THE ACQUISITION OF ENGLISH *FIRST* BY TWO CHINESE CHILDREN: TWO STRATEGIES IN SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

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摘　　要

　　兒童習得母語的策略有二，一為逐步漸進的方式（ analytic strategy ），一為整體籠統的方式（ gestalt strategy ）（ Peters ， 1977 ）。前者的語言，發音清晰，可以觀察到由一句一詞，而一句二詞，進而發展到一句話可以包括許多詞彙的不同階段。後者的語言，則由多詞組成的片語或句子構成，不易觀察到逐詞發展的階段。

　　兒童習得第二語言，是否也會使用以上兩種策略？若有，其特色為何？本文探討兩個以國語為母語的中國兒童，在美國居住一年期間，學習第二語言（英語）時，如何使用 first （以及國語的 ˋ 第一 ˊ 和 ˋ 先 ˊ ）這個詞彙，進而觀察以上兩種策略，在第二語言習得中所呈現的特色。

　　習得母語時偏向逐步漸進策略的孩子，在習得第二語言時，亦多使用同一策略。她很早便了解 first 的語意，且會創新地將英語兒童常用的句子（ formulaic expressions ）如 ˋ I'm the first one ˊ 與 ˋ me first one ˊ 混合而造出如 ˋ I me first one ˊ 的句子。其語言亦有國語與英語混合使用，以及英語干擾國語的現象。其含 first 一詞的語句，多用於描述、評論、指示的用途。

　　習得母語時偏向整體籠統策略的孩子，在習得第二語言時，亦趨向於使用原用的策略，其語言中也很早便出現英語兒童常用的句子，並有斷詞錯誤（ missegmentation ）的情況，如將 ˋ I'm the second one ˊ 說成了 ˋ I me first two ˊ （ 受 ˋ I me first one ˊ 之影響 ），然而卻極少雙語混合使用，或互相干擾的現象，其語言多用於與人溝通之用途。

Abstract

　　Children acquiring their first language have been identified to employ the analytic and the gestalt strategies (Peters, 1977). The language of the former is quite intelligible; and can be observed to pass through a series of one-word, two-word, and multi-word stages. The language of the latter aims at whole phrases or sentences rather than single words.

　　In the acquisition of the second language, will children resort to the similar strategies used in acquiring their mother tongue? If so, what are the characteristics of the two strategies from the perspective of the second language acquisition? This paper investigates the role of the two aforementioned strategies in the acquisition

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of English as a second language by two Mandarin-speaking Chinese children during their one-year stay in the United States.

The data examined are collected from diary, notes, and cassette tapes recorded every two or three weeks in the home environment of a five-year-old and a three-year-old. The language examined is focused on the children's utterances containing English *first* and its Mandarin equivalents *diyi* and *shian*.

The child who had been analytic in acquiring her first language tends to apply the same strategy in acquiring her second language. Very early on, she had analyzed the meaning of the word *first* and would blend formulaic expressions like "I'm the first one" and "me first one" to yield "I me first one." The mix of her Mandarin and English and the interference from her English to her Mandarin can both be found. Her utterances containing *first* are mainly for descriptive purposes such as describing events, providing comments, and giving instructions.

The child who had been gestalt in acquiring her first language also tends to apply the same gestalt strategy in acquiring her second language. Her language showed the abundant usage of formulaic expressions, yet she would missegment words and utter "I me first two" for the intended "I'm the second one." There was little mix or interference found in her speech. Her utterances containing *first* are predominantly used for communicative purpose, i.e., engaging in social interaction with people around her.

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1. Introduction

Two of the classic studies in the literature dealing with first language acquisition have demonstrated that children acquire their first language either by passing through a series of one-word, two-word, and multi-word stages or by attempting to produce the whole phrases or sentences rather than single words. The first approach is represented by Brown's study (1973) of the three Harvard children: Adam, Eve, and Sarah. In this study, Brown points out that children's language develops with an increase of the length of their utterance, noticeably the increase of the number of morphemes. The second approach is represented by Peters' study (1977) of the child Minh at the University of Hawaii. In Minh's early speech, Peters found another frustratingly unintelligible mush-month type of speech. From then on, these two

approaches to the acquisition of the first language have been known as the **analytic** and the **gestalt** strategies (McLaughlin, 1984).

