Multilingual Education

Robyn Moloney
Hui Ling Xu *Editors*

Exploring Innovative Pedagogy in the Teaching and Learning of Chinese as a Foreign Language

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Foreword

It is interesting to reflect that in a recent survey of priority foreign languages in official curricula across the world over the past 150 years (Cha and Ham 2008), Chinese is totally absent. According to this analysis, since the middle of the 1880s, a struggle for educational pre-eminence occurred between German, French and English, with their relative fortunes buffeted by major world events, especially the great shifts of geopolitical power occasioned by war, military strategy and economic/technological predominance. Germany's technological supremacy during the late nineteenth century saw its language favoured in many countries, but it ceded space to French and English through the conflicts of the first half of the twentieth century. The latter two dominated language preferences for the subsequent decades despite conceding space to Russian under the ideological divisions of the Cold War. With the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, Russian declined and then collapsed as a favoured foreign language of choice, with French ceding significant space as well, leaving the field of 'first foreign language' almost entirely to English.

No depiction of such titanic tussles between soft power codes (languages) of the great world powers in the next 50 years is conceivable without a strong story about Chinese.

This 150-year history of language selection coincides with the creation of practically all the language teaching methodologies and most of the language acquisition and psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic theories that frame how educators think and do teaching today. Most of the intellectual legacy of language education has been framed in and around a small number of European/World languages. Inclusion of Chinese among the most widely taught languages globally, with its unique linguistic and communicative features and its historical specificity, will represent a further impetus and refinement in innovation in all language education, theory and practice. An obvious instance is the computer keyboard I am using to write this foreword. The keyboard design directly mirrors the orthography of the languages in whose economies the digital and computing worlds were incubated, establishing a normative presence for Western semantic systems and Latin alphabet-based writing.

As the many excellent chapters in this important and useful volume show, this inheritance is being rapidly transformed to accommodate a new world in which

Chinese takes its rightful place. The volume performs what it proclaims. It is about innovation in pedagogy occasioned by the seemingly insatiable worldwide demand for teaching and learning Chinese as a foreign language, CFL, but because the focus is study of Chinese by non-native speakers, such innovation can only happen through a fusion of perspectives from Chinese teachers of Chinese and Western/non-Chinese teachers of Chinese.

The enterprise is a shared one because of who the learners are and the multifarious purposes for the study of Chinese by masses of young people across the world, including large numbers of ethnic Chinese young people living in the vast global diaspora of Chinese communities. A new pedagogy, or rather, a range of new pedagogies, and the theories which animate and underlie such new pedagogies are emerging from demand for CFL. These respond to the unique characteristics of Chinese but also to the diverse settings and purposes in which its study occurs and the new economic/strategic realities that make it all necessary. The globalisation that is bringing these many changes about is evident in the sites of innovation reflected in the volume. The prominence of Australia is one instance of this. Absent in past eras of language pedagogical innovation, Australia today is forging a strong presence as a site of innovation and experimentation in effective teaching and learning of CFL.

Allied to the new sites and reasons for expansion of CFL are the foundational consequences of what is happening with how the world is networked and how we communicate. The chapters of the volume dedicated to discussing technologies, and the multi-literacies that new technologies facilitate, are impressive. Here we see experimentation in which speech, print, moving image and other semiotic practices are combined, in real-time or delayed-time teaching and learning. This isn't unique to Chinese, but the specific demands of Chinese, tones, characters and a vast range of spoken differences 'tied' together with non-sound-specific script suggest that CFL will be a stimulus to wider educational transformations in the role and place of language learning.

Some chapters discuss long established methods (European CLIL and constructivist pedagogies, both devised in settings where Chinese was not a featured language of education) and show fascinating detail of how these are adapting to CFL.

These radical and deep changes, and the special character of Chinese, produce not only a need for innovation but a refinement in the notion of innovation itself. To teach CFL successfully today requires old teachers and new teachers, and old learners and new learners, to be in dialogue. By old teachers I mean traditional educators and their methods and values, and by traditional learners, I am referring to those for whom learning Standard Chinese meant the extension of a dialect form into a standard literary form. Interaction in research and teaching between these groups with learners of Chinese who have become its teachers, non-native speaker teachers, and who can offer a great deal to the acquisition of the language by those who have no familial or cultural grounding in the language is a source of great innovative potential. This kind of potential is evident in the compelling narratives featured in several chapters of the volume.

For learners studying CFL today involves hybrid texts combining still and moving images, sound, colour, hypertext, instantaneous links and multidirectional referencing. These are the new normal of second language learning deeply felt in Chinese

experiencing radical transformation in the visual representation of its historically venerated script. These changes all occur on devices like iPads and tablets and smartphones, embedded with an array of e-learning tools—virtual life worlds in which the very term mobility itself takes on new meaning. With the immediate checking possibilities of electronic glosses and online translations and pronunciation guides, peer learning, tandem translations and other networking systems, the task of teaching itself is moving towards management of an array of readily accessible un-mediated language input resources. The volume addresses these changes at both school and university levels, with children and adults, and reports an array of important thinking and new practice that suggest improved attitude of learners and the promise of accelerated acquisition through more exposure targeted to the interests and learning styles of individual students. Teaching innovation in promoting literacy in Chinese therefore becomes innovation in handling what are scarcely settled innovations in the modalities of modern communication itself.

A recurring theme in the volume, sometimes discussed explicitly and sometimes implied, is about pedagogical and linguistic authority. The standard written form carries ancient authority and high cultural prestige, and innovation needs to 'justify' itself pedagogically against criteria from both tradition and the needs of contemporary life. Here the role of 'native' institutions, such as mainland Chinese textbooks, Confucius Institutes and native teachers, represent one plane of authority and norms and come into interaction, not always easily negotiated, with the interests and circumstances of new learners and teachers and researchers who do not have Chinese ethnicity or language background. This interaction is not, of course, unique to Chinese, but at its present stage of rapid growth and promotion by education systems around the world in a context of shortage of non-'background' teachers, it is a particularly acute, and interesting, dilemma.

The dialogues these encounters require are amply represented in the volume and constitute an exciting phase in language pedagogical innovation in general which will feed into general language pedagogy.

Robyn Moloney and Hui Ling Xu, the diligent editors of the volume, are correct therefore to frame the overall task of the book as responding to a 'need' for innovative pedagogy. This need comes about because many parents want their children to learn CFL, education systems are competing to offer strong programs in CFL and public discourse and media attention is often focused on its study. The editors supply a response to this need through perspectives drawn from a wide array of second and foreign language settings of CFL. There will also be complexity in provision of CFL because the spread of Chinese precedes the spread of its mass teaching by many decades. The many varieties of Chinese have long been present in communities where ancient and then modern forms of Chinese were taught as classical and foreign languages. Now CFL is expanding into these communities as a language of mass learning and increasingly as a community or heritage language as well.

