)
	B try to follow them and try to understand them (59.4%)
	C nothing in my head but wait until my turn to answer questions (9.4%)
	D try to participate in the discussion (27.4%)

10- What is your attitude when your teacher gives the students questions in online courses? (105 responses)	A proactively get the opportunity to answer the questions (53.8%)
	B answer all the questions but wait until the teacher calls on me (40.6%)
	C close the microphone and when I have to answer I tell the teacher "bad connection" (3.8%)
	D close the microphone and when I have to answer I tell the teacher "I don't know" (1.8%)
11- What distracts your attention most when you are taking Chinese courses online? (99 responses)	A cannot understand the new things (17.2%)
	B cannot memorize the old things (30.3%)
	C disturbance from my surroundings (phone, pets, family members) (33.3%)
	D disturbance from my classmates (background noise, wrong operation of application) (19.2%)
12- What kind of ability in Chinese has been improved after taking online courses? (105 responses)	A reading ability (24.8%)
	B speaking and listening ability (46.7%)
	C writing ability (10.5%)
	D nothing improved (18.1%)
13- What kind of ability in Chinese has decreased after taking online courses? (105 responses)	A reading ability (3.8%)
	B speaking and listening ability (17.7%)
	C writing ability (30.5%)
	D nothing decreased (48.6%)
14- What kind of exercise do you want your teacher to add to your online class? (101 responses)	A communication exercises (37.6%)
	B writing exercises (9.9%)
	C translation exercises (20.8%)
	D Chinese character writing exercises (31.7%)

## 5. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS

### 5. 1. Advantages of online Chinese courses

Luckily the responses show some advantages of online Chinese courses, which is a comfort for both teachers and students in this quarantine period. Students cannot meet teachers face to face these days but online courses connect them more strongly and closely than before. Teachers and students are willing to exchange more ideas about online courses and Chinese language learning.

### 5. 1. 1. Advantages for communication training

There are questions with surprising responses. The first one is “what do you usually do when your teacher talks to or asks other students to answer the questions in online courses?” 59% of 105 responses is “try to follow them and try to understand them”; 27.6% of 105 responses is “try to participate in the discussion”, which means 86.6% of the students are actively engaged in the courses. It is very positive feedback to teachers.

Trying to listen to and understand the communication between teachers and other students can effectively improve students’ listening ability, and if they can participate, that will motivate their willingness to express themselves. This phenomenon only happens in the online Chinese courses because teachers and students are sharing one screen, so sometimes they have to listen and teachers also leave more time for them to think before talking during online courses, giving them time to use a sentence with fewer mistakes which in return gives them more confidence.

At the same time, teachers are paying great attention to the communication training during online courses, according to question 6: 60.6% of 104 responses show that teachers practice listening and speaking with the students more than 15 minutes; and 80.8% students indicated that teachers practice listening and speaking with students in each course for more than 10 minutes. That shows teachers are also adjusting their teaching method and making their courses more online compatible.

In addition, students also clearly know their improvement, according to question 13. 47.1% of 104 responses shows that students’ speaking and listening ability has improved as well as 25% of students indicate their reading ability has improved. The reason, besides the one above we have mentioned, is that teachers are using more Chinese characters on the PowerPoint rather than pinyin to force students to read Chinese characters. In the traditional courses, writing pinyin<sup>2</sup> on a whiteboard is very easy, while presenting pinyin with tones on PowerPoint in online courses is much more difficult, so teachers will not give all the Chinese characters in pinyin. As a result, students grow more independent in memorizing how to read Chinese characters, and that becomes a surprising advantage for Chinese online courses.

### 5. 1. 2. Advantages for building a stronger emotional link

Before the questionnaire investigation, teachers were not so confident about themselves for their online courses. They are trained for traditional class only and the online course is a new challenge for all of them no matter how much teaching experience they have. With online courses, they have to design the class and learn to use the application from zero. However, students have given very **positive feedback**, especially in telling

---

<sup>2</sup> Pinyin: Chinese pronunciation alphabet.



the teachers that they know teachers are trying the best, spending more time and working harder. The last question of the questionnaire is an open question “what else do you want to say about Chinese online courses? Please let us know”. Forty-two students have answered this question and most of them have expressed their appreciation to the teachers.

