

Třísková, Hana. De-stress in Mandarin: clitics, cliticoids and phonetic chunks. In: Istvan Kecskes and Chaofen Sun eds. *Key Issues in Chinese as a Second Language Research*. New York and London: Routledge, 2017. pp. 29–56.

Abstract: The paper is concerned with **Chinese tonal monosyllabic function words** (the cliticoids) and their exercising in L2 learning by means of phonetic chunks. Tonal monosyllabic function words such as prepositions (e.g. *gěi* 给 “to”), classifiers (e.g. *tiáo* 条), personal pronouns (e.g. *wǒ* 我 “I”), modal verbs, conjunctions etc. are high-frequency items of the Chinese lexicon. They carry lexical tone, thus have a potential to be stressed. Yet, due to their deficiency in lexical meaning, they regularly become unstressed (and phonetically reduced) in connected speech, namely in colloquial *putonghua*. They receive stress (i.e. full pronunciation) only if carrying emphasis or if uttered in isolation. A new term is coined for this rather coherent group: **“the cliticoids”**. The author observes that Chinese cliticoids display similar features as *words with weak forms* found in English (such as articles, personal pronouns, prepositions, etc.). The paper begins with explaining phonetic cues of Chinese stress and non-stress, discussing the relationship between stress and tone. The category of Chinese cliticoids is introduced next. Their list is provided, the pitfalls of their pronunciation in connected speech are pointed out. A similar group – English *words with weak forms* – is introduced then. Finally, the concept of **“phonetic chunks”** (short 2-3 syllabic chunks of speech which contain the cliticoids) is introduced. Phonetic chunks draw on the concept of **formulaic language**. They are particularly designed for exercising the unstressed, reduced pronunciation of the cliticoids. The author offers an overview of various stress patterns and syntactic structures of phonetic chunks.



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Description: *Key Issues in Chinese as a Second Language Research* presents and discusses research projects that serve as theoretical grounding for improving the teaching and learning of Chinese as a second language (CSL) in order to help researchers and practitioners better understand the acquisition, development, and use of CSL. With the exception of the first chapter, which is state-of-the-art, each chapter makes an attempt to bring together theory and practice by focusing on theory building and theory application in practice. The book is organized around areas where most future research is needed in CSL: phonology, semantics, grammar, and pragmatics. Consisting of contributions from an international group of scholars working on cutting-edge research, this is the ideal text for researchers, graduate students, and practitioners in the area of Chinese as a second or foreign language.