

The Use of English as a Lingua Franca in Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language: A Case Study of Native Chinese Teachers in Beijing

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1 Background

This chapter provides a case study of how native Chinese teachers use English as a lingua franca (ELF) when teaching Mandarin Chinese as a Foreign Language (henceforth, CFL) in Beijing universities. In this study, the term ELF is used to describe interactions among mainly non-native speakers of English who use English as their chosen tool for communication in international and intercultural settings. Often in these interactions, only a minority of ‘native’ speakers of English are involved (see House 2003; Murata and Jenkins 2009 for the definition of ELF).

With the rise of China’s economy, CFL teaching has prospered in the last decade. The large influx of international students into Beijing has brought with it different cultures and languages. Meanwhile, English has spread widely around the world, and the number of English speakers is increasing, especially in what Kachru calls the ‘expanding circle’ (Graddol 2006; Jenkins 2009: 18; Kachru 1985: 12–13, 1992: 356). In CFL classes, Chinese teachers use ELF to assist the teaching of Chinese language, to introduce Chinese culture and to communicate with students who come from many different countries. I will refer to the use of English for these three aspects of teaching as ‘ELF pedagogy’. The popularity of the Chinese language and the fast development of ELF worldwide mean that a new cultural and academic milieu of foreign language teaching and learning has evolved which requires more empirical attention.

As the most populous country in the world, China also has one of the largest populations of English students and a history of more than seven decades of English language teaching and learning. The learning of English as a second language started to flourish at all levels from the end of the 1970s, including the school and

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university systems, commerce and the wider population (Lam 2005). More people are now learning English in China than in any other country. The number of people who desire to learn English outnumbers the total populations of the United States and Britain combined (Kirkpatrick 2007: 146). The recent Asia Society's report (Norman 2011) finds that there are more than 300 million Chinese students learning English in China; and according to another study, China now produces more than 20 million new users of English each year (Graddol 2006: 95).

China's huge investment in English, together with its promotion of Chinese as a foreign language, must be seen in a global context. One reason for investing in English is that English is seen as a means of internationalizing both the student community and teaching staff. Another reason is that in CFL teaching, English proficiency is now one of the most important requirements when recruiting qualified Chinese language teachers in and outside China. The growing international importance of Chinese has increased demand for more qualified CFL teachers to be able to teach the language around the world. The global gap between CFL teachers and international Chinese students was estimated to be 1:1,000, which means that four million more CFL teachers are needed (Chinese Ministry of Education 2006: 203). To meet the demand for qualified CFL teachers, the Master of Teaching Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages (MTC SOL) has been established in around 200 universities in China since 2007, and it has already become one of the most popular master programs in China's universities. In terms of foreign language competence, the MTC SOL program guide states that half the core curriculum should be taught in a foreign language (mainly English). By the end of the 2-year master program, graduates are expected to teach and communicate fluently in English. Furthermore, the Qualification Test for CFL Teachers was re-launched in late 2011. Only those with a high proficiency in foreign languages now qualify. To be certified, candidates need a minimum English score of band 5 in IELTS or 500 in TOEFL. This shows that English (or other major languages such as French, Japanese, German and Spanish) are considered a basic requirement for teaching CFL.

2 Previous Research

Previous research has focused on the tension between the Chinese-only principle and experiments of promoting an ELF pedagogy, a judicious use of English as a mediation tool. Article 20 of the Law on the Commonly Used Language and Script in China covers the policy for CFL teaching across China. It states that Putonghua (modern standard Mandarin Chinese) and the standardized Chinese characters should be taught in classes for foreigners who are learning Chinese (Rohsenow 2004: 41). Moreover, in a collection of teaching syllabuses for CFL, editor Yang Jizhou explicitly states that ELF and other foreign languages should be forbidden in CFL classes (1999: 5). Following this, Hanban (2002: 3), the government office managing Chinese studies, issued a new set of teaching syllabuses saying that CFL teachers should 'maximize target language and diminish the use of [English] as a medium of instruction'.

