

Statement of Purpose for PhD

I intend to apply for the Ph.D. Program in Educational Psychology in the College of Education, Michigan State University for the fall of 2000.

Motivation and Purpose

My motivation of further study and research on Educational psychology has something to do with my son's early reading experience in addition to my language teaching career.

I received my MA in linguistics and applied linguistics in 1992 from Shanghai Jiao Tong University. I became a faculty member in the school of Foreign Languages of the same university immediately after graduation. I have kept a keen interest in second language acquisition, especially in TESOL. In 1995 I became a mother. I had an impulse to do an experiment: trying to make my son bilingual, able to speak both Chinese, our native language and English, a foreign language, in his tender age.

For some reasons, I give up bilingual education. I began to teach him, in a way of play, to recognize Chinese characters when he was about 6 months young, in my spare time. He was able to read (Chinese) when he was 3 years old. Four and a half now, he can read children stories independently and fluently. It seems to me – to all people around, a miracle that a child is really able to become literate in its tender age without difficulty! People think that my son is more talented and might be a prodigy. But I feel that that my son is not quite different from other children. Every child might be able to do so if being guided properly, if the ways of understanding language and literacy are better understood, if ...

A hoard of questions occur to me: the most realistic one is: why my students – all students in our country, in fact, need so long a time to learn English, a second language, of course, first at primary school, then secondary school and finally at college or even at graduate school? Is it because that language acquisition and language learning are so different? What is the panorama of the psychological process of language learning? Could we develop more efficient and effective educational practices and to make language teaching and learning an easy and a happy thing?

I have read your program information description and feel the Educational Psychology Program should be suitable to me. The purpose of my applying for a place at your university is precisely to acquire the depth of knowledge and sophistication of methodology to attain a superior level of expertise by way of strict training.

Academic background

Undergraduate study I majored in English Education Foreign Languages Department of Qufu Normal University, located in Qufu, the birth place of Confucius. I received quite good education there. The courses I studied included general education, introductory educational psychology, pedagogy, Foreign literature, and so on.

I was outstanding both at academic courses and extracurricular activities. I was among the best five in a class of 25. I acted as the assistant to the editor-in-chief of the school literary newspaper “Xing Tang “ when I was a junior and the editor-in-chief when I was a senior.

Graduate Study Having worked as a teacher at Liaocheng Teacher’s Institute for two years, I passed the 1989 Postgraduate Examination Test and started to do my master’s degree in Linguistics and Applied Linguistics School of Foreign Languages of Shanghai Jiao Tong University. This department is a reputable one in China with quite a number of famous scholars specializing in linguistics and applied linguistics. Affiliated to the department is the College English Test Administrative office, which administers the National College English Tests on behalf of the State Education Ministry. I benefited a great deal from the teaching of the professors and also had chances to observe and take part in as well the research activities such as testing.

I was among the best 5 in a class of 15. Unfortunately, my need for self-development in educational psychology was not satisfied owing to the lack of necessary equipment and facilities for doing experiment and collecting data. The lack of the latest collections of books on linguistics, psychology or pedagogy in our library due to the lack of hard currency also affected my systematic research more or less.

Research activities After graduation, I researched in several fields. I published two books, three research papers and several million words of translation. I am outlining below my academic contributions:

- The paper *Translation on Discourse Level* (published in 1993) won the first prize on the 4th Conference of Shanghai Translators Association in 1993.
- *Modern American English Colloquialisms* (published in 1995) won the title *Best Publications of Shanghai Jiao Tong University Press for the Year 1995* in July 1996.
- I joined the survey team of the project Survey of College English Education in China (from 1996 to 1997) and acted as one of the reporters.

Work experience

After finishing my graduate study in 1992 with an MA degree, I started my teaching career in the Foreign Languages Department of Shanghai Jiao Tong University. I teach both non-English major and English major students. My main activities and achievements since 1992 are as follows:

- In 1997 I was appointed as the leader of College English Teaching and Research Group (II). On this post, I make term-based teaching plan, organize discussion and assessment, coordinate testing, research on TESL, etc.
- I won the title *Excellent Young Teacher* awarded by Shanghai Jiao Tong University for the years 1995, and 1999 respectively.
- I was promoted to associate professorship academically earlier in 1996 for my outstanding teaching and publications and became the youngest associate professor of the institution that year.

Plan for professional study and my future career

As I have stated earlier, I plan to further my graduate study at your university majoring in educational psychology and minoring in SLA in the hope that after graduation I will become a language educator and reformer with particular reference to TESOL.

My ambition is that after receiving education at your university, I will root myself on the Chinese soil and brave a new way to efficient and effective foreign language teaching and learning.