For example, they write down their teachers' name and commend them as the best teacher:

(28) *Dianling Sun is the best teacher ever.* Many students gave positive remarks such as: (9) *Best courses.*; (3) *Amazing.*; (7) *It's good overall.* Two students even wrote down their comments in Chinese to express their appreciation: (31) *我觉得很有意思但是我们的上网不太好，所以常常听和看不容易。* (*I think it's very interesting but our internet is not very good, so often (depending on the internet) listening and reading is not easy*); (38) *我真喜欢汉语课。我学很有意思的生词* (*I really like Chinese courses, I am learning very interesting phrases*).

All these sincere comments give more confidence to Chinese teachers about themselves and their online Chinese courses.

On a normal school day, students and teachers did not have the feeling of being so emotionally connected because everyone took the normal classes for granted. However, in this different period, students and teachers are standing together to make the days during quarantine more meaningful; and both of them cherish more about the Chinese courses, which is definitely a bright side of the dark clouds.

## 5. 2. Disadvantages of Chinese online courses

According to the responses from the questionnaire, there are some disadvantages of online Chinese courses. Here is the specific analysis.

### 5. 2. 1. Disadvantages in the teaching of writing Chinese characters

When teaching Chinese, **writing Chinese characters** is very important, especially when the students are mainly beginners. They need to learn the basic Chinese characters and basic character structures. For Chinese teachers with touch screens, teaching Chinese characters will be easy because they can write them directly on the screens to show the order of the strokes in Chinese characters. But the teachers whose computers do not have touch screens; they spend more time in preparation to show the orders of the strokes in Chinese characters.

As for the students, when they finish the writing of one Chinese character, they want to show it to the teacher. However, only one student's screen can be seen on teacher's side at a time. Usually the application shows the student who is answering the question (the application cannot distinguish from answering questions or any other sound). As a result, in order to use

the application and show their Chinese characters to the teacher, students need to speak or make sounds to switch each other to the teacher's side. For a class with a smaller number of students (less than 5), this is not a problem. But according to our investigation shown: 45.7% of 105 students are from the class with 5 to 10 students, which means it will take a long time to check the Chinese characters one by one. If there is any mistake, the recheck also requires more time.

All these facts and obstacles lead to a hard decision that **teachers have to abandon the teaching of Chinese characters, or decrease the time of teaching Chinese characters** during the online courses. Teachers use time after class to send the stroke orders instead of teaching and showing it to the students during the online courses. But this method is not as efficient as traditional teaching since there is no immediate check of the Chinese characters being written, students usually cannot find their mistakes. Even worse, students will abandon the writing of Chinese characters as well. Students gradually realize typing is much easier than writing Chinese characters. They gradually submit their homework by typing Chinese characters rather than writing on paper and sending photos. Students also know this problem clearly, as shown in the question 14. 32% students want their teacher to add Chinese character writing exercises to online courses.

In the short term, learning Chinese without writing Chinese characters is much easier; however, students cannot continue their Chinese study for a long time if they do not have a solid Chinese character base. For later Chinese online courses, the main problems to solve are how to teach Chinese characters and how to give enough time to teach and practice the writing of Chinese characters online.

### **5. 2. 2. Disadvantages in presenting new knowledge with only visual and oral methods**

For all levels of Chinese courses in Lebanon, the basic focus is **student-oriented**. Teachers usually design many class activities such as role-play, students' presentations and short dialogues to fully interact with the students. Especially when presenting new knowledge, student-oriented teaching methods can help students control the use of grammar, as well as master new phrases in a short time.

However online courses are **computer-oriented**, so the teacher can only provide visual and oral methods to attract students' attention and to explain the new grammar and phrases. If more than two students join the discussion, teachers will get confused from the mix of the voices.

For example: Because there is no corresponding English or French word with the same meaning nor the way of use as the unique Chinese “把” sentence. (“把” sentence is a unique Chinese language sentence, the

basic sentence pattern is ‘Subject+把+object+verb+了’, to show the disposal from the subject to the object;

For example:我把蛋糕吃了: I ate the cake.) When presented face to face, teachers can do the activities and actions relating to daily life with students together to put “把” into daily communication, so students can understand it better and use it naturally. But with the only help coming from visual and oral methods online, even though students understand “把” when they are in the class by watching and listening, they still cannot use it in daily communication independently because no one can tell them exactly how to use the construction for specific occasions. The way of presenting new Chinese grammar and phrases through online platforms is lacking deep-impression and effective personal engagement.

According to question 8 about the use of new phrases and grammar, 51.4% of 105 students chose “use the new grammar and new phrases only when the teacher asks me to do so.” The fact is that, from the homework, teachers still can notice that the students cannot use the new grammar and phrases correctly. Inefficient learning of new knowledge and mistakes lead to the unwillingness to use them. Only 38.1% students choose to use them proactively; the majority of the students still need the teacher’s requirement.

