注意：考試開始鈴響前，不得翻閱試題，並不得書寫、畫記、作答。

國立清華大學 110 學年度碩士班考試入學試題

系所班組別：外國語文學系
　　　　　　乙組(語言研究與教學組)

科 目 代 碼：3901

考 試 科 目 ：英文閱讀與寫作

一作答注意事項一

1. 請核對答案卷（卡）上之准考證號、科目名稱是否正確。

2. 考試開始後，請於作答前先翻閱整份試題，是否有污損或試題印刷不清，得舉手請監試人員處理，但不得要求解釋題意。

3. 考生限在答案卷上標記「▇ 由此開始作答」區內作答，且不可書寫姓名、准考證號或與作答無關之其他文字或符號。

4. 答案卷用盡不得要求加頁。

5. 答案卷可用任何書寫工具作答，惟為方便閱卷辨識，請儘量使用藍色或黑色書寫；答案卡限用 2B 鉛筆畫記；如畫記不清（含未依範例畫記）致光學閱讀機無法辨識答案者，其後果一律由考生自行負責。

6. 其他應考規則、違規處理及扣分方式，請自行詳閱准考證明上「**國立清華大學試場規則及違規處理辦法**」，無法因本試題封面作答注意事項中未列明而稱未知悉。

系所班組別：外國語文學系碩士班 乙組 (語言研究與教學組)

考試科目 (代碼)：英文閱讀與寫作 (3901)

Instructions: The following passage is taken and partially edited from a journal article (Jiang, et al. (2011). Morphological congruency and the acquisition of L2 morphemes. *Language Learning, 61(3),* 940-967). <u>Please read the passage carefully and answer the questions that are listed at the end of the passage.</u>

Morphological congruency and the acquisition of L2 morpheme

The acquisition of grammatical morphemes by second-language (L2) learners has received a great deal of attention in SLA research. There is a consensus that grammatical morphemes, such as plural, tense, and gender markers, are difficult structures for adult learners to acquire, but researchers disagree as to whether they are ultimately acquirable.

Much research evidence has accumulated over the past two decades that is directly related to the issue. However, the evidence has been mixed, allowing each side to find support for their position. For example, a number of longitudinal studies have shown that their participants had difficulty in accurately using grammatical morphemes in spontaneous L2 production and that they exhibited little progress over an extended period of time, even though they were considered highly proficient L2 users otherwise (e.g., Jia, 2003; Lardiere, 1998, 2003; Long, 2003; Schmidt, 1983). On the other hand, native like accuracy in morpheme use has been observed in adult L2 learners in other studies (e.g., Flege et al., 1999; Goad & White, 2006; Herschensohn, 2001; White, Valenzuela, Kozlowska-MacGregor, & Leung, 2004).

A number of factors may be responsible for such conflicting findings. One can expect L2 learners' proficiency, for example, to play an important role, and the participants' L2 proficiency has varied a great deal across different studies. Some studies examined beginning to intermediate learners who have limited experience in the L2 (e.g., Herschensohn, 2001); other studies have tested advanced learners who, with many years of residence in the target language environment, had probably reached a steady state in their L2 morphosyntax (e.g., Lardiere, 1998).

However, L2 proficiency alone does not provide an adequate explanation of the conflicting results. Another important factor is research method. A variety of methods

have been used in studying morphological development. Data collection in some studies involved only a single test session lasting no more than an hour; other studies have been longitudinal, tracking the same L2 learners' morphological performance over a period of several years. There is much diversity in the specific tasks used for data collection as well, such as grammaticality judgment, sentence completion, picture- or video-based retelling, interviewing, and self- paced reading. Particularly significant in this regard is the fact that these tasks differ in the extent to which they allow participants to rely on their explicit knowledge. Some tasks draw the participants' attention to grammatical accuracy and give them plenty of time and motivation to apply explicit knowledge. Consequently, the results are informative about the participants' possession of explicit knowledge of a target structure more than the development of an ability to use the structure spontaneously in communication. Some other tasks are designed or adopted to minimize the involvement of explicit knowledge. Such methodological differences could have also contributed to the inconsistency in the findings.

The Morphological Congruency Hypothesis

The third factor, one that is the focus of the present study, is the type of morphological markers under investigation and their **morphological congruency** across languages. Languages differ in terms of which meaning is grammaticalized and thus morphologically marked. Some languages, such as English and Russian, mark plurals, whereas plural marking is highly restricted and optional in other languages, such as Chinese and Japanese.

While learning an L2, a learner may have to learn a grammatical morpheme that does or does not have a counterpart in his or her first language (L1). Such crosslinguistic relationships in morphological marking can be described as involving differing levels of **morphological congruency.** Two languages are **morphologically congruent** when both grammaticalize and mark a meaning morphologically. They are **morphologically incongruent** when a grammatical morpheme is present in one language but not in the other. Morphological congruency always refers specifically to a particular morpheme, rather than two languages in general. Thus, French and

English are morphologically congruent in plural marking but not in gender marking. Chinese and English are morphologically congruent to some extent in aspect marking but not in tense marking.

