CIFLTE PUBLIC TALKS

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Center for International Foreign Language Teacher Education (CIFLTE) Teachers College, Columbia University

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Talk 1: The Trade Effect of English as a Lingua Franca

This talk highlights the importance of language in international trade and the associated outcomes. To be specific, I will discuss recent literature on economic effects of language (focusing on language and trade studies), followed by suggestions of future research directions. Finally, I will illustrate the importance of language with my work on the trade effect of English as a lingua franca.
The mother tongue of language learners plays an important role in second language acquisition. From the perspective of language economics and by introducing the notion of linguistic distance, we estimate the impact of language learners’ mother tongue on Chinese acquisition as second language. We find that there is a negative correlation between linguistic distance and Chinese acquisition. Other things being equal, the closer linguistic distance between Chinese and learners’ mother tongue is the higher Chinese proficiency the learner acquires and vice versa. This effect also applies to listening, reading, and writing. Based on the results, the policy implication of linguistic distance study on Teaching Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages (TCSOL) as well as the dissemination of Chinese in the world is discussed.