Despite a rigid state policy of using Chinese-only pedagogy, there have been intensive debates on whether or not to use ELF in CFL classes. Two schools of thought have formed on whether to allow or disallow the use of ELF. Proponents of Chinese-only pedagogy have argued that Chinese is best taught through Chinese only, and that the use of ELF or other languages the students are familiar with always results in negative transfer in the process of acquiring Chinese (e.g. Liu 2006: 118; Lü 1993: 84; Sun 2003: 101). Some Chinese scholars have challenged the lingua franca status of English (Ma 2003; Wang 2007, 2009). They argue that the use of English in the CFL classroom will only help to spread English to CFL students, which would distort the purposes of teaching and promoting Chinese to the world.

On the other side, opponents of the Chinese-only pedagogy have argued against this position by providing empirical evidence that CFL teachers have in practice successfully applied the ELF pedagogy to varying degrees. Xu (2008) has argued for using ELF sensibly and judiciously in CFL teaching. Danping Wang (2010a) has suggested that CFL teachers need to become bilingual in Chinese and English in the increasingly globalized teaching contexts. Corresponding to the promotion of English language education in China (Lam 2005), teachers' English language competence is becoming as important as their comparative linguistic knowledge of English and Chinese (Zhang 2006). In some studies (e.g. Chen 2010), CFL teachers are portrayed as messengers who spread Chinese culture in addition to the role of language educator. This has increased the importance of ELF to keep the class communicative and interactive. But how do CFL teachers perceive the role of ELF in teaching Chinese to international students in a multinational and multilingual CFL class? Until now, empirical research on language use in CFL classrooms has been limited. The present study seeks to add to our knowledge.

3 The Present Study

This chapter is based on a preliminary case study of CFL teachers' beliefs and attitudes towards using ELF in CFL teaching. Specifically, this qualitative study was informed by principles of grounded theory (Creswell 2008) and, most importantly, narrative inquiry (Clandinin and Connelly 2000). The overall aim was to tell each participant's story and explain their beliefs and attitudes towards using ELF in CFL teaching.

Research Questions

For this reason, the study sought to answer the following two research questions:

1. What are native Chinese teachers' beliefs and attitudes towards the use of ELF in CFL teaching?
2. What factors contribute to these beliefs and attitudes? How and why?

Conceptual Framework

Conceptually, the study was guided by theoretical discussions of teachers' beliefs, attitudes and knowledge or belief systems, and the ways in which these belief systems are formed. That teacher beliefs could have a direct effect on their teaching is not new. Ghaith described the construct of teacher beliefs as "comprehensive of several dimensions relative to beliefs about learning, teaching, program and curriculum, and the teaching profession more generally" (Ghaith 2004: 280). Borg (2006) summarized by saying that teacher beliefs are teachers' pedagogical beliefs or those beliefs of relevance to an individual teaching situation. Richards argued that teachers' beliefs are "working principles or maxims which teachers consciously or unconsciously refer to as they teach" (1996: 282). In describing what teachers' beliefs are and how they are formed, a number of language educators (e.g. Carless 2008; Crawford 2004; Levine 2003, 2011; Macaro 2001; Rolin-Ianziti and Brownlie 2002; Tsui 2007) have provided insightful examples. Teachers' beliefs can be shaped by many factors, including their own experiences as L2 learners, teacher training, teaching experiences, official policies, and through exposure to the perspectives of colleagues and superiors.

In the present study, teacher participants' opinions were classified into the three categories identified in Macaro's (2005, 2009) 'continuum of perspective'. The continuum illustrates three distinct personal beliefs that teachers might hold regarding their potential language choice in the L2 classroom: (1) the virtual position (a monolingual perspective, supporting an exclusive use of the target language); (2) the maximal position (acknowledging that exclusive use of the target language is not attainable, yet feeling guilty when resorting to students' L1); and (3) the optimal position (a multilingual perspective).