We need to keep in mind that language education systems still struggle to achieve success for many learners in 'traditional' languages of schooling and, in English-speaking countries, even in languages that are direct cognates of English. Innovation, therefore, is needed for all second language education if our aim is to increase the number of learners who succeed, but these education systems must now redouble

their commitment to innovation to respond to the worldwide demand for CFL. This can only occur through efforts to diversify pedagogy, to understand students and teachers and to comprehend the implications for teaching of new kinds of communication itself in the new transnational spaces and discourses we all increasingly inhabit.

The first part of the volume focuses on the contemporary population of learners enrolled in CFL and the learning contexts in which they are engaged. One promising innovation for beginners in environments with limited curriculum time is on pedagogies which integrate mainstream subject matter with language study. These 'integration' models are potentially time efficient because careful syllabus design can reinforce core content and encourage learners in autonomous self-directed study. The chapters which discuss sociocultural aspects of CFL enrich our understanding of personal development through study abroad schemes, attitudinal and intellectual growth in intercultural enquiry in class and critical thinking skills.

Allied to learner changes are studies examining how teachers are changed through CFL. Featuring reflections, research and practical experiences and professional and personal narrative histories of twenty-three teachers from a range of national and linguistic backgrounds, the volume underscores how wide the CFL conversation is and how broad it must be to effectively tackle the large challenge placed before educators of a Chinese that has broken out of the confines of university sinology or area studies into mainstream community life and demand from the 'ordinary' public. In this new realm, as the editors note, old authorities about the right and proper way to teach Chinese will have to make room for new voices posing new questions about Chinese in new sites of learning for new populations of learners.

These questions take on additional interest because one of the abiding cultural stereotypes about Chinese civilisation concerns its assumed procedural rigidity, including in education, an image comprised of transmissive modes of education through pliant unquestioning learners and authoritative inflexible teachers.

The volume has an important role to play in disseminating experimental and conceptual/theoretical work about CFL. It will take its place in a growing conversation of the responses we must all make to properly admit Chinese to a secure and permanent place among the important languages we teach and learn in the contemporary world. It is more than an educational endeavour but a need to accommodate to our rapidly changing environment in which China, Chinese culture and Chinese forms of communication will feature more prominently.

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Reference

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Contents

Taking the Initiative to Innovate: Pedagogies for Chinese as a Foreign Language

Robyn Moloney and Hui Ling Xu

Abstract This chapter frames the history and rationale for a research-based examination of new modes of teaching and learning within Chinese as a Foreign Language (CFL). The chapter investigates the nature of innovative pedagogies, offers a brief overview of the history of the teaching of CFL, identifies the current challenges in CFL, and observes new developments emerging through recent CFL research publications. The chapter highlights three areas of teacher knowledge needed: understanding of learners, understanding of teachers themselves, and understanding of resources available which offer new opportunities. Integrating learner, teacher and technology, the chapter concludes with an overview of the studies in the volume. The chapter both disseminates innovative work being done in CFL, to create a greater circle of influence, and exemplifies an inclusive diversified and creative community of practice for CFL.

1 Introduction

The globalized spread of the teaching of Chinese as a Foreign Language (CFL) is creating demand on educators to diversify their pedagogy to be effective in many different educational contexts. This entails new teacher understandings in three areas: the students in new contexts, themselves in new contexts, and the resources which deliver best learning outcomes in those new contexts. Tensions may arise between resilient educational values embedded in older language pedagogies, and values and assumptions inherent in evolving innovative pedagogies. This chapter frames the rationale for this volume's research-based examination of new approaches

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to teaching and learning in CFL. Innovation can be defined as the application of better solutions to meet new requirements or needs (O'Sullivan and Dooley 2008). CFL is facing complex new requirements in new international teaching environments, and it will be enhanced by the application of better pedagogic solutions to meet those needs. A number of years have passed since the challenges of creating success for CFL teaching in Australia have been identified (Orton 2008, 2011), and some significant progress has been made in teacher education (Orton 2014; Singh and Han 2014). Highlighting the need for innovation in CFL teaching and learning, Orton has written that we need a "mindset which can appreciate innovation" (2008, p. 38). The rationale of this volume is to illustrate that mind-set, through the provision of role-model scholar-teachers and the initiatives they are taking in innovative practice.

In constructing the rationale of the volume, this chapter investigates the nature of innovative pedagogies, offers a brief overview of the history of the teaching of CFL, identifies the current challenges in CFL, and observes new developments emerging through recent CFL research publications. The studies in this volume exemplify the three areas of teacher learning needed, as identified above, that is, understanding of learners, understanding of teachers themselves, and understanding of resources available which offer new opportunities. Integrating learner, teacher and technology, the chapter concludes with an overview of the studies in the volume.

Any volume published in the Western arena, about the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language, must be inherently an intercultural collaborative enterprise. With an understanding of the "East meets West" dimension, or 'middle ground', to borrow Gu (顾泠沅 1999)'s term, such a volume must explore the discoveries of teachers from Chinese backgrounds working in diverse classrooms and their critical perceptions of the similarities and differences between educational schema. It must also explore the discoveries of teachers with Western educational backgrounds, finding ways to teach Chinese which align with the constructivist learning model which has shaped their understanding of goals and roles. We are reminded by Liu (2011) that tensions and exchanges in this area are long-standing, and that fixed lines drawn between teaching ideologies are unhelpful. All pedagogies are clearly the dynamic products of the merging of local and imported models, political and social constructions to meet the needs of a Zeitgeist. Both groups of teachers, however, informed by theoretical understanding, are together engaged in devising for their students the best possible educational outcomes, using the newest tools, setting up innovative social interactions and engaging learning spaces, to exploit the inherent rich and deep interest of the bridging between people, languages, cultures, values, and behaviours.

This volume, due to the professional practical interests of its editors, (a language teacher educator, and a tertiary CFL educator) is squarely focussed on initiatives in innovative language pedagogy. As such, it is wary of cultural comparisons which may produce essentialized assumptions about "Chinese perspective", and aware of the emerging critique (Dervin 2010, 2011) of studies and teaching practice (Cole and Meadows 2013) which perpetuate fixed understandings of culture, particularly in studies involving Chinese students. Ma's (2014) collection of studies of how educators from China and the United States learnt about and from one another concludes with this useful reflection on the cultural evolution of the two perspectives on teaching, that:

> *…both can be strengthened with complementary elements from the other. The purpose of learning about and from each other is not to lose one's own identity or just to become the other. Rather, each needs to learn from other sources in order to outgrow its own limitations and become better and stronger than it would be otherwise* (Ma 2014, p. 173).