Given the prevailing evidence for the influence of learners' L1 in L2 learning, it is reasonable to suggest that morphological congruency may play an important role in the learning of L2 morphemes. In the present context, we are particularly interested in how morphological congruency affects ultimate attainment in L2 morpheme acquisition. We hypothesize that when L2 learners reach an advanced or near-native level of L2 proficiency, only congruent learners (i.e., those whose L1 has a corresponding morpheme to the target L2 morpheme) are able to reach nativelike proficiency in acquiring an L2 morpheme. Incongruent L2 learners will find it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to develop nativelike competence with respect to the same L2 morpheme. We call this proposal **the morphological congruency hypothesis.**

There are indications of such a morphological congruency effect in the literature. One such indication is that when advanced L2 learners have been found to have great difficulty in performing in a nativelike manner with respect to plural or past tense marking, they have often turned out to be individuals whose L1 does not have an obligatory grammaticalized plural or tense marker (Jia, 2003; Lardiere, 1998, 2003; Long, 2003; Schmidt, 1983). These studies are similar in several important ways. They are all longitudinal studies whose data collection spanned a period of several years; their participants had lived in the target language environment for many years and were likely to have reached a steady state in their morphosyntactic development in English; their participants all had an L1 that does not mark plural or past tense morphologically (i.e., Chinese and Japanese); finally, they all produced much lower accuracy rates in plural or past tense marking than native speakers and showed little progress over the period of many years while being studied.

A second indication comes from studies involving different groups of L2 learners whose L1s vary with respect to whether they are morphologically congruent with the target language. In such studies, learners with a congruent L1 almost always outperform learners with an incongruent L1. In Hawkins and Liszka's (2003) study of

past tense marking in ESL speakers, for example, the accuracy rates for the congruent group—a group of German learners of English—were above 95%, but the proficiency-matched incongruent group— the Chinese ESL speakers—showed much lower accuracy rates on both regular and irregular verbs (62.5% and 84.2%, respectively). Similarly, in a study of gender agreement in Dutch L2, Sabourin, Stowe, and de Haan (2006) tested three proficiency-matched groups of participants whose L1s either mark gender (German and Romance languages groups) or do not mark it (the English group). English-speaking participants' accuracy was significantly lower than that of the other two groups (Experiment 2, English 51%, German 81%, Romance 71%).

A third line of evidence can be found in studies that have tested the same group of participants on a number of different morphemes (Bialystok, 1997; Franceschina, 2001; White, 2003). Some of these morphemes had a counterpart in the participants' L1, but others did not. In line with the morphological congruency hypothesis, the participants in all these studies did much better on the morphological structures that were instantiated in their L1. For example, in a longitudinal case study of a Turkish ESL speaker, White (2003) examined the participants' performance on four morphemes (i.e., third-person –s, past tense, plural, and articles). Turkish is similar to English in marking plural and past tense, but it does not have articles. Consistent with the prediction of the morphological congruency hypothesis, the participant's accuracy on articles was much lower than on plural and tense markers. Similar findings were shown in another case study by Franceschina (2001), whose participant, Martin, was a native speaker of English but was also a highly proficient French L2 speaker. Among the errors he made in French, 93% were related to gender, compared to only 7% related to number marking. Again, morphological congruency seemed to determine the learner's success in developing nativelike accuracy with individual morphemes.

A Psycholinguistic Approach to Testing the Hypothesis
We put the morphological congruency hypothesis to the test by examining morphological performance by two ESL groups in a self-paced reading task. The

target morpheme under investigation was the English plural marker. As Russian marks plural and Japanese does not, at least not obligatorily, Russian and Japanese ESL speakers were chosen to represent a morphologically congruent and a morphologically incongruent group, respectively. The participants in both groups were highly proficient ESL speakers who have had many years of residence in an English-speaking country.

The self-paced reading task was chosen for its advantages in minimizing the involvement of explicit knowledge (see Jiang, 2004, 2007, for a discussion of its advantages). In performing the self-paced reading task, a participant reads sentences word by word. Only one word appears on a computer monitor at any time. The participant has to press a button to see the next word, which appears to the right side of the preceding word to mimic the real-life left-to-right reading direction. The word-by-word presentation of sentences allows one to record the participant's reading time on each word as primary data. The task emphasizes both reading time and comprehension. For the latter purpose, questions are given to ensure and check the participant's reading comprehension. With this method, the acquisition of a structure is determined by comparing individuals' reading times for a grammatical sentence and its ungrammatical counterpart, as illustrated below:

1a. *They met several of the board <u>members</u> during their visit.*
1b. **They met several of the board <u>member</u> during their visit.*

A delay in reading any underlined word of the ungrammatical sentence, as compared to the same words in the grammatical version, would suggest that the individual has developed an automatic sensitivity to errors involving a particular structure—in this case, the plural morpheme. This sensitivity can then be taken as evidence for the acquisition of the structure. By contrast, an absence of such differences in reading time between the correct and incorrect versions is considered to be evidence of a lack of integrated linguistic knowledge about the target structure.

END OF READING PASSAGE

Questions:

1. [COMPREHENSION CHECK QUESTIONS]

   1.1) According to the passage, <u>what are the three factors</u> that could be the reasons <u>behind conflicting research findings on the acquisition of grammatical morphemes</u>? Explain your answer by summarizing the relevant paragraphs in your own words. (30%)

   1.2) According to the passage, <u>what are the three indications of a morphological congruency effect in the literature</u>? Explain your answer by summarizing the relevant paragraphs in your own words. (30%)

2. [OPINION QUESTIONS]

   2.1) Imagine yourself as the researcher of this study. Based on the morphological congruency hypothesis, how do you predict the Russian and Japanese ESL speakers to perform on the self-paced reading task? Who will perform better and why? Also, in addition to the Japanese and Russian ESL speakers, is it necessary to include a group of English native speakers to test the hypothesis? Why or why not? Please be specific in explaining your answers. (20%)

   2.2) Think about your own foreign language learning/teaching experience. Does your experience support or refute the morphological congruency hypothesis? Do you agree or disagree with this hypothesis? Please provide some examples from your own observations in language learning/teaching to support your position. (20%)