From a structural point of view, analytic children's speech is quite intelligible and hence can readily be analyzed into linguistic units such as distinctive features, phonemes, morphemes, words, phrases, etc. It is, therefore, easy to observe an orderly progression from shorter and simpler utterances to longer and more complex ones. Gestalt children's speech, on the other hand, is rather unintelligible. However, in their speech, "although the segmental fidelity was not very great, the combination of number of syllables, stress, intonation, and such segments as could be distinguished combined to give a very good impression of sentencehood." (Peters, 1977:564)

From a functional perspective, the child Minh's analytic, clear, one-word-at-a-time speech is generally used in referential[2] contexts such as naming objects in picture books, labeling a quality, or naming a desired object or action. His gestalt speech, on the other hand, is used in more conversationally defined contexts like opening conversations, summonses, playing with his brother, requesting something, and discussing objects sociably. Table 1 summarizes the major features of the analytic and the gestalt strategies.

While noticing that "both gestalt and analytic strategies of language learning seem to remain available for learning second and later languages,"[3] Peters made the following significant speculation:

"Krashen 1975 has proposed that adult second-language learners have two modes of language learning, which he has labeled **acquisition** and

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[2] The term **referential** is used by Nelson (1973) to describe the children she studied whose vocabulary of the first 50 words were mainly general nominals. For other children whose early vocabulary was characterized by a great number of personal or social expressions, Nelson called them the **expressive** children. Peters reported that Nelson first used the terms **word-learners** and **sentence-learners** to describe the two classes of speakers, focusing on a structural feature as a salient characteristic; later Nelson changed the terms to **referential** and **expressive,** which imply a functional orientation. Although Peters finally decided to choose **analytic** and **gestalt** as labeling terms to emphasize the difference in terms of processing strategies, she nevertheless pointed out that "these three characterizations may turn out to be facets of some single more basic distinction" (1977:570) of the two types of strategies.

[3] Peters (1977) mentioned that Vihman's daughter Virve was analytic in learning her first language (Estonian), but gestalt when she began to learn English at preschool at the age of two.

learning. Acquisition is characterized as subconscious, and dependent on interaction with primary linguistic data; whereas learning is conscious, and dependent on rule isolation feedback. It may be that a child's gestalt and analytic strategies may somehow develop into an adult's acquisition and learning strategies. It would, e.g., be interesting to see if a gestalt (or expressive) child developed into a person who preferred to learn a second language by 'feel', while an analytic (or referential) child developed into an adult who preferred to learn language 'by the book'." (1977:571)

Table 1. Analytic and Gestaltl Strategies in First Language Acquisition
(Peters, 1977:566)

Analytic	Gestalt
A. Structural Features:	
*intelligible	*rather unintelligible
*easily analyzed ling. units (distinctive features, phonemes, morphemes, words, phrases, sentences)	*aim at whole phrases or sentences rather than single words
*orderly progression from one-word to two-word to multi-word stages	*prominent prosodic features: combination of stress, number of syllables, intonation & some distinguishable segments gives a very good impression of sentencehood
B. Functional Features:	
*naming object (doggie)	*opening conversations/summonses (What's that?, Uh-oh!, Mommy!)
*labeling quality (hot)	*playing with sibling (Airplane go up)
*naming action (up!)	*requesting something (I want milk)
	*discussing objects sociably (Silly, isn't it?)

At the present time, it may still be too far to bridge the gap between a gestalt or analytic child with an acquisition or learning adult. Are the criteria for first-language gestalt and analytic strategies still applicable to child and/or adult second

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language acquisition? Under the circumstances that the speech from L2 learners would conceivably be longer and more complex than those from L1 learners, would some additional factors be desired to specify the gestalt and analytic strategies in child second language acquisition? In other words, if there is indeed such connection between the development of the different language learning strategies, one way to bridge the gap between a gestalt or analytic child and an acquisition or learning adult might be to examine: (1) whether L1 gestalt and analytic strategies are manifested in child L2, and (2) what are the structural and functional features of these two strategies in the context of child second language acquisition.

This paper attempts to answer the above questions by focusing on the acquisition of English *first* by two Chinese children, one of whom represents the gestalt, and the other, the analytic, learner. The paper also suggests some additional criteria to pinpoint the presence of both strategies in child second language acquisition. Table 2 sketches the research interest.

Table 2. Research Interst

Child L1		Child L2		Adult L2
Analytic	→	**strategic features?**	→	Learning
Gestalt	→	**strategic features?**	→	Acquisition

Furthermore, the paper tries to relate these two strategies to the various pairs of cognitive styles. Implications of this study will also be briefly discussed.