Participants

Interview participants were chosen using purposive sampling (Glaser and Strauss 1967) as the main goal of qualitative sampling is to find individuals who can provide rich and varied insights into the phenomenon under investigation so as to maximize what we can learn (Dörnyei 2007: 126). Based on the purposive sampling, 24 native Chinese teachers from universities in Beijing were selected to participate in one-on-one in-depth interviews. Their perspectives were classified into three groups in accordance with Macaro's (2005, 2009) 'continuum of perspective'. In this chapter one representative from each group has been chosen and his or her perspective presented. The demographics of the three participants are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1 A summary of CFL teachers' demographics

Name	Gender	Qualifications	Qualified areas	Teaching experience
Zhang	Male	Ph.D.	Chinese	10–15 years
Liu	Female	M.A.	MTC SOL	less than 5 years
Gao	Female	M.A.	English	5–10 years

Data Collection

Prior to the interviews, participants signed a consent form and agreed to have their conversations recorded for research purposes. Taking into account the heavy workload and each teacher's timetable, the face-to-face interviews were limited to 40 min each. In order to increase the richness and depth of the responses and to help in tracking and identifying themes from the transcripts, notes and memos were taken while the participants were talking. Pseudonyms were used to protect the participants' identity.

Data Analyses

During transcription of the interviews, emerging themes and similarities or differences among the three teachers' beliefs and strategies were noted. In keeping with grounded theory methodology, transcripts were reviewed several times and any questions which arose during analysis were clarified with the participants. Field notes and interview transcripts were analyzed using systematic and thematic open coding techniques.

4 Findings

We now move to a summary of the findings from this study. This section begins by describing the participants' beliefs and then turns to an analysis of the factors that shaped and influenced these beliefs. Interviews were done in Chinese and translated to English. The words are italicized when the English words were used by the interviewees. If Chinese is used to present certain Chinese symbols, the character is shown first, followed by pinyin and the English gloss in parentheses: 翻译 (fānyī, translation). The three participants, Zhang, Liu and Gao, represent three distinct perspectives on the issue of ELF use in CFL class: virtual position, maximal position and optimal position.

Case One: Zhang

Zhang's perspective corresponded to what Macaro (2001) refers to as the virtual position. He supported the Chinese-only pedagogy and believed that Chinese could only be taught through exclusive use of Chinese. For example, he responded with certainty to the question of 'Do you use Chinese only when teaching CFL students?' Zhang said:

Yes. I speak Chinese only . . . As you can see along the corridors, posters and banners are plentiful on the walls reminding our students about speaking Chinese only. My school has a very strict rule prohibiting the use of English. Every teacher knows it. Chinese teachers should never forget that international students are here in China to learn Chinese, not English.

Zhang's remarks show that CFL teachers are expected to practice what the language policy and teaching syllabus dictate. Zhang's perception was that 'students are here in China to learn Chinese, not English', so he believed that English should never be spoken or used in the context of CFL teaching. He felt that learning Chinese through Chinese only is the best method. On the basis of his understanding of second language acquisition, he explained:

That is undoubtedly the best way to learn a foreign language. Recalling how we learnt Chinese as children, we became native speakers by ear and imitation. There were no other languages helping us understand, right? So all that students need to do is to keep practicing with us, and then they will become native speakers like us.

Zhang rejected the use of ELF and argued that L2 learning can be equated with L1 learning. However, it has long been known that L2 learning is by no means equal to L1 acquisition (Auerbach 1993; Cook 2001). For students with little or no prior knowledge of Chinese, a Chinese-only pedagogy could result in teaching consisting only of drills of language forms. However, Zhang's insistence on speaking Chinese only was based on the belief that the use of ELF would cause interference when learning Chinese. Zhang argued:

Translation is a very bad idea! I'll never ask my students to waste time on it. What they need to do is to forget their mother tongue as much and as quickly as possible. They should activate a part of the brain to speak and think in Chinese only. They need to drop all 'crutches' and learn to walk on their own. If I use English to translate for them, they would rely on it and expect me to translate for them all the time.

Zhang saw translation as unnecessary or even harmful. 'Crutches' is a metaphor here for using ELF as a translation tool. In Zhang's eyes, CFL students were seen as handicapped in speaking Chinese, and hence ELF as a source of interference or cause of confusion in learning Chinese. He also believed that if he were to use ELF, his students would in turn probably increase their use as well. With a very firm belief in the virtual position, Zhang expressed his strong antipathy towards English:

The Noble Prize winner, Ding Zhaozhong (Samuel Ting), delivered his speech in Chinese at the Award Ceremony and this broke the convention. He's the pride of all Chinese people . . . Chinese is a great language. We should defend ourselves against the invasion of English.