Not fully understanding while learning and not enough practice after courses lead to the inefficient learning of new phrases and grammar. Teachers need to spend more and more time reviewing and repeating, which leads to less time for the presentation of new knowledge. If the online courses continue as the main method of learning Chinese because of the pandemic, teachers need to think about new ways to present and practice the new knowledge. Otherwise, both Chinese language teaching and learning will become more difficult for teachers and students.

### **5. 2. 3. Disadvantages of concentration difficulty in online courses**

The lack of concentration is a universal problem for all online courses, but this lack of concentration affects the Chinese online courses the most. Because the Chinese language is a foreign language for all students, they really need to focus on the courses; every step of the courses is continuous, and learning a different graphology and new Chinese characters is demanding. If the students miss one part, they cannot follow nor understand the later content. While taking courses online, **internet** and **electricity** are the main and inevitable reasons to disturb students and teachers; besides that, the following four reasons also matter a lot.

According to question 11, among 98 responses: 33.7% students found their own surroundings (phone, pets, family members) disturb them most; 29.6% students think “they cannot memorize the old things”. The other two reasons “cannot understand the new things” and “disturbing from my

classmates (background noise, operate the application wrongly)” also have a relatively high rate.

Great concentration is an essential element of successful online Chinese courses. Any kind of disturbance can be a reason for losing concentration. Except the inevitable ones “internet and electricity,” all the other reasons should be eliminated. Students as well as their families are supposed to create a **learning-friendly environment** for all online courses, especially for Chinese online courses: no TV, no music, no family member talking, no pet scratching, no little brother or sister crying... And this needs the joint effort from all the Chinese learners.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Online courses are a **secondary choice** for both teachers and students in the Coronavirus lockdown to allow a continuous study of Chinese. Since the fact is still here that no effective medicine nor vaccine has been created to effectively fight against the Coronavirus, it is still not sure how long the online courses will continue. So, both teachers and students should join their effort to make online Chinese courses more effective. There are methods based on the statistics we had for the later online Chinese courses to make improvements.

### 6. 1. Notice the difference between traditional Chinese courses and online Chinese courses

As is shown above in the instruction, there are big differences between traditional Chinese course and online Chinese course, especially in the students’ interaction and teacher’s class control. But there is a very tricky phenomenon that almost all the teachers are trying to imitate even trying to copy the traditional class model in an online platform, which includes the activities, exercises, and class procedures.

One point needs to be made clear that online courses have their own rhythm and features, and all the content taught and explained in online courses will not be repeated again. There will not be another year of 2020. Online courses are a must choice under such a special circumstance. Both teachers and students need to accept this fact and give online courses a rational expectation (usually lower expectation than traditional courses). Only teachers and students mentally accept this fact, the anxiety and frustration will ease.

### 6. 2. Adjust the learning steps and aims for online Chinese courses

As stated in the context of adult Chinese language learning in Lebanon, there are steps and aims for students to follow in every period of time during their Chinese learning in Lebanon. However, when the learning takes place online, the results are not as good as before, and students usually cannot meet their aims within the specific time. A new set of goals and steps needs

to be created according to the online course rhythm. At least, teachers should be clear about the learning goals of one semester and know how to connect and balance the teaching and learning transition between online courses and perhaps the traditional ones afterwards.

Teachers and students should clearly set up and understand the aims for a certain period of Chinese online courses, whether it is mainly for reviewing or practicing or learning new material. In addition, for each level of class, one should consider how attendance will be counted, how exams will take place, how teachers will give the students class performance scores... As long as the aims are met, course content and methodology will be adjusted to be more suitable and effective for learning. However, this work requires much time, effort, and determination. Teachers need to work together for the adjustment of the aims and methods of each level of courses. Lastly each teacher should reconsider his/her own classes to make the teaching more specific and targeted.

As analyzed before, the time for the teaching and studying of writing Chinese characters is a main problem relating to Chinese online courses. Therefore, for future online Chinese courses, teachers can plan to add extra time for each chapter, especially for the teaching of Chinese character writing. Meanwhile, self-discipline becomes very important for students to learn the writing of Chinese characters, and teachers also need to be stricter and more serious about students.

Universities and Confucius Institute can also search more online courses videos to give the additional supplement for students after class, and get more cooperation with Chinese universities to open international online Chinese classes for the students.