2. Methodology: Subjects, Second-Language Environment, and Data Collection

2.1 Subjects

The subjects in this study are two Chinese girls named Romy and Yvonne. Both of them acquired Mandarin as their first language, and grew up in a Mandarin environment until they went to the United States for a one-year visit. During this period, they attended a preschool, hence had a chance to be exposed to a second-language, i.e., English.

Romy started speaking early. Her speech was clear and intelligible. She was able to make fairly complex sentences around two years of age. Before she went to America, she had learned the English alphabet and some English vocabulary from her English picture books, to count from one to ten and to sing simple songs

like "Happy Birthday to You" and "Alphabet Song" in English.

Her younger sister Yvonne seemed to be, in many ways, the opposite of her. For example, Yvonne started speaking late. By the time she went to the United States, many of her utterances were still not very clear. However, she was able to express herself through clearly noticeable rise and fall of her intonation. Sometimes, I could distinguish the tone of every Mandarin syllable in her speech, but I didn't understand what she was saying. Unlike Romy, who went to the United States at the age of 4 years and 5 months, and could be said to have been quite advanced with her acquisition of Mandarin, Yvonne left Taiwan at the age of 2 years and 7 months, and her first language was far from a full-fledged one yet. (see Table 3)

Table 3. Linguistic Background of the Subjects

Child	L1 Mandarin	L1 & L2 Mandarin & English
Romy	birth to 5;4	4;5 to 5;4
Yvonne	birth to 3;6	2;7 to 3;6

2.2 Second-language Environment

During their one-year stay in America, Romy and Yvonne attended a preschool (in Berkeley, California), a place where they acquired most of their English. On the whole, the one-year stay in the United States witnessed both children's growing ability with English, and a gradual, although by no means complete, shift from Mandarin to English. Such shift can easily be observed from the transcripts of their speech.

2.3 Data Collection

The speech data examined in this study comprise of all of the two children's utterances containing the English word *first* and its Mandarin equivalents *diyi* and *shian*. These utterances are derived from a database of their spontaneous, naturalistic, home-environment speech collected in two ways: (1) from one-hour cassette tapes recorded every two or three weeks, and (2) from notes taken on the spot when any interesting phenomena were observed.

3. English *First* and Mandarin *Diyi* and *Shian*

In this section, some linguistic characteristics of English *first* and its Mandarin equivalents *diyi* and *shian* will be analyzed and discussed.

3.1 English *First*

First can be an adjectival determiner (see examples 1 & 2) or a temporal adverb (3-6), meaning "prior to all others in occurrence or existence" in terms of time and sequence. Like other adverbs in the English language,[4] *first* may occur at various syntactic positions within a sentence: at sentence final position (3), at sentence initial position (4), before the main verb (5), and after the verb (6).[5]

A. *First* as an adjectival determiner

1. Is that my *first* time?	[Adam, 3;5]
2. This the *first* one.	[Abe, 3;5.3]

B. *First* as a temporal adverb

3. Can I learn the cards *first?*	[Adam, 3;9]
4. *First* you need to put some paste on here.	[Abe, 3;1.26]
5. I'm gonna *first* go in kindergarten.	[Adam, 4;3]
6. Who gets to the castle *first* with the dinosaur wins.	[Abe, 4;1.24]

3.2 Two Mandarin Equivalents of *First: Diyi* and *Shian*

Two of the Mandarin equivalents of *first* can be *diyi* and *shian. Diyi* functions as an adjectival determiner. It can be followed by a classifier (CL) and then the noun (7). It can also occur after the verb (8). *Shian,* on the other hand, is required to precede the verb (9).

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[4] See Huang (1975) for the firve possible positions for English adverbs.
[5] These examples are taken from English-speaking children Adam (Brown, 1973) and Abe (Kuczaj, 1976). I am grateful to Brown and Kuczaj for allowing me to analyze and to cite their data.

C. *Diyi* and *Shian*

7. *Diyi* jian yao go potty.   [Yvonne, 2;09.18]
第一　件　要　go potty.
First CL (thing) be go potty.   (literal English)
"The first (thing) is to go potty."

8. Je shi *diyi*.   [Romy, 3;3.10]
這　是　第一
"This is the *first*."

9. Mama, ni *shian* buyao na jege.   [Romy, 2;6.10]
媽媽　妳　先　不要　拿　這個
Mommy, you *first* not take this   (literal English)
"Mommy, you don't take this *first*."