For me, I don't use a single English word in my class. I've heard that some scholars are developing a pedagogy which helps us teach Chinese through Chinese only... That's exactly what I want.

Zhang's beliefs explain the enthusiasm towards avoiding English in a CLF teaching context. An increasing number of studies have appeared in recent years which attempt to prove that CFL classes can be taught without using any English. In the interview with Zhang, he seemed to enjoy sharing his self-developed methods of explaining certain difficult Chinese words, whether by drawing pictures, making gestures, telling stories or acting a drama, as long as those techniques could help him teach Chinese and avoid resorting to English.

Case Two: Liu

Liu was supportive of the maximal position. She admitted that perfect learning conditions (where only the L2 is used) do not exist, but she still held that teachers should maximize the use of the L2. She found it unrealistic to use Chinese only, but she would try to maximize the use of Chinese. She sometimes used ELF, but often doubted if resorting to ELF was correct. In the beginning of the interview, Liu was for Chinese-only pedagogy, but she later admitted that this was not strictly true. She then explained and gave examples of using ELF in actual teaching practice. As Liu said:

It's not easy to explain Chinese only in Chinese, especially when it comes to grammar. Sometimes, I will give out the equivalent English translation for the grammar term and tell my students to '*read the English explanation in your textbooks*'. Students always want me to help them translate from English to Chinese in various situations. I'm glad to, but I hesitate... As long as I can explain it in Chinese, I won't do it in English.

Liu agreed that English deployed as a medium of instruction should be used, but as little as possible. However, she also admitted that many situations require the use of English. It can be seen from Liu's example that using English for explanatory purposes was considered important. In addition to this pedagogical reason, some classroom managerial and communicative reasons were also reported in Liu's interviews. As Liu said:

I don't think it's a good practice to give instructions in English but it seems there's no better way... My class are absolute beginners. For example, if I want my class to divide into two groups and do some practice, I will say '*two groups*' and '*pair work*'... Body gestures and flashcards are sometimes very awkward for me. If I speak some English, it will be an easy job. It saves a great amount of time! And more importantly, I can chat with my students and make friends with them.

As Liu explained, using ELF helped to save time and to build a rapport between teacher and students. As can be seen from Liu's case, she did not strongly reject the notion that ELF could benefit CFL learning, but she often felt guilty when resorting to ELF. During the interview, Liu always remembered to express her hesitations. As she argued:

I might have spoken too much English just now Next time, I think I will try to write down those English words on the blackboard instead of speaking them out . . . I've prepared all the necessary vocabulary for this lesson. In case of being asked to translate from English to Chinese, I've also brought an English pocket dictionary with me . . . just in case.

Liu said she was a novice CFL teacher and always worried if she had done something wrong. She thought she adhered to a Chinese-only pedagogy, but in fact she was applying an ELF pedagogy in actual teaching.

Furthermore, when using ELF Liu had problems understanding different varieties of English and worried whether her students understood her English. For example, Liu said:

I feel very confused when speaking English There are many times that I cannot figure out what my students are trying to ask. Their English is neither British nor American Their English accents are very strong . . . and I sometimes feel sorry for my Korean students because I don't even know whether they speak English.

Liu further explained that her current class consisted of 15 students, who came from Korea, Indonesia, France, Spain, Sweden and Norway. Liu's attitudes towards ELF accents revealed that many English learners in China may still cling to the notion that only British and American accents are acceptable and intelligible.

In this case, Liu saw pedagogical value in switching or mixing codes and translation, yet felt guilty, hesitant and worried about these strategies. Even though ELF was considered to be useful, Liu herself did not feel that it was legitimate to adopt an ELF pedagogy.

Case Three: Gao

Gao held a multilingual perspective, which Macaro referred to as the optimal position. In contrast to how Liu felt about using ELF, Gao recognized the value of ELF use without having any pedagogical regrets. She regarded English use in the CFL classroom as a 'lubricant' (Butzkamm 1998) to create a 'harmonious and balanced teaching environment' (Senior 2006: 270).