Similarly, in compiling this volume, our purpose has been to contribute to CFL education professional discourse in two ways.

Firstly our goal has been to collect and disseminate the initiatives being taken in innovation in CFL, to create a circle of influence in effective teaching practice. The volume provides a new resource, profiling use of new technologies, new classroom models, and consideration of intercultural learning within CFL, underpinned in each study by theoretical understanding of the learning involved. The research-based studies all essentially reflect the author's investment in their CFL classroom, and demonstrate the authors' critical understandings of why the use of new technologies, new classroom models, and new teacher knowledge, are all essential elements of CFL development in educational contexts such as Australia. Secondly the volume wishes to model an inclusive diversified community of practice (Lave and Wenger 1991, 2002; Wenger 1998) which values diversity in practice and in teacher beliefs. This book represents the work of CFL teachers from a variety of backgrounds and training, all of whom have important and authoritative work to contribute to the CFL field. It is evident that the CFL teacher community is today more extensive and more diversified than its academic origins, which may no longer have the role, or the right, to define the parameters of how Chinese 'should be taught' (Moloney and Xu 2015). Expertise appropriate to different contexts must be recognised. This collection makes it clear that the CFL teacher community of practice has become decentralised, with many new autonomous and authoritative community bases producing innovative and effective pedagogy.

2 What Are Innovative Pedagogies?

The notion of innovation in education is not a new one. Even a brief search reveals a long and detailed history of innovation in education. As the social, economic and cultural make-up of a nation or community changes, and perceives new needs, the desire to critique existing practice, explore and try new things has been a constant and fundamental feature of education (Bishop 1986; Miles 1964; Maier 1971). A long list of innovations, learning models, and earlier technologies may have come and gone in classrooms, but yet have moved educational thinking along, each in their own way. Innovation may include incremental improvement of existing practice, transformation of curriculum, or a confronting re-evaluation of what learning goals can or should be. The notion of an innovative pedagogy must always involve examining the expectations and characteristics of the educational framework from which it emerges, and both the teachers and the learners to whom the innovation is being introduced.

Creativity of thought and practice has been regarded as the building block of innovation. The creativity 'process' seen in the studies of this volume, exhibits a

number of phases: preparation, incubation, illumination and verification (Wallas 1926). The volume represents a fifth phase (Kao 1989), elaboration, when the idea or the practice is structured and finalised in a form that can be communicated to others. Innovation results in the creation of new knowledge and learning within a community. Even when failures occur (for example, Moloney's 2013 'cautionary tale'), the learning gained can be a valuable asset for the community. The scope of innovation exists both within the individual teacher and the collective knowledge of the teacher community. This collective knowledge is increasingly evident with the advent of online CFL teacher network communities: for example, the 汉语老师 HanyuLaoshi Show webinar, for Australian CFL teacher professional development (http://education.unimelb.edu.au/cttc/professional_development/online_programs/hanyu_laoshi_show). It has been noted that communities with "knowledge reservoirs" (O'Sullivan and Dooley 2008) are in a better position to store and share this knowledge so that it will move innovation on, generate more ideas, and produce adaptations in different contexts.

It is common in such overviews to speak of the "drivers" of innovation. In the case of CFL pedagogy, the search for innovative pedagogy is being driven in the bigger picture by the global economic rationale for the production of graduates competent in Chinese language and cultural knowledge. As noted, this has seen expansion of CFL enrolments internationally, but not the production of sustained successful high-level CFL achievement (Orton 2008). The studies in this volume document however that innovation is also happily affording new personal interactions for learners with the civilizational and cultural reasons to pursue Chinese study (Lo Bianco 2013).

Teachers at all levels are the leaders driving innovative pedagogy for CFL, but they need support from their professional bodies, and from policy. Individually they are important as leaders within their teaching institutions and professional community. However, research has shown that effective support for innovation must include institutional leadership. Innovation needs to be a systemic phenomenon (Fagerberg et al. 2006). This must include school faculty heads, school principals, university departmental heads, CFL academics, *Hanban* (The Office of Chinese Language Council International), pre-service teacher trainers, and deliverers of in-service teacher professional development. It needs leadership that is flexible, open to new ideas, is prepared to allow distributed leadership in areas of specialization and expertise, builds trust and gives confidence to members who are trying new practices, and is prepared to commit resources. These are all characteristics of an emerging new community of practice for CFL. To understand the significance of this change, we briefly review the origins and shifts in CFL practice.

3 A Brief Overview of the History and Current State of CFL

The teaching of Chinese to non-Chinese speakers as a foreign language is not a recent phenomenon, as expanding the Chinese language to its neighbouring countries and regions had always been held by successive ancient Chinese rulers to be an

important national language policy (Zhang 张西平 2008; Lo Bianco 2013). The teaching of Chinese to Westerners began in ancient times, which can be traced back to the Tang dynasty in the seventh to ninth century (Tsung and Cruickshank 2011). In modern China, the history of teaching Chinese to non-Chinese speakers began in 1950 when basic Chinese language training courses were offered to some Eastern European exchange students at Qinghua university (Zhao 赵金铭 2006; Sun 孙德金 2009). Chinese language courses were later extended to a number of other universities in Beijing as more foreign students from other parts of the world such as Western Europe, Asia and Africa came to study short term Chinese courses or to gain Chinese language proficiency in order to undertake formal university education in China. From the 1960s small numbers of Chinese teachers were also sent abroad to conduct Chinese language courses. While within China there were some ups and downs along the road of teaching Chinese to foreign students, as a result of the rise and decline in national power and influence (cf. Gao 高增霞 2008), CFL gained greater momentum in the late 1980s after China opened its door to the outside world. It was also this period that saw the beginning of the development of teaching Chinese as a foreign language as an independent discipline, with efforts such as the creation of a number of journals devoted to CFL research, such as "Language Teaching and Research" (1979), "Chinese Teaching in the World" (1987); the setting up of local and national research organizations, such as "the Language Teaching and Research Society of Beijing Language Institute" (1984), "Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language Research Society of the Chinese Education Academy" (1983), as well as the design and offering of bachelor and master degrees of CFL teacher training courses in various universities (Wang et al. 2013; Zhao 赵金铭 2006).