It is important to note that while there are shared semantic traits between English *first* and Mandarin *diyi* and *shian,* the syntactic characteristics of the English and Mandarin adverbials can be quite different. The main difference is that English adverbs are quite free in that they can, in various combinations, be placed at the sentence initial or final position, before or after the verb. By contrast, Mandarin adverbs take a fixed preverbal position. Failure to observe this rule would cause ungrammatical sentences in Mandarin. Table 4 summarizes the above discussion.

Table 4. Syntactic Characteristics of *First*, *Diyi*, and *Shian*

	English *First*	Mandarin *Diyi* and *Shian*
as Adj. Det.	det+*first*+N (1,2)	*diyi*+CL+N (7)
		V+*diyi* (8)
as Adv.	sentence final (3)	*shian*+V (9)
	sentence initial (4)	*fixed adv position
	first+V (5)	
	V+*first* (6)	
	*free adv position	

4. *First* from the Two Chinese Children

4.1 *First* from Romy, an Analytic Learner

Three types of *first* have been identified in Romy's speech during the year of her second language acquisition. The earliest appeared type is the adjectival

determiner *first*. The second type consists of sentential adverb *first* in her pure English utterances ad in utterances where she mixed her Mandarin and English. The third type comprises of two kinds of errors due to the interference from her second language (English) to her first language (Mandarin).

4.1.1 The Earliest Appeared *First*

The following six examples are taken from one tape session, recorded after Romy and Yvonne had attended preschool for about one and half month.[6] These examples may be taken as the various surface forms of the underlying sentence, "I'm the *first* one."

1. I me *first* one.	(line 1, 3, 6, also in part of line 5)
2. I gota *first* one.	(line 9)
3. I *first* one.	(line 9)
4. I'm *fir*(st).	(line 17, 19)
5. I'm the *first*.	(line 21)
6. I *first*.	(line 23) [4;06.14]

It may be interesting to note that although most of these utterances could be regarded as shorter, or perhaps incomplete, versions of the underlying target sentence "I'm the *first* one," the various realizations may serve as good indication that she had analyzed the usage of the word *first* in the target sentence. However, except in 5, "No, I'm the *first*," most of Romy's "the *first* one"s lack the determiner, i.e., the definite article "the." The scarcity of the determiner may be an indication that Romy has not fully grasped the beginning unit in the "determiner+*first*+N" structure yet.

Among these six utterances, utterance 1 "I me *first* one" is probably the most important. First of all, this marks the beginning usage of *first* from the available data. Secondly, because "I me *first* one" is repeated four times in a row by Romy and echoed two times in the form "I me *first* **two**" by Yvonne, the whole utterance seemed to have become a formulaic expression to the children. And it is very likely that they have heard and used such formula frequently, especially when they are engaged in games or competitive activities. Thirdly, on the tape, "me" is a clearly audible segment [mi] instead of the contracted segment [m] of "am." Could it be that "I me *first* one" is a blend of "I'm the *first* one" and "me *first*

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[6] See Appendix for the transcript of the part of the recording of this session.

one.''?[7] If this is the case, then, could the blending of "I'm the *first* one" and "me *first* one" be taken as an indication of the child's creative ability in handling formulas. It seems that, given her limited ability with English, the child is still able to create meaningful, although a bit strange, sentences.

4.1.2 Sentential *First* and Mix of the Two Languages

Two months later, another type of *first* showed up in Romy's speech. This sentential adverb *first* was found in her pure English utterances (7-11) and in the utterance (12) where she mixed her first and second languages.

    7. I got the Rose Parade book *first*.   [4;08.18]
    8. ...Alex was pulling- the rug, and I was on, are going
       over *first,* um, and Alex didn't see me go over that
       rug.   [4;11.07]
    9. I didn't eat anything and I start to play *first*.   [4;11.10]
   10. I have to draw *first*.   [5;02.03]
   11. *First* you have to eat the pi-- (pizza), if you don't
       eat, then the show person won't look at you.   [5;00.10]
   12a. Ni chr-wan fish *first*.   [5;01.26]
       你 吃 完   fish *first*.
     b. You eat-finish fish *first*.   (literal English)
     c. "You finish eating the fish *first*."

Except for 7 (arguing with Yvonne) and 12 (giving instruction to Yvonne), these utterances are mainly for descriptive purpose, which means that she used them either to describe her experiences (8-10) or to provide comments for clarafication (11).