To keep the class interactive is very important. I encourage my students to negotiate meanings in any languages they like as long as they truly understand what I'm teaching. Using English is a strategy for me in the class Whenever I have some new Chinese words that I anticipate that most of my students do not know, I will ask those students who are able to translate into English to do so in a louder voice. Then, the rest of the class would understand the meaning of that Chinese word through English.

Gao spoke against the complete dominance of the classroom teacher. She emphasized the importance of interaction and comprehension between teachers and students. She reported that she would like to see if students had really understood her instructions. Gao added that the class should have a rich cultural atmosphere. And English was the best, probably the only possible medium to use for introducing the Chinese culture in a multilingual classroom. She continued:

I'd like to make my class full of interesting Chinese culture. I want my students to know more about Chinese culture even if their Chinese proficiency remains limited. I translated those special Chinese cultural symbols, such as 春联 (chūnlián, couplets), 针灸 (zhēnjiǔ, acupuncture) into English. And I use very simple English to explain to my students. They had a lot of fun in my class... Otherwise, a class without new knowledge or interesting stories would be so boring.

As Gao pointed out, a content-vacuous class might not be suitable for adult international students. She found that a bilingual introduction to Chinese culture was entertaining for many of her students and made her class interesting. Gao also mentioned that even advanced students may need translations or interpretations now and then. Gao told a story of how she was made aware of language when she was requested to speak English by a group of students from Europe:

A group of Europeans came to me after the class and wondered if I spoke English. I said yes and then they were relieved. They started to complain about how frustrated they were in the first week in Beijing. They also told me about their difficulties in paying school fees, buying the right textbooks, logging in to the Internet... They said it's too hard for them to survive and some of them had already thought of quitting the program.

From Gao's perspective, language is not simply a means of expression or communication; rather, it is a practice that constructs, and is constructed by, the ways language learners understand their social surroundings and their possibilities for the future. Gao emphasized the importance of ELF for building a close relationship with students. She realized that international students of Chinese studying abroad needed time to adapt to the local culture and life style. ELF is a useful way for CFL teachers and their students to get together, inside and outside class, for study and for socializing. Gao further explained:

I took some time to reflect on my teaching approach and I developed a 'bilingual method'. For the beginners' Chinese class, I speak English most of the time during the first two weeks. I use plain English to introduce my teaching method and explain basic Chinese grammar to the class. It's a very effective transitional stage.

Gao designed a set of personalized teaching methods where ELF is frequently used for giving directions, building up relationships, managing classroom activities and checking comprehensibility. For this and many other reasons, Gao stressed the importance of CFL teachers using ELF to handle a multilingual and multicultural class. As she pointed out:

The beginners' class is definitely multilingual. CFL students in Beijing's universities usually make a multinational, multiethnic, multicultural class. Look, this class has 10 students, who are from at least five different countries, two from France, one from Russia, one from Sweden, and three from Korea... English is the only possible language for all of us to communicate in.

Gao had discovered the fact that CFL classrooms in Beijing are multilingual, and that English is the only shared language for teachers and students to communicate in a cross-cultural setting. According to Gao, English was used in her class, though she said that some of her students' English proficiency seemed limited. Gao also mentioned that beyond the classroom, English is equally important in many practical and personal ways for CFL teachers.

I majored in English at university My good command of English helped me get many part-time jobs and thus working experience. English is very important. If your English is not good enough, you won't get the chance to teach Chinese overseas, which is the dream of many CFL teachers.

As Gao described, English can bring extra opportunities. These include work experience, more opportunities to use English, and more importantly, the possibility to teach Chinese overseas. As a new CFL teacher in the department, Gao was surprised by the enthusiasm of her colleagues to win opportunities to go abroad. She found that CFL teachers were all expecting an enhancement of their social mobility through teaching CFL abroad, an opportunity only available for the few who are capable of teaching CFL through ELF.

What Influenced Their Beliefs?

Zhang, Liu and Gao's beliefs regarding the use of ELF in teaching CFL seem to have been influenced by many factors, including their English language learning experience, their English language proficiency, their beliefs about language and nation and their own foreign language identity.