Almost five decades later, along with globalization and China's increasing interaction with the outside world and rising economic and political power, there has been a global "heat wave" in the learning of Chinese. Currently, there are about 100 countries with more than 2500 universities offering Chinese language subjects (Zhou et al. forth) while it is estimated that the number of students studying Chinese worldwide is at over 400 million (Xia and Guo 夏日光, 郭奕 2012). In Australia, for example, with its close proximity to Asia and the Federal government's incentives to learn major Asian languages, the number of students enrolled in learning Chinese is on a steady increase. For example, by 2008, there were about 84,000 students studying Chinese in 319 schools (Orton 2008), but the number has grown much higher since then. The same situation can be observed in the tertiary sector, where almost all universities and colleges offer Chinese programs. Although there is no recent estimate of tertiary Chinese language learners, the increasing rate of 60 % between 2001 and 2006 (cf. White and Baldauf 2006) is a clear indication of an upward trend.

4 Challenges

An increasing global demand for Chinese language education must be matched by a sufficient supply of qualified teachers. However, teacher shortage is widespread. In response to this challenge, the Chinese government has made investment in

supporting Chinese language education in the world. Most notable and important initiatives include the setting up of Confucius Institutes in various countries in the world, with the number reaching 400 in over 100 countries (Xia and Guo 夏日光, 郭奕 2012), as well as the 'Going Out' program. The latter involves sending thousands of volunteer Chinese teachers, usually with only short term training, to undertake Chinese language teaching in primary, secondary and in fewer cases, tertiary sectors in various countries. By 2014, *Hanba* has sent over 30,000 volunteers to more about 120 countries (Xu and Moloney, this volume). Parallel in strategic importance to the 'Going Out' is the 'Inviting In' program, designed in response to not only the shortage of qualified teachers, but also to calls for 'localization', reiterated by the director of *Hanban* in its ninth Confucius Institute Conference (Chen and Yang 陈悦, 杨伏山 2014). 'Localization' refers to the use of local teachers for CFL teaching, development of local teaching materials and pedagogies, in the recognition of the challenging need for adaptation in CFL practice. According to Lü (吕蕴鸽 2010), Tsung and Cruickshank (2011), Xu and Moloney (2014a, b), the diversity is reflected in many aspects: in learner make up, that is, their linguistic and cultural backgrounds, learning goals and motivations, learning styles, local teaching modes, and the more complex make up of institutions offering Chinese courses. Thus, it has been recognized as an important strategy to sustain CFL growth if overseas students can be trained to be qualified CFL teachers to return to engage in teaching and developing locally suitable materials and methods in their home country.

The biggest challenge facing CFL remains pedagogy. Many scholars have voiced concerns that CFL is still primarily dominated by a traditional pedagogic approach (Li, this volume; Diaz, this volume; Moloney and Xu 2012; Xu and Moloney, this volume; Wang et al. 2013, amongst others). The essence of such an approach can best be summarized by Hu's (2002) description of how English is taught in China, reflecting the commonality in approach to all foreign language teaching methodologies in China. According to Hu, the traditional approach to teaching English is characterized as mainly grammar-translation, memorization of structural patterns and vocabulary, rote learning, and systematic study of grammatical patterns (Hu 2002). This has been influenced by the values inherent in pedagogy for teaching of Chinese as a first language, where textbooks are treated as the main source of content and knowledge and the written language including its logographic system are greatly emphasised. Although aware of the dangers of essentializing the educational beliefs of a very diverse social group, Hu (ibid) claims that a 'traditional' foreign language approach in China in general does appear to draw support from the principles of Chinese educational schema. Under this schema, learning is considered a serious matter that requires deep commitment and painstaking effort. As education also concerns moral development, teaching should encourage imitation of socially approved models and collective orientations but should discourage individuality and fulfilment of personal needs and self-expression. Teaching is essentially a 'mimetic' model, characterised by the transmission of knowledge through an imitative and repetitive process as the teacher dominating this process. The teacher role is elevated to an authority of knowledge and thus, any pedagogical practice that would jeopardize such a role is difficult to adopt. As for learners and learning,

students should have positive attitudes and be keen on pursuing more knowledge. Furthermore, in line with the transmission model of teaching, students should maintain a high level of receptiveness, whole-heartedly embracing the knowledge from their teacher or books. To achieve these goals, they must take learning seriously and must have diligence, fortitude perseverance and patience (Hu 2002, p. 100).

Educated under variations of this schema, many CFL teachers often expect to adopt a didactic, teacher-centred and authoritative approach (cf. Li, this volume) in their CFL classroom. This is problematic in the Western context. In Australia for example, at least 90 % of CFL teachers are of Chinese background and received their formative education in China (Orton 2008). CFL teachers report that their educational beliefs refer back to their own education, and that even after many years they hold on to what they believe is the right way of teaching Chinese to non-Chinese speakers (Moloney and Xu 2012). As such, despite CFL's rapid expansion, a traditional CFL pedagogy has been found to be ineffective in sustaining students' interests and retaining strong enrolment numbers to higher levels of study (cf Orton 2008, 2010; Liu and Bianco 2007; Moloney and Xu 2015). As Xu and Moloney (this volume) and Li (this volume) point out, to work in Western-based school contexts, CFL teachers have to sometime un-learn previous practice, then learn how to teach effectively to local learners, gain understanding of the school system, the domestic culture, the characteristics of the students, and gain a new critical view of both themselves and their local colleagues.

5 Emerging Developments in CFL Research and Practice

In the past decade, CFL research, reflecting new development in CFL practice, has seen a stronger critical focus on effective pedagogy. In China, a review by Zhao's (赵金铭 2010) review of research output in CFL in the five decades since 1950, confirms the growing body of research studies devoted to pedagogy development and innovation. Such effort shows recognition of the limitations of traditional practice and of the urgent need to change, if CFL is to have a sustainable and healthy growth to meet the growing demand and new needs.

An emerging community of scholars is leading new research in CFL pedagogy, driven by new understandings of foreign language learning and teaching against the background of a changing world in an era of globalization (Kramsch 2014). Demonstrating this, we acknowledge as a sample, a series published by the Chinese Language Teachers Association in America, including, *Chinese Pedagogy: An Emerging field* (McGinnis 1996), *Research among learners of Chinese as a foreign language* (Everson and Shen 2010), and the collections of studies in the volumes by Tsung and Cruickshank (2011), Everson and Xiao (2011), and Zhou et al. (2014).