In utterance 12 where she mixed her Mandarin and English, the Mandarin "ni chr-wan" and the English "fish *first*" each follows its own grammar. Such utterance is taken by Harding and Riley (1986:50) as aan evidence showing that

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[7] Research on children's talk about the self (Budwig, 1985) shows that *me*, and other forms like *I*, *my*, and childrens's own "names" do occur in children's utterance initial position as subject of the sentence, for examples, (*Me jump*, *I like peas*, *My did it*, *Megan count*). Budwig reported that the Nonego-anchored children in her study use *me*, as in utterances like "*Bring me the ball*," in much the same way adults use it to mark the self as patient, recipient, location, etc., of action. The Ego-anchored children use *me* as patient and recipient in the context of highly formulaic utterances such as "*gimme*." However, the Ego-Anchored children also use the *me* form productively in utterance initial position, referring to self as a subject affected by action ("*Me jump*" for "*I jump*").

"either the child produces mixed utterances which reflect her inability to separate the two languages or that the child has two distinct systems, since the correct word order is preserved." To them, " 'mixing' is part of the process of getting things sorted out." Furthermore,they reminded the parents of bilingual children that mixed utterances need not be interpreted as evidence of confusion when "in fact the child is getting on with the task of building up two sets of patterns by making more and more subtle contrasts." Therefore, it is probably safe to conclude that, at this stage, Romy is in the process of getting the two languages sorted out.

Generally speaking, the utterances in this section are examples of well-formed sentences constructed on her own. The proper usage of the temporal term *first* may be an indication of the child's growing mastery of her second language.

4.1.3 Interference from L2 to L1

While Romy seemed to have mastered the use of sentential adverb *first*, some of her utterances revealed that she had perhaps learned it too well. In her third type of *first*, showing up after she had been in the English environment for about six months, two kinds of errors can be observed.

A. Transfer of the Usage of *First* from English to Mandarin

13a. Wo na-dau nage jiandau *shian* de.   (actual utterance)
　　 我 拿到 那個 剪刀 先 的
　　 Subj V Determiner Obj Adv Nominalizer

b. I (am the one who) got hold the scissors *first*.   (literal English)

c. before nominalization:
　　 Wo *shian* na-dau nage jiandau.   (correct Mandarin)
　　 我 先 拿到 那個 剪刀
　　 S Adv V Det O

d. after nominalization:
　　 Wo *shian* na-dau nage jiandau de.   (correct Mandarin)
　　 我 先 拿到 那個 剪刀 的
　　 S Adv V Det O Nom   [4;09.17]

B. Leveling of the Semantic Distinction Between Mandarin *Diyi* and *Shian*
　 Because of English *First*

14a. Wo tsa wode shou *diyi*.   (actual utterance)
　　 我 擦 我的 手 第一
　　 S V Det O Adv

b. I wipe my hands *first*.   (literal English)

c. Wo *shian* tsa wode shou.   (correct Mandarin)
  我　先　擦　我的　手
  S   Adv V   Det   O   [5;00.00]
  (Romy wanted to apply lotion on her hands before she did it on her face.)

The first kind, illustrated by 13a, concerns the transfer of the usage of *first* from English to Mandarin. In this utterance, "wo na-dau nage jiandau *shian* de" (literally, "I (am the one who) got hold of the scissors *first.*"), although the words are all in Mandarin, the adverb *shian* is moved away from its correct Mandarin preverbal position to the end of her sentence before it was nominalized, i.e., the *shian* in 13c "wo *shian* na-dau nage jiandau" is moved to sentence final to yield "wo na-dau nage jiandau *shian*," and then is added with a "de" at the end for nominalization (13a). Since sentence-final *first* is probably the most salient one among the various types of *first,* (Chiang 1990:71), the moving of *shian* from the Mandarin preverbal to sentence-final position is very likely to have been triggered by the sentence-final English *first.*

The second kind of Romy's interference error, illustrated by 14a, reveals the leveling of the semantic distinction between her Mandarin *shian* and *diyi* because of the English *first.* In Mandarin, although both *diyi* and *shian* can be English *first,* it does not necessarily mean that they are always interchangeable. An important difference between them is that when it comes to finer distinctions, *shian* refers to the more general notion of priority, while *diyi* conveys precisely the notion of firstness in terms of sequentiality.

Since she intended to apply lotion on her hands before she applied it on her face, *shian* should therefore be a better choice than *diyi,* i.e., 14a "wo tsa wode shou *diyi*" should be replaced by 14c "wo *shian* tsa wode shou." Romy's leveling of the semantic distinction between *diyi* and *shian,* together with the placing of *diyi* at the sentence-final position, can be taken as a good indication of the weakening of her Mandarin.