English Language Learning Experience

Their beliefs seem to have been influenced by their own experiences as foreign language learners (Lortie 1975). All the three participants are native Chinese speakers and English is their second language. They said that they were trained to learn a foreign language by rote instead of through interpersonal communication. As Liu said,

I grew up in a small village. I had not spoken to any foreigner until I came to Beijing for university. I believe if I had had a chance to practice English with native speakers, my English would not be so broken. So when I teach CFL, I'll try to maximize the use of it as much as I can. It's our responsibility.

Liu considered the maximal use of Chinese as a prerequisite for being a 'responsible Chinese teacher'. Similarly, Zhang thought that his experience of learning English was not satisfactory due to his teachers' methods. He felt regret for not having had the opportunity to study English in an English-speaking country. Zhang said:

My English teachers were all native Chinese speakers. Their English was not very good, not like native English speakers. They spoke Chinese all the time in class and left us little time to practice If I had had a chance, I would have rather gone to America and lived there for a few years. It's definitely the best way to learn English.

Zhang supported the claim that learning is best achieved when teachers and students use the target language exclusively. However, he seemed to ignore the fact that many of his students had only limited or no prior knowledge of Chinese when

they started his classes. In contrast, for Zhang and many other Chinese, English has been a compulsory subject since grade three in primary school (Braine 2005). Therefore, Chinese students going abroad to study English in English-speaking countries are not authentic absolute beginners of English. It is noteworthy that none of the three participants had learnt a foreign language in a multilingual setting, and thus working as a CFL teacher had in fact brought challenges to them in terms of coping with a cross-cultural learning environment.

Moreover, there is a gap between what the CFL teachers learn when acquiring English and the English they actually need as CFL teachers. Gao recalled that she sometimes hesitated to speak English due to her lack of English vocabulary associated with Chinese culture. For example, Gao said:

When I first got to teach Chinese, one of my students asked me what Chinese people eat for breakfast. I suddenly found I don't know how to say 豆浆 (dòujiāng, soybean milk), 馄饨 (húntun, won ton), 包子 (bāozi, steamed bun), 油条 (yóutiáo, deep fried dough)... All that we have learnt in our English class are western food terms: 'pizza', 'hamburger' and 'pasta'. I think it's very important for CFL teachers to learn enough English terms to be able to translate specific Chinese symbols.

As we can see from Gao, what they have learnt in their English class is English which will prepare them for an English-speaking country. This is a problem which needs to be addressed so that CFL teachers can also explain Chinese culture in English, especially in a beginners' class.

English Language Proficiency

Whereas Gao was quite confident, Liu and Zhang both reported a low confidence in their ability to speak English. However, all of them agreed that competence in English is of great importance to the career development of CFL teachers. The lack of proficiency in English has frequently been described as 'a bottleneck' for the development of the CFL teacher (Su 2006). Some previous studies (e.g. Deng 2008) have shown that the lack of English proficiency is a serious impediment to CFL teachers. Liu worried whether her knowledge of English was enough for her to manage an interactive class. She said:

Foreign language teaching in Europe and America is very different. Teachers seem to have a very equal relationship with their students. I want to learn from them, but I'm afraid my English is too limited to develop a close relationship with my students. I'd rather not bother with my broken English. I don't want to cause extra trouble or see my students laugh at me.

It is understandable that CFL teachers avoid using English because their English competence is not good. For Liu, speaking in 'broken' English would somehow diminish her authority in class, which is built upon being a native Chinese speaker. Liu continued:

English is very important to us. We are now encouraged to publish papers in English journals and promote the teaching and study of Chinese in the wider world. If your English isn't good enough, reading academic journals in English would be rather difficult, which will become a stumbling stone for career advancement in universities.

Liu's perspective was echoed by Gao, who found value in ELF pedagogy and communicated in ELF effortlessly with students. In the interview, Gao gave an example of how she used ELF pedagogically in correcting a mistake made by one of her students. She started speaking in a mixed English and Chinese code when she told this story. Gao said:

My student said 我是病 (*wǒ shì bìng, I am sick). It's a very common mistake for beginners. So I told my student *it is a mistake*. 是 (shì, to be) in Chinese cannot be used in this way. You should say 我病了 (wǒ bìng le, I'm sick) because the adjective can work as a predicate in Chinese, and no link verbs are needed.

