

## **L1 Attrition Effect on the Pragmatic Use of Ba Construction**

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Recent research focusing on complex structures that involve an interface between syntax and pragmatics have found divergence in the performance of late bilinguals from their monolingual peers. Ba construction in Chinese can be considered as one of these structures, which appears to be vulnerable to attrition effect among Chinese late bilinguals. The goal of this study is to explore and get a picture of the maintenance and attrition of Chinese late bilinguals' use and knowledge on Ba construction in the early years after emigration. Two main research questions follow: 1. Whether divergence will be found on Ba construction among Chinese students in the UK as compared to their monolingual peers in China; 2. If divergence is found, what are the factors that contribute to it? To explore the two questions, this study conducted two experiments: Experiment I investigates the performance of the participants in two acceptability judgment tasks (timed vs. untimed) via E-prime by an "attriters" group (N=21) and a control group (N=31); Experiment II measures the pragmatic ability of the participants with respect to Ba construction with a multiple-choice discourse completion task by another "attriters" group (N=54) and another control group (N=78). Results suggest that both control and "attriters" groups know the rules of the pragmatic use of Ba construction; the "attriters" groups appear to be less efficient in applying the rules correctly during processing. A significant difference was also found between the "attriters" with the LOR (length of residence in the UK) of less than one year and the control group; The older the age at which the attriters arrived in the UK, the lesser "attrition effect" they revealed.