4.2 *First* from Yvonne: a Gestalt Learner

In general, the picture of Yvonne's acquisition of the two languages is quite different from that of Romy. She tends to be a gestalt learner in that her speech is more formulaic, often accompanied with high-pitched voice, facial expressions, and gestures. Furthermore, she seldom mixed her Mandarin with her English.

4.2.1 Earliest Appeared *First* and Missegmentation of Formulaic Expressions

Like Romy's, Yvonne's earliest *first* belongs to the adjectival determiner type.

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1. I me *first* two.   (line 2 & 4, Appendix)   [2;09.00]
2. I be the *first* one.   [2;10.16]
3. *Diyi* jian yao go potty.   [2;09.18]
   First CL (thing) will be go potty.   (literal English)

The above utterances are some of the representative instances which reflect the more formulaic type of linguistic input Yvonne frequently received either at home or in school, through familiar daily activities. Like Romy's, Yvonne's earliest *first* belongs to the adjectival determiner *first*. And these examples provide additional evidence for Wong-Fillmore's (1976:300) claim that formulas "are indeed among the first things learned in the new language".

It may be interesting to observe that Romy's "I me *first* one" served as a model for Yvonne's "I me *first* two."[8] To Yvonne, the "one" in Romy's utterance is probably the most salient unit from a string of sounds that she could readily identify. Phonologically, "one" is the last unit in a string of words uttered by Romy, thus is likely the clearest to remember in Yvonne's memory. This means that Yvonne took "I me first one" as a formula, and had for sure analyzed the last syllable. She apparently thought the "one" in Romy's "I me first **one**" as the word for "number one". Since Romy was already the number one, Yvonne then, at most, could only be number two. Therefore, without any hesitation, Yvonne took her turn right after Romy, copying whatever Romy had said, yet made a crucial change by replacing Romy's "one" with her own "two." What she really intended to say should then be "I'm the second one." Such an utterance, therefore, is a good example of

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[8] It may be thought that Yvonne's "I me *first* **two**" could also be "I me *first* **too**". The latter is probably what Romy had taken for because Romy repeated her "I me first one" two times after Yvonne's "I me first two." However, to Yvonne, it's more likely that she was intending to say "I me first two" because, in the present case, she uttered her words after Romy had said hers. And because she is the second child ever since she was born, she has been so used to follow Romy's example and she herself takes the second place in doing almost everything. Besides, at that time, a month and half after she had been exposed to the English environment, Yvonne's English was still very limited. She could pronounce several of her teachers' names; animal names such as "panda, whale, elephant"; but she was not able to produce well-constructed sentences except for a few lines from the songs she learned at school, e.g., [ho ma da no hæ da fam] for "Old McDonald had a farm") and there was no instance of the adverb "too" (in the sense of "also") found in her speech yet. Furthermore, it was checked between the parents that both had intuitively understood Yvonne as having said "I me first two" rather than "I me first too."

what Peters (1985:1059) called Missegmentation.[9]

Almost as a formula, "I me first **two**" is a rather revealing utterance. Although Yvonne might not have understood each of the smaller units in Romy's "I me first one," she somehow understood the meaning of the whole utterance (a typical characteristic of the gestalt learner) and was able to imitate whatever she had heard. Nevertheless, the crucial change from the word *one* to the word *two* indicates that not only had Yvonne actually acquired the holistic meaning of her sister's "I me first one," but she was able to create, with her limited English, another meaningful sentence. Therefore, the utterance "I me first two" is interesting in that it reveals both the imitative and the creative abilities of Yvonne even in an early stage of her second language acquisition.

4.2.2 Independently Used Sentential Adverb *First*

The second type of Yvonne's later, independently produced *first* all belong to the sentential adverb *first*.

4. I want you sit down. I want you sit down *first,*
   then I want sit down your lap.   [3;02.12]
   (requesting to sit on mother's lap)
5. Daddy, I put on my seatbelt on *first.*   [3;02.25]
   (informing her father that she buckled her seatbelt first,
   therefore expecting a praise from him)
6. See! she said Micky Mouse *first.*   [3;02.26]
   (emphasizing that she was right)
7. No, abcd *first.*   [3;04.22]
   (insisting that her mother should read the alphabet book first)
8. *First,* I been wor—, *first, first,* you sing
   "I been working on the railroad."   [3;06.05]
   (instructing her mother to sing the song)

The above utterances exhibit that Yvonne differs from Romy in at least two ways. One is that although Yvonne's English may not always be grammatical (4,

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[9] A similar, unpublished example from Chiu-yu Tseng's daughter (personal communication) is that the child, upon hearing her father's praise "wonderful", continued with "two-derful, three-derful". Yvonne missegmented the last syllable in the string of sounds she had just heard, and Tseng's daughter missegmented the first syllable.

5, 8), she seldom mixed her English with her Mandarin. The other is that, unlike Romy, whose utterances containing sentence-final *first* are mostly for descriptive purpose, Yvonne's utterances containing sentential *first* (4-8) all serve a more communicative purpose[10] because such utterances helped her to engage in direct social interactions with people around her.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Analytic and Gestalt Strategies in Child Second Language Acquisition

The general picture of Romy and Yvonne's acquisition of the English word *first* indicates two quite different approaches to the second language acquisition. Romy tends to be an analytic learner because her speech is of good intelligibility and, through her grammatical and ungrammatical utterances, it is quite clear that, from early on, she had analyzed this word. Yvonne, on the other hand, tends to be a gestalt learner because she is less intelligible and her utterances often contain unanalyzed phrases or sentences. Her speech is characterized by high-pitched voice and greater intonational variety. Since these characteristics are typical of the strategies found in child first language acquisition, it seems to be true that the analytic and the gestalt strategies also exist in children's second language acquisition.

To put the various threads of discussion on the word *first* together, I would like to suggest the following structural and functional features for the analytic and the gestalt strategies in child second language acquisition. The structural features of the analytic speech like Romy's include the early-on analyzed linguistic units, the blending of formulaic expressions, the mix of the first and the second languages, and the interference from the second language to the first language (the opposite direction is conceivably also possible). The structural features of the gestalt speech like Yvonne's indicate the abundant usage of formulaic expressions and the presence of missegmentation. At the functional level, the analytic strategy is primarily for the descriptive purpose such as describing events, providing comments, or giving instructions, whereas the communicatively oriented gestalt strategy is predominantly used for engaging in social interaction. (See Table 5 for summary)

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[10] J. Huang (1970) reported that his son Paul's early English (as second language) utterances such as the rather long one "Get out of here" all serve a more communicatively oriented function.

Table 5. Analytic and Gestalt Strategies in Child Second Language Acquisition

Analytic (Romy)	Gestalt (Yvonne)
A. Structural Features:	
*analyzed linguistic units	*formulaic expressions
*blending of formulas	*missegmentation
*mix of L1 & L2	*little mix
*interference from L2 to L1	*little interference
B. Functional Feature:	
*describing events	*engaging in social interaction
*providing comments	
*giving instructions	

5.2 Language Learning Strategies and Cognitive Styles

Why are there variations in children's language development? How do different language learning strategies arise? One answer to these questions, as suggested by both first and second language acquisition researchers, concerns the difference in cognitive organizations or cognitive styles.

Among the first language acquisition researchers, Nelson was one of the first to try to explain the relations between the form and the function of children's early language. In Nelson's (1973) study of 18 children's first 50 words, 10 were classified as **referential** (**analytic** in Peters' term) group in that their early lexicons were dominated by words for objects. These children had larger vocabularies, used fewer phrases, moved predictably from single words to a two-word stage, and acquired words faster than the other "expressive" group. The **expressive** (**gestalt** in Peters' term) children had fewer object labels but more pronouns, modifiers, and function words. They also acquired many more personal-social expressions, which were usually longer than a single word. Nelson proposed that these differences reflected the children's differing hypothesis about how language is used, i.e., different forms are manifestations of different functions. It can be concluded that children applying analytic strategy exhibit the referential tendency in organizing their world around objects, hence the language to talk about and categorize the objects in their environment. Children of gestalt strategy will be more expressive because their

conceptual organization was focused on people, thus the more socially oriented vocabularies as a means to talk about themselves, to talk about others, and to interact with people around them.

Parallel to the analytic and gestalt strategies is also the cognitive style of field independence-dependence (Brown, 1987). A field independent cognitive style enables one to distinguish parts from a whole, to be generally more independent, competitive, and self-confident. In second language leaning, field independence has been shown to correlate positively and significantly with language success in the classroom (Naiman et al., 1978), particularly the learning that involves analysis, attention to details, mastering of exercises, drills, etc. Field dependence cognitive style, on the other hand, is the tendency to be dependent on the total field perceived as a unified whole, yet the parts embedded within the field are not easily perceived. Such persons tend to be more socialized, will derive their self-identity from persons around them, and are usually more perceptive of the feelings and thoughts of others. They tend to be successful in learning the communicative aspects of a second language.