In our attention to these publications, we observe several developments in pedagogical development and innovation, similarly reflected also in the studies of this volume. We observe the continued exploration of the use of technology in addressing the needs of a more mobile and interactive world population (e.g. Henderson et al. 2009; Pasfield-Neofitou, Grant & Huang, this volume; McLaren and Hooper,

this volume). We observe new attention to the beliefs, identity, and knowledge construction of the teacher as essential to the teaching and learning process (e.g. Lü 吕蕴鸽 2010; Singh and Han 2014; Xu & Moloney, this volume). We observe investigation of learner response (Duff et al. 2013) and how to foster a learner centred environment, such as enabling autonomous learning (Wang, this volume). We observe a greater importance attached to sociocultural aspects of learning, as for example, an intercultural approach to CFL (e.g. Zhang 张英 2007; Moloney & Xu, this volume). We observe investigation of the nature of a 'middle ground' in CFL. Educators interested in cross-cultural study investigate the interaction of "East meets West" (Ma 2014; Ma and Wang 2014). This is reflected in CFL teachers' caution about not 'throwing the baby out with the bathwater', that is, the danger and loss involved, in discarding all elements of traditional way of teaching Chinese language (cf. Moloney and Xu 2015).

In sum, we see the development of "a process of modification, adaptation and transformation in a particular socio-cultural context, creating hybrid kinds of pedagogy" (Deng 2011, p. 561). An interesting hybrid is developing, where, while teachers respect the particular characteristics of Chinese that must be acquired, they find innovative pedagogies to deliver that learning. CFL teachers are seeing, like Ang (2003), "hybridity as a site of innovation" (Ang, ibid. p. 152). We believe that the studies of this volume demonstrate that a modernised hybrid CFL practice is being achieved, with collaborative and inclusive professional leadership across a new and diverse CFL teacher community.

6 Learners, Teachers, and Technology: The Volume

Martina Mollering's overview of CFL policy development in Australia opens the collection. It offers a strong contextual framework for the volume, examining the learning and teaching of Chinese against the background of Australia's language ecology. It provides an overview of the development of Australian language policies pertaining to the learning and teaching of Chinese – including initiatives resulting from the recent Australian Government White Paper *Australia in the Asian Century* (Commonwealth of Australia 2012), and, in this context, discusses the teaching of Chinese in regards to the newly developed National Curriculum Languages. The chapter addresses the distinction between second language learners, background language learners and first language learners, providing discussion of those groupings and how they are being addressed through government language policies.

The ensuing chapters, as noted, are loosely grouped into three key areas: studies of learners, studies of teachers and studies of particular applications of new technologies in CFL. The distinction is however an arbitrary one, as today the three area components are integrated and inseparable. Discussions as to the ordering of the chapters revealed that many chapters could be considered to represent all three areas. Twenty-first century teachers, learners and pedagogies are all part of a digital world, as the rapid development of information and communication technology has

impacted teachers' and learners' lives, their social interactions, their understanding of, and power to access, knowledge.

The first group of studies features learners encountering new learning contexts which are seeking to maximise and expand learning, make it experiential, meaningful, or personal. Jane Orton and Xia Cui have designed a unit of work following the principles of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), the fusion of language learning with school subject learning. The CLIL solution can provide more time, and maintain motivation, in CFL study. Jane Orton and Xia Cui offer a theoretical framework for their design, drawing on the work of Vygotsky, Dewey and other constructivist educational theorists. According to principles derived from the framework, they develop a unit which teaches the use of an iPad and applications for learning Chinese. Concrete steps in design, from choice of content area, establishment of content learning objectives, sourcing of texts, analysis of language, and actual lesson plans, are explained and illustrated.

Danping Wang considers the capacity of CFL learners to go beyond the classroom to become autonomous learners. This chapter explores learner autonomy in teaching and learning of CFL. The voices of CFL learners have been absent in explaining their understandings of the Chinese language and Chinese pedagogies, difficulties in learning as well as strategies they develop to cope with the difficulties. Drawing on narrative inquiry, the study investigates how CFL learners develop autonomous learning skills. In particular, the study presents eight learners' personal accounts of learning trajectories, through a series of in-depth interviews. The interviews elicit their understandings of the Chinese language, evaluations of the Chinese pedagogy and learning strategies developed in the specific Chinese learning context. The chapter argues that the ultimate purpose for pedagogical reform is to cultivate learners' autonomous ability so that they can become independent life-long learners and users of the Chinese language.

In the last two decades North American, European and Australian language pedagogy has been shaped by sociocultural theoretical developments. There is growing recognition of the 'intercultural turn', or the role of critical enquiry into the nature of language and culture, within language learning (e.g. Kramsch 1993, 2006; Byram 1988; Corbett 2003; Scarino and Crichton 2007). This has resulted in language pedagogy which includes attention to the development of learners' intercultural capabilities. This approach is aligned with a constructivist theoretical learning model and calls for the learner to construct an understanding of his/her relationship with the target language and culture. The assumptions, learner roles, and expected outcomes of this approach need to be examined from a CFL pedagogical perspective and addressed accordingly. Three studies in the volume (Tsung & Hooper; Moloney & Xu; Tasker) showcase quite different approaches to sociocultural learning in CFL students. Given the limited attention to intercultural learning within Chinese studies to date, these projects break new ground in Chinese pedagogy research.

Linda Tsung and Penny Hooper draw on the framework of language socialization and focus on the learner experience of becoming culturally and linguistically competent through trans-national learning. Their study reveals the vital role of language socialization and social interaction in the development of linguistic

competence and confidence as a Chinese language user for non-native speakers undertaking study abroad. The study shows that during their stay abroad, students became more active in exploring opportunities, such as joining social networks, and engaging in a large variety of strategies which maximised their Chinese language learning. Importantly, the study suggests that although the social networks of Chinese native speakers in the Australia may not be as abundant; there are often large Chinese communities in major urban areas which students should be encouraged to join and participate in their activities.

Robyn Moloney and Hui Ling Xu situate their approach to intercultural learning within the classroom. They present a pedagogical project designed to support development of student intercultural competence and critical thinking in the tertiary language classroom. As an integral part of language acquisition, students need to acquire habits of critical thinking about culture, or 'intercultural competence'. Following classroom workshop scaffolding, students were given structured opportunities to write journal entries examining a Chinese practice or an aspect of language usage, and to examine the values which were inherent in both the practice and their response to it. The study found that learners found the workshop and the ensuing tasks to be challenging in facilitating heightened intercultural awareness.

