

SOFTWARE AND WORLD WIDE WEB NEWS

Adso Textbook

<http://textbook.adsotrans.com/> (Free)

AdsoTextbook is an effort to create an online archive of contextually annotated Chinese texts. All words are annotated with the contextually appropriate pinyin and English. Students can simply mouseover unfamiliar words for definitions. The site has a reasonable selection of texts, poems and songs at different levels of difficulty. Representative texts include:

* A Selection from Dream of the Red Chamber

(<http://textbook.adsotrans.com/?q=node/48>)

* Remembering Norman Bethune

(<http://textbook.adsotrans.com/?q=node/43>)

* Children's Rhyme

(<http://textbook.adsotrans.com/?q=node/19>)

The textbook is volunteer-based and supported by donations. Some special features (private vocabulary lists, control over display options, access to text recordings and language lessons) are made available exclusively to contributors. All annotated texts are available without charge for use by students and teachers. We hope these materials are useful and welcome suggestions on new texts to make available.

Instructors interested in annotating their own texts for use by students should visit <http://textbook.adsotrans.com/?q=node/94>. This page includes videos illustrating the annotation process. Our goal is to automate the menial tasks in text annotation and empower contributors to edit the results using a web-based editing interface. Once texts have been annotated once, they may be viewed in simplified or traditional Chinese or as properly word-spaced pinyin.

iFLY Language – the Speech Technology Enabled Electronic Chinese Learning Platform
<http://www.iflytek.com> (Free demo)

In November of 2006, iFLYTEK the leading company in Chinese speech technology in the world, released the

electronic Chinese learning platform: iFLY Language.
<http://www.iflylanguage.com/english>

The platform is built on top of speech synthesis (computer speaking human speech based on any input text) and speech recognition (computer understanding human speech based on any input human speech). It has two major functionalities:

1. Read any Chinese text for a user at any time, any where.
 - a. A user can input any Chinese text in multiple methods – directly type in, cut & paste, or upload document in word, PDF and some other formats into the system
 - b. The system can then read the text out in standard Mandarin Chinese for the user – the quality of the synthesized speech is above the average of that of standard mandarin speakers
 - c. The system can show Chinese Pin Yin automatically aligned with the original input
 - d. The user can follow and learn to speak in a Karaoke fashion
 - e. The user can opt to save the standard Chinese output into a MP3 file
2. Evaluate and correct one's spoken Chinese at any time, any where
 - a. A user can speak towards the system some Chinese words that are pre-defined by the system
 - b. The system will then do automatic evaluation for the user, generating a report that points out where and how the user may have made a mistake, how to improve the pronunciation, etc.
 - c. This function is rooted on top of what iFLYTEK invented for China's National Language & Character Committee to test and evaluate Mandarin in mainland China – the sole system being adopted by the national government in the National Oral Mandarin Exam

So, to a large degree, anyone interested in learning spoken Chinese now has a platform to assist the learning of pronunciation at any time any where.

On top of these features, the platform has a whole set of supporting functions to enable teachers to define content