Another cognitive style that can be related to analytic and gestalt strategies concerns the left- and right-brain dominance. According to Stevick (1982), left-brain-dominant second language learners are better at producing separate words, gathering the specifics of language, carrying out sequences of operations and dealing with abstraction, classification, labeling, and reorganization. Right-brain-dominant learners, on the other hand, appear to deal better with whole images, generalizations, metaphors, emotional reactions, and artistic expressions. Given the above findings, it is tempting to wonder whether an analytic child will become academically superior and a gestalt child will develop into an artist.

5.3 Implications of the Study

Between Peters' analytic and gestalt children acquiring the mother tongue and Krashen's learning and acquisition adults learning the second language, a number of strategies or styles have been suggested to account for the alternative ways a learner may use to accomplish the task of language learning.

This paper has suggested additional structural and functional features for analytic and gestalt strategies in children learning the second language. The implications of these findings may be viewed from the perspectives of the parents and caretakers, the teachers, and the language acquisition researchers.

With more knowledge of the different language learning strategies and their relations to the various cognitive styles, parents and caretakers may understand better their children's production of both one-word, two-word, multi-word utterances and

their over-all, meaning-bearing, prosody-rich utterances; and enjoy the different aspects of each child's unique journey of language development. Teachers need to pay a greater attention to the whole meanings in the gestalt expressions of some learners and devise curriculum that would properly measure their communicative ability.

Researchers have now recognized the existence of both analytic and gestalt strategies in first language acquisition. Peters (1977:570-71) pointed out that "there is probably a continuum of children, varying from those who are very analytic right from the beginning, through those who use mixes of analytic and gestalt speech in varying proportions, to those who may start out with a completely gestalt approach and have to convert slowly and painfully to a more analytic approach to language. As Nelson has pointed out, the degree of acceptance of the child's speech by the caretaker will greatly affect how painful such a conversion will be. Language acquisition researchers can work toward a more thorough understanding of the analytic and gestalt speech in second and later language acquisition and the process of conversion from a predominantly gestalt approach to a more analytic approach to language. This understanding will help parents and caretakers to have different expectation of different child's language development and to enjoy the interaction with the child. It will also help the teachers to provide proper guidance for different language learners.

Appendix

Below is the transcript of a part of recording of the session from which the two children's earliest *firsts* are observed. (R: Romy, Y: Yvonne, S: Shannon, Romy and Yvonne's school friend who came over for a short visit, F: Father, M: Mother)

line

<R, Y and S are asked to sit down and wait for pumpkin pie>
1 R: I me **first** one.   [4;06.14]
2 Y: I me **first** two.   [2;09.00]
3 R: I me **first** one.
4 Y: I me **first** two.
5. R: I me **first** one chr wan (finish eating).
6. R: I me **first** one.
        <before eating, F asks children to wash hands>

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7 F: Rourou, Rourou yau shi shou, you go **first,** wash hands.
      (Romy, Romy needs to wash hands),

      . . . . .

8 S: me **first** one.

9 R: I wash hand, I gota **first** one. I **first** one.
      <I'm the **first** one to have hands washed>

10 M: <cutting the pumpkin pie> ok, now Shannon **first**, because Shannon
      is the guest.

11 R: no!

12 M: ta shr keren na. (She is the guest, particle na)

13 F: keren ne, Rourou. (Guest, particle ne, Romy.)

14 M: keren **shian** na (Guest **first**, particle na).

15 R: no!

16 M: ni dao nage, ayi-chia chiu de shrhou, shi-pu-shi ye gei ni, **shian** na?
      (when you went to the aunt's house, wasn't it that you were also
      allowed to be the **first**?)

      . . . . .

17 R: <finish eating the pie> I'm ready done, I'm **fir(st).**

18 M: You are already done, you feel full.
      <M thought R had said "I'm full.">

19 R: no, I'm **first,** you say full.

20 M: I said wrong.

21 R: no, I'm the **first.** <running into the bathroom to wash hands. S
      follows.>

      . . . . .

      <R & S are running back to the living room>

22 S: I'm the **first.**

23 R: <loudly> I **first.**

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