It can be seen from Gao's example that a good command of English could benefit the class in providing comparative language knowledge. It is definitely an advantage for CFL teachers to be able to understand English linguistics and use it for teaching in a CFL class.

National Identity and Codeswitching

As mentioned in Zhang's example, Samuel Ting's refusal to speak English at the Nobel Prize ceremony in 1976 brought pride to native Chinese speakers. In this context, Zhang expressed a firm belief in the exclusive use of Chinese in the language classroom:

Responsible Chinese teachers should be role models for their students and help them speak Chinese like a native. As a Chinese teacher, we have a responsibility to keep the purity of Chinese language. . . . When I speak Chinese, I do not switch codes to English. After all, Chinese class is not a place for us to show off our English. Only 假洋鬼子 (jiǎ yáng guǐzi, fake foreigners) switch codes.

'Jiǎ yáng guǐzi' refers to local Chinese who pretend to act or speak like foreigners. Such people can be easily identified from their use of mixed English-Chinese code when they speak Chinese. Yet English is considered by many to be a threat to the purity of the Chinese language and even harmful to national cohesion. Zhang's attitudes reflect the current battle of 'saving Chinese from English' (*The Economist* 2010). Huang Youyi, the director of the China International Publishing Group, proposed to take preventive measures to preserve the purity of Chinese on the 2010 Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. Huang said:

'if we don't pay attention and don't take measures to stop the expansion of mingling Chinese and English, Chinese won't be a pure language in a couple of years. In the long run, Chinese will lose its role as an independent linguistic system for passing on information and expressing human feelings.' (Wang 2010b)

The banning of the use of English acronyms in the Chinese media might have some impact on both students and teachers by highlighting the relationship between language and national pride.

Zhang also thought that using English would make students from Korea and Japan (the majority of CFL students in Beijing) uncomfortable. As he said:

It's very dangerous for a Chinese teacher to use English in class. Students from Korea and Japan and many other places in Asia do not speak English at all. It will cause injustice in class. Students would question, why doesn't my teacher use my mother tongue? Why English? We want to keep the class equal. We should not make our students feel that we only like to communicate with students from the US and UK.

It is clearly idealistic to suggest that each individual has the right to speak their mother tongue in the classroom; and it is impractical to expect Chinese language teachers to speak all languages. But equality and language justice are not maintained by depriving people completely of their language rights by insisting on the Chinese-only principle. In this case, English becomes the baby thrown out with the bathwater.

English Language Identity

The teacher participants' foreign language identity was believed to be a crucial factor influencing their beliefs about the use of English. Interestingly, only Gao who supported the optimal position was comfortable being labeled as a bilingual, while Zhang and Liu, who supported the virtual and maximal positions, either rejected the notion or found it problematic. While they treated English as a useful tool, they did not regard it as necessary for their identities. When asked to comment on their foreign language identity, Liu argued:

Are Chinese teachers bilingual? No ... I don't think so. I do know that English is the first foreign language for most Chinese teachers ... but it is problematic if I am regarded as a bilingual teacher ... It's very wrong to put English onto the same level as Chinese.

Zhang's attitudes resembled Liu's. They were both satisfied with being monolingual but standard Chinese speakers and hesitated to accept English as part of their linguistic identity. To some extent, Liu even regarded those who used English in CFL class as unpatriotic. Tsui (2005) argues that many Asian countries are in the process of reinventing national identity at the same time as they are 'legitimizing' the hegemony of English by making it a central feature of national development. In most cases, this paradox is resolved by appropriating English in ways which do least damage to their national language and identity. For example, Liu used English in her class, but she rejected it as part of her identity. Then, another paradox lies in the fact that English is the first step for the Chinese language to reach the world.