Thirdly, Adriana Diaz focuses on the development of intercultural teaching resources, as the fulcrum to advance from passive recognition to active implementation of interculturally-oriented teaching practices in the tertiary CFL classroom. Diaz concentrates on the selection, adaption and use of authentic teaching resources – intercultural autobiographies, oral history accounts, and immigrant literature and film excerpts. She presents the results of the strategic integration of these resources in a CFL university program, within both language and cultural context courses. Integration of these resources entailed engaging learners in the critical exploration of emic and etic perspectives to support suspension of judgement and critical deconstruction of stereotypes, both considered key aspects in the development of learners' intercultural capabilities.

The learner in social interaction, enabled by technology, is the focus of Isabel Tasker's chapter. Tasker examines the genesis, theoretical justification, implementation and evaluation of Tandem Translation learning tasks in advanced level tertiary Chinese classes. In Tandem Translation, L1 and L2 speakers of Chinese and English work collaboratively and reflectively in pairs to create joint translations between both languages, in a process of complementary learning. In the distance learning context of the university, Tandem Translation is conducted online, linking classmates who are located off-campus with those located on-campus in meaningful shared learning activity. Tasker's study demonstrates the ways in which learners position themselves as expert and novice at different stages of the task, and identifies the types of constructivist learning affordances for CFL, offered by Tandem Translation.

The focus of the collection then moves to the teacher, with a number of studies which examine change and struggle in CFL teachers, in the adaptation processes which they must negotiate to work in international contexts. As a research focus on teacher identity sits within the "individualism" of a constructivist educational framework, such studies have had limited research attention in CFL. The critical

relationship between teacher beliefs, and the pick-up of innovative pedagogies is well established however in education studies, for example, in teacher use of technologies (eg, Pajares 1992; Niederhauser et al. 1999; Windschitl and Sahl 2002; Kim et al 2013). As noted above, the volume conceptualized the examination of teacher personal narratives and experience as part of its rationale in identifying initiatives taken in 'innovative pedagogies'. The collection thus includes a number of chapters focusing on the 'who' rather than the 'what' of CFL teaching, in the conviction that it is the transformations occurring in teachers which is going to lead the next period of change in CFL education.

Hui Ling Xu and Robyn Moloney's study of teacher narratives, collected in China, from eight 'returnees' from overseas *Hanban* placements, includes the teachers' often very difficult experience in their placement, their critical reflection, and their conclusions as to most effective CFL practice. Using the notion of teacher personal practical knowledge (Connelly and Clandinin 1985; Sun 2014), the eight narratives reveal both individual and common experiences in the teachers' transformation, and raise important professional questions for the future of CFL teacher training, practice and pathways.

Zhen Li similarly positions teacher identity construction as a critical element of CFL innovation. Based on a life-history narrative study of four experienced CFL teachers of Chinese background, this chapter explores how the teachers construct a successful professional identity. The teachers' stories of 20 years of teaching CFL in both Australian and international schools characterise the complex process of constructing a successful professional career in Western school contexts. The development of teachers' pedagogical beliefs reflects effective blends of Eastern and Western cultural values and pedagogical practices. Their 'middle ground' notion of constructing professional identity has important implications for CFL pedagogical innovation in Western school contexts.

Teacher beliefs are core to the driving passion and pedagogy in a primary school CFL program using the principles of Content and Language Integrated Learning. Lesley Harbon, Ruth Fielding and Jianlian Liang bring together their academic and practitioner voices to investigate what is essentially 'at the heart' of how the CLIL teacher plans, designs, implements, assesses and evaluates her teaching of Chinese in the primary classroom. The three authors position the innovative aspect in how the core beliefs of the teacher are activated, and what difference her pedagogical practice makes in impacting student learning.

While a number of studies earlier in the collection included research attention to teacher and learner interaction with technologies, the collection concludes with three studies which explicitly showcase three very different applications of technologies to CFL study. New technologies have given us a wealth of innovative opportunities to give students choices, to create tasks, to use games, to interact with others, to explore media, and to engage students in language and culture simulations (Scarino and Liddicoat 2009). The need for variety in language learning practice activities has always included a range of text-based exercises, visual resources, verbal role-play, kinaesthetic activities using objects, flashcards, the overhead projector, games, songs and drama activities. A similar range of best-practice variety in technology-based pedagogy is emerging, to meet expectations of good language

learning, including the ability to think critically about cultural difference. A common installation in classrooms today, the interactive whiteboard, for example, has been effective in engaging CFL learners in exposure to authentic resources and in increasing students' learning interest and motivation (Xu and Moloney 2011a, b). We know that our students are digital natives (Prensky 2001), and think and process knowledge fundamentally differently from learners in previous decades. They are more than capable of taking advantage of the myriad online opportunities to be autonomous learners (Wang, this volume).

The three chapters presenting studies of innovative technologies represent solutions to three different needs in CFL education. Firstly, in English-dominant countries such as Australia, a major challenge is the lack of interaction with speakers of the target language and limited opportunities to actively use the language outside the classroom. In educational settings, there are also other constraints such as low contact hours. But these challenges can now be supported by using technology such as Virtual Worlds (Pasfield-Neofitou, Grant & Huang, this volume) which provides an online simulated personalized environment for students to interact with native speakers.

Sarah Pasfield-Neofitou, Scott Grant and Hui Huang outline a history of the use Second Life for task-based learning in Chinese as a Foreign Language over 6 years in a tertiary context. They describe a model for sharing resources with other educators through the Virtually Enhanced Languages project. They address the limited opportunities for learners to engage with other speakers or to be immersed in the target culture. The application of Virtual Worlds such as Second Life thus provides a platform for immersion in a quasi-authentic C2 environment and opportunities to interact with others through contextualized tasks. In this chapter, the authors reported how they created such a platform called Chinese Island, in an attempt to mimic the real "Chinese" environment intended to familiarize students with a country they may have never visited in real-life. The activities designed were based on the theoretical framework of Task Based Language Learning (TBLL), providing contextually meaningful and authentic opportunities for learners to interact with avatar-embodied Non Personal Characters, other learners, or even native speakers, which fosters cognitive and behavioral engagement. This empirical study shows that the innovative combination of TBLL and virtually enhanced language project can provide a rich environment for language and cultural learning.

Anne McLaren and Mat Bettinson address a second key need for CFL learners. They find that acquisition of literacy in a character-based language such as Chinese can be difficult and time-consuming for the CFL learner. They have found that software applications such as e-dictionaries, digital flash cards for character recognition, and digital character writing programs offer potential to reduce learner frustration, stimulate student motivation, and thus enhance student learning. These e-learning tools are relatively new as they have emerged in tandem with the development of mobile technologies such as i-tablets and smart phones from 2006. For this reason, little investigation has been done so far on the potential use of these electronic aids in the CFL classroom. Their study is based

on the trial use of e-technologies in a course on Chinese literature by CFL learners at intermediate tertiary level. The chapter highlights student perceptions of the efficacy of electronic glosses or hypertext as a teaching innovation in promoting literacy in Chinese.

The third need is the search for solutions to the need of accommodating an increasing and more diversified demography of students. Long distance learning offers an effective and delivery to meet the demand of students who would otherwise not able to attend regular on-campus classes. Yuping Wang's chapter focuses on how online language learning can be effectively designed to maximize distance education learning outcomes in CFL. This chapter first proposes a framework for online language learning design based on established instructional design models, a systems approach to learning design, and language learning theories. The proposed framework addresses six basic elements in online learning design, namely, the analysis of learners, the assessment of technological affordances, course design, learning support design, ongoing reflection and evaluation, and continuous improvement. This is built into a fully online Chinese program offered at Griffith University in Australia, as a case study. The evaluation indicates that the proposed framework is effective in capturing the essential design elements in online language learning. This research advances our understanding of the optimal design for online CFL language learning in particular and the potential of online language learning as a whole.

In sum, the studies here suggest that traditional textbook-based CFL learning in an authority-based, lecture-oriented environment will struggle unsuccessfully to engage, in isolation from the fabric of learners' lives. An innovative hybridised CFL practice will appeal to learners' discovery-based constructivist style of learning, offering them a vast range of language knowledge and learning opportunities.

7 Conclusion

The studies in this volume demonstrate that there is an innovative future developing for CFL. However, transforming individual teacher practices and behaviour is a complex and problematic process (Rogers 2003), as teachers have a well-documented history of resisting change, and of struggling with innovations which challenge the beliefs about teaching and learning which they hold important. Globalisation produces not only economic rationales for particular languages' significance, but calls for "deep changes into our ways of thinking, learning, and knowing, that educational institutions are not prepared to deal with" (Kramsch 2014, p. 297). In common with the teaching of all foreign languages, CFL teachers and CFL learners are being changed by mobility and technologies and information networks. We see teachers from very different educational training backgrounds sitting in the same staffroom, designing a variety of ways to deliver CFL lessons together to meet the needs of their students (Xu & Moloney, this volume). Training institutions which

have delineated only one "best" CFL pedagogical style, are challenged by an evolving, unfixed, reflective and creative pedagogy which can respond to the demands of the Zeitgeist (Kramsch 2014). We are called on to diversify our pedagogy, our understanding of students and of ourselves in new contexts, and even our teaching of language rules and practice, in the face of evolving language use.

This volume offers models for change and development for the CFL teacher and learner of the twenty-first century. In the spirit of "throwing away a brick in order to get a gem (jade)", 抛砖引玉, we trust that the studies of this timely volume demonstrate that innovative teachers and their pedagogies are leading the way to a modernised CFL practice, achieved through collaboration, which will be supported by an inclusive and diverse professional leadership across the CFL teacher community.

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Australian Language Policy and the Learning and Teaching of Chinese

Martina Möllering

Abstract Census figures from 2011 show that 4 % of the Australian population are of Chinese background and that the Chinese language (Mandarin) has the widest distribution as home language after English, with nearly 320,000 speakers, or 1.7 % of the population. This chapter examines the learning and teaching of Chinese against the background of Australia's language ecology. It provides an overview of the development of Australian language policies pertaining to the learning and teaching of Chinese – including initiatives resulting from the recent Australian Government White Paper *Australia in the Asian Century* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012) – and, in this context, discusses the teaching of Chinese in regards to the newly developed National Curriculum Languages. The chapter addresses the distinction between second language learners, background language learners and first language learners, providing discussion of how those groupings are being addressed through government language policies. In its final section, this contribution discusses the relationship between macro-level language policies and their implementation at the local level of Chinese language teaching.

1 Introduction: Language Policy and Language Study in Australia

While Australia has been acclaimed internationally for its development of language policy (for a critical discussion of the term 'language policy' in this context see Nicholas 2015), the effect of different stages of policy on the actual integration of language study into the mainstream curriculum has been varying. Australia-wide less than 15 % of students in year 12, the final year of schooling, are enrolled in a language other than English (c.f. Möllering 2014), and there seems to be a paradox between the language resources available and the poor use of those resources.

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Michael Clyne described this paradox in terms of a 'monolingual mindset', a term that is still shaping the discourse on language education (c.f. Hajek and Slaughter 2015):

> The greatest impediment to recognizing, valuing and utilising our language potential is a persistent monolingual mindset. Such a mindset sees everything in terms of monolingualism being the norm, even though there are more bi- and multilinguals in the world than monolinguals and in spite of our own linguistic diversity. (Clyne 2005, p. XI)

The status of the learning and teaching of languages in the Australian education system has now been addressed for several decades of language policy. An increase in participation in the study of languages in schools could be observed, especially at primary level and less so in the later secondary years (Curnow 2010; Liddicoat et al. 2007), however, the influence of language policy on the study of languages in the school sector has been criticized as being too limited. Liddicoat (2010), in his analysis of evolving developments since the first explicit language policy, the National Policy on Languages (NPL), formulated in 1987, focuses on those elements of policy that address student participation in languages studies. He comes to the conclusion that language policies have "consistently failed to meet set targets" (Liddicoat 2010, p. 22).

Five language planning reports can be seen as decisive for language policy in Australia (Lo Bianco 2009), namely (1) the Galbally Report on Post-Arrival Programs and Services for Migrants (1978), (2) the National Policy on Languages (Lo Bianco 1987), (3) the Australian Language and Literacy Policy (DEET 1991), (4) the National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools (NALSAS) (COAG 1994) and (5) the Commonwealth Literacy Policy 1997. In the context of Chinese, policies (2) to (4) can be seen to be most pertinent and are therefore discussed here with some level of detail, before the Australian Government White Paper *Australia in the Asian Century* (Commonwealth of Australia 2012) and the direction it sets for the study of Chinese is outlined.

1.1 The National Policy on Languages (NPL), 1987

A main feature of the National Policy on Languages was the assertion that the study of at least one language in addition to English would be "an expected part of the educational experience of all Australians" (Lo Bianco 1987, p. 120). Furthermore, language study would ideally be provided continuously throughout the years of compulsory schooling and would consist of several lessons per week. The National Policy on Languages was far-reaching in its goals, as it envisaged languages education as an element of overall educational provision that was to be integrated in mainstream school structure (c.f. Möllering 2014) and Chinese was identified as one of nine 'languages of wider teaching', next to Arabic, French, German, Modern Greek, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese and Spanish. This integrative approach to language education was to be linked to a program of first language maintenance via

complementary provision. The Australian national language policy attracted international attention; it was extolled as a model approach (c.f. Clyne, p. 2005) and praised as "a significant milestone…in language policy development in the English-speaking world" (Ingram 2000, p. 6). The policy document envisaged a long-term process of educational change through influencing other policy makers, however, rather than projecting the short-term implementation of these goals. In Australia, direct implementation of educational policy lies outside of the Commonwealth Government's educational obligations for the primary and secondary sector as education is primarily the responsibility of the States and Territories and not the Federal Government (for a discussion as to how that impacts on the status of 'language policy' in regards to legitimate authority and the ability to effect change see Nicholas 2015).

1.2 The Australian Language and Literacy Policy (ALLP)

In 1991, the NPL was supplanted by the ALLP, which stipulated four goals (DEET 1991):

1. The maintenance of a level of spoken and written English which is appropriate for a range of contexts,
2. expansion and improvement of the learning of languages other than English,
3. maintenance and development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages,
4. expansion and improvement of language services provided through interpreting and translating, print, electronic media and libraries.

In the context of learning and teaching the Chinese language in Australia, it is goal 2 that is of particular interest to the discussion:

> The learning of languages other than English must be substantially expanded and improved to enhance educational outcomes and communication within both the Australian and international community (DEET 1991, p. 14).

Following Liddicoat's analysis (2010) these newly set goals are a move away from the much broader scope of the National Policy on Languages. The comprehensive provision of language education to all students in their compulsory years of study is not so much at the fore here, but rather an expansion of the existing provision of language study with a target of 25 % of students enrolling for a language in Year 12. In the ALLP the rationale for language learning is stated as follows:

> Proficiency in languages other than English is important because it:
>
> - enriches our community intellectually, educationally and culturally;
> - contributes to economic, diplomatic, strategic, scientific and technological development: and
> - contributes to social cohesiveness through better communication and understanding throughout the broader Australian community. (DEET 1991, pp. 14–15)

Ingram criticizes the ALLP for being "unbalanced in the weighting it gives to economic reasons for language education and languages of economic rather than cultural or multicultural significance" (Ingram 2000: 7) and Lo Bianco (2009, 2010) analyses the 1990s as a period where a new approach to public policy took influence on language policy, "substituting commercial principles of efficiency and return on investment for ethnic advocacy or regional integration. … [transforming] language policy into a series of responses to concerns about international economic competitiveness." (Lo Bianco 2009, p. 16).

In the context of the ALLP, Chinese is 1 of 14 priority languages, next to Aboriginal languages (Australian Indigenous languages grouped as a single language for purposes of the policy), Arabic, French, German, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Modern Greek, Russian, Spanish, Thai and Vietnamese; states were asked to choose eight languages for financial inducement.

1.3 National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools (NALSAS)

In order to strengthen the learning and teaching of Asian languages, NALSAS was developed on the basis of the report *Asian Languages and Australia's Economic Future* (COAG 1994). Under this scheme, more than $200 million were made available between 1994 and 2002 (Liddicoat et al. 2007) to only four languages: Chinese (Mandarin), Indonesian, Japanese and Korean. Due to this financial boost, enrolments increased, in particular in Japanese, and enrolments in the four languages expanded to 23.4 % of all school students. By 2006, however, enrolments had returned to around 18 %, due to the short duration of programs which ceased to exist once the funding ended (Lo Bianco 2009).

1.4 Australian Government White Paper Australia in the Asian Century

While the Australian Government White Paper *Australia in the Asian Century* published in 2012 (Commonwealth of Australia) acknowledges the success of various national and state initiatives to increase studies of Asia and learning of Asian languages in schools, it qualifies this success as limited and localized:

> There have been various national and state-based initiatives in recent decades to increase studies of Asia and language learning in schools (…). These programs have had limited, localised success, but have not produced a significant cohort of young Australians completing secondary education with deep knowledge of our region or high levels of proficiency in Asian languages. (Commonwealth of Australia 2012, p. 167)

The White paper stresses the need for Australians to build 'Asia-relevant capabilities – both broad-based and specialized' (p. 161) and points to the language component of the Australian Curriculum as enabling agent for the learning and teaching of Asian languages, in particular Chinese, which is foregrounded as one of the first languages for which a full curriculum is being developed.

The development of the *Australian Curriculum: Languages* and in particular the curriculum for Chinese will be discussed below.

2 The Learning and Teaching of Chinese in Australian Secondary Education

According to data from the 2011 Australian census, people of Chinese heritage make up 4 % of the Australian population (866,205 by ancestry; 319,000 born in China according to census data). The following table shows the significance of the Chinese language(s) in the Australian context in terms of the number of speakers relative to the total Australian population. Table 1 is based on data from the 2011 Australian Census (Australian Bureau of Statistics).

But it is not only within Australia that Chinese, spoken by a significant proportion of the population, plays a major role. Orton (2008) outlines the importance of developing Australia's relationship with China by listing its significance for Australia as follows. China is:

- a regional neighbor
- its largest trading partner
- a rising world economic power
- a major source of immigrant workforce
- a major source of international students

Table 1 2011 Australian Census data on languages spoken at home

Language spoken at home	Persons '000	Proportion of total population %	Proportion who spoke English very well %	Proportion born in Australia %
English only	15 394.7	80.7	–	83.8
Mandarin	319.5	1.7	37.5	9.0
Italian	295.0	1.5	62.1	43.2
Arabic	264.4	1.4	61.9	38.5
Cantonese	254.7	1.3	46.4	19.9
Greek	243.3	1.3	65.0	54.1
Vietnamese	219.8	1.2	39.5	27.9
Spanish	111.4	0.6	62.1	21.9
Hindi	104.9	0.5	80.2	9.8
Tagalog	79.0	0.4	66.9	5.9

- a major source of tourists to Australia
- a major destination for Australian tourists
- the biggest source of its immigrant settlers
- a country with a long and prestigious culture
- home to 1 in 5 human beings on earth (Orton 2008, p. 4)

Orton's (2008) report on *The Current State of Chinese Language Education in Australian Schools* addresses the educational challenge to develop a strong body of China-literate Year 12 students nationally. It outlines in detail the provision of Chinese language teaching across the Australian secondary school sector, stressing the difficulty of collating such data due to different reporting mechanisms, and therