



### Destiny, 缘分, 緣份, voorbestemming...

People often wonder how learning a new language can change their lives. As an amateur language learner, I have got new opportunities, precious friendships and so on. However, I did not expect a romantic and multilingual relationship until we encountered each other at CLT.

We are Josse and Yuling. We have been language partners in English and Mandarin Chinese for one and a half years. At the time, I was looking for a language partner to improve my spoken English. With the help of our teachers, Josse and I got to know each other at CLT. From then on, we started our weekly meeting and our friends joined us sometimes to practise English and Chinese. We often spend our spare time together, and most importantly, appreciate the beauty of languages.

Gradually, as you could imagine, we have fallen in love with each other. Interestingly, our mother languages are actually Dutch and Cantonese (a dialect of Chinese, widely used in southeastern China and overseas communities). We are keen on learning the mother languages of each other, because this is the best connection to the culture and life in an international relationship.

Besides, we gradually rediscover our own languages in a new perspective. As native speakers, we master our own mother tongue by heart without learning special skills, while these are helpful to language learners. What is striking to me is that Josse studies the Cantonese pronunciation with phonetic symbols, which we native speakers do not use at all. On the other hand, Josse had never heard about “soft ketchup”, the clue of conjugating Dutch verbs, which is widely used by Dutch learners. These vignettes in language learning make us laugh.

Enjoying the romance in our relationship, we still insist on practising language skills every week. We aim to master the mother tongue of each other and create our own secret language together. Because of language learning, we have created our common destiny. We truly believe that this multilingual story will be continued happily.

Yuling Yu