5 Discussion and Conclusion

This chapter has drawn on interview data to explore teachers' beliefs about ELF use in the CFL classroom in Beijing. Three categories of beliefs were identified by adopting Macaro's (2005, 2009) terms of the virtual, maximal and optional positions. Three CFL teachers provided explicit and consistent opinions on the issue of ELF use in the CFL classroom. Their beliefs were found to have been influenced

considerably by their English learning experience, English language proficiency, national identity and English language identity. An important finding was the fact that ELF is used to interpret Chinese words and culture for pedagogical purposes, to manage the classroom and build rapport with students for practical purposes. ELF is also found to be used for enhancing CFL teachers' academic research ability and increasing their social mobility through giving them the opportunity to teach Chinese overseas.

Some important implications emerged through the discussions of CFL teachers' beliefs about ELF pedagogy and the factors that influenced their beliefs. The study suggests that the teacher participants are in need of guidelines or theoretical support in developing an ELF pedagogy to meet the needs of multilingual international students of Chinese. First of all, it is suggested that CFL teachers rethink and reexamine the beliefs and identities they have built upon their own experiences as L2 learners, their teacher training, their teaching experiences, official policies, etc. Secondly, while it is understandable that the majority of CFL teachers majored in Chinese literature or Chinese linguistics without appropriate knowledge in foreign language teaching and learning (Zhang 2006: 310–311), as the world embraces the Chinese language, CFL teachers are increasingly called upon to incorporate an understanding of second language acquisition or applied linguistics into their teaching (Lam 2005: 189). Thirdly, this study suggests that a good command of English can benefit CFL teachers in several ways: (1) by gaining a bilingual ability to do linguistic analysis between Chinese and English and a sensitive awareness of the differences between Chinese and English; (2) by enhancing their bilingual reading ability which can benefit their possibilities for academic advancement, give them a wider perspective on international research exchange and enable them to introduce the rich research resources of CFL teaching and learning into the world of L2 studies; (3) by giving them confidence as bilingual or multilingual CFL teachers who understand the hardships, joys and strategies of learning a foreign language, thus also providing them with good interpersonal skills for international communication and advantages when it comes to teaching and living overseas. Since language beliefs are dynamic and situated, teachers' comments on ELF use in CFL classrooms are inevitably influenced by the recent economic development in China, and the need for internationalization.

6 Chinese as Lingua Franca

The popularity and power of a language follows the power of the people who speak the language. Though today power resides in English-speaking countries, especially the United States, which has led others to learn the language, economists from e.g. the Pew Research Center (2011) report that China has already overshadowed the U.S. and will replace the U.S. as the world's leading superpower. This view is especially widespread in Western Europe, where at least six-in-ten in France (72 %), Spain (67 %), Britain (65 %) and Germany (61 %) see China overtaking the U.S. In

such a context, an increasingly frequent public and academic discussion is whether Chinese will be the new English (Tsung and Cruickshank 2011: xvi). Some have doubted the possibility of Chinese taking over from English as an international lingua franca, while others have said that it has already become one (Yasukata 2009). Such a perspective sounds more political than educational, however, and is not based on any empirical studies, but rather to some extent on an ambition to promote the international status of Chinese and make it another international lingua franca on a par with ELF. As revealed by the findings of this study, however, even frontline native Chinese teachers seek help from English as a communication tool and use English as a research source. As Boyle puts it, “at this stage in the last few years of the millennium, it does look as if China will continue to want English, and want it badly” (Boyle 2000: 15).

Although the world embraces CFL, and the Chinese government strives to promote Chinese, even enthusiastic proponents of Chinese do not predict that it will overtake English as the world’s most commonly used language in the near future. As Jacques notes, although Chinese is the most widely spoken language in the world, far exceeding English, the vast majority of Chinese speakers live in China; English, by contrast, has flown the nest (Jacques 2009: 115). Murata and Jenkins argue that it is a well-established fact that during the past four centuries, the English language has spread around the world, and that, as a result, it is used for a wide range of purposes by many millions of people for whom it is not a mother tongue in the traditional sense of the term (Murata and Jenkins 2009: 40). China’s decision to make English a key part of its strategy for economic development has had a galvanizing impact on neighboring countries where enthusiasm for English was in danger of waning. Not only is China setting the pace, but until countries in the region are able to develop their national proficiency in Chinese, English will provide their main means of communicating with China (Graddol 2006: 95).

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