### **6. 3. Fully use the advantage of high-technology**

Online Chinese courses have their own strength which should be used. The first is about saving time. Many students don't live near the universities. Usually, they needed to drive a long time from Tripoli, Byblos, Saida, even Nabatieh to Beirut to attend the traditional Chinese courses, and traffic is a world issue so they always wasted much time. Online Chinese courses can save at least one hour for students when they attend the courses at home. But the time saved is not for video games, pets, coffee, shisha, nor sleep. It is for preparation of the course, for previewing and reviewing.

Online Chinese courses have a very good function that students can record teachers teaching process and voice. And teachers can share their teaching materials on the platform. These are very important materials for students to review the courses. Each chapter of adults' Chinese textbooks is continuous, students can preview new chapter and find the difficult points, and focus more

on the difficult points while practicing more on the familiar points, in this way, the online Chinese courses can be more effective.

Online Chinese courses can also break the limitation of space, which means no matter where the Chinese teachers are, in Lebanon or in China, they all can give courses to Lebanese Chinese learners. In this way, students can have more choices for learning from different teachers and taking different kinds of Chinese classes.

An online platform is not only one means to teach. Other function such as the live show can give students more chance to speak before the camera, and a live show from teachers to present surroundings in teachers' life (topic relating to songs, clothes, hobbies, food, etc.) can make what the students have learned related to everyday life.

#### **6. 4. Online Chinese courses can be supportive courses for traditional Chinese courses in the future**

The spring semester started from the end of January, so students had taken at least five weeks of traditional Chinese course before the Coronavirus lockdown. There are usually 13 weeks in one semester. In the future, traditional Chinese courses definitely will be back; however, the return of traditional Chinese courses should not bring an end to online courses. Online Chinese courses can be used as supportive course for oral and listening training, especially when teachers and students are preparing for some Chinese competition (e.g. Chinese bridge competition<sup>3</sup>) and HSK exams.

All traditional Chinese courses given now are **comprehensive Chinese courses**, which means teachers need to teach listening, speaking, reading, writing and the graphology of Chinese characters at the same time. These demands lead to the slow improvement of students' Chinese proficiency. Since online Chinese courses have positive effects on listening and oral abilities, they can be added once students finish one chapter, to serve as a complementary course for listening and training to improve students' ability to express.

For each one in this world, Coronavirus is a terrible disaster. But there is an old saying in China that each disaster is an opportunity. Because of this disaster, students cannot go to school and employees cannot go to work... But this is a rare opportunity to keep people home and focus on the bigger development of digital tools. This is also the first-time people seriously had to combine high-technology with traditional education and it is applied around the world. This is a good opportunity to rely on technology in education, to find the problem and to make improvements. Many students and teachers experience anxiety and depression from online courses, but it is not necessary to be so

---

<sup>3</sup> Chinese Bridge competition: A Chinese proficiency competition for all foreign Chinese learners around the world.

negative. Teachers need to be encouraging and positive first then to motivate students to be more engaged. The Coronavirus has already made people lose their normal life. Turn this disaster into an opportunity, if a systematic and professional online Chinese teaching system is built in this different period in Lebanon, it will be beneficial for all the Chinese learners in this world.

## REFERENCES

- Lyu, B., & Qi, X. (2020). A Review of Research on Technology-Assisted Teaching and Learning of Chinese as a Second or Foreign Language from 2008 to 2018. *Frontiers of Education in China*, 15, 142-163.
- Chisoni, G., & Mushangwe, H. (2015). Evaluating the impact of the use of the internet on learning Chinese by students from the Confucius Institute of the University of Zimbabwe. *Journal of Technology and Chinese Language Teaching*, 6(1), 25-42.
- Cui, X. L. (2020). Chinese Teaching against the Background of Global Public Health Emergency. *China Academic Journal Electronic Publishing House*, 291-299.
- Hsin, S.-C., Hsieh, C.-L., & Chang-Blust, L. (2017). Preservice Teacher Training for Online Chinese Teaching: A case of Distance Courses for High School Learners. *Journal of Technology and Chinese Language teaching*, 8(1), 86-103.
- Tseng, J. J., Lien, Y. J., & Chen, H. J. (2016). Using a teacher support group to develop teacher knowledge of Mandarin teaching via web conferencing technology. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 29(1), 127-147.
- Xiang, C. H. (2018). Designing and launching a year-long executive education programme at LSE Confucius Institute for business London-Chinese Language and culture for business (CLCB). *Journal of Teaching English for Specific and Academic Purposes*, 6(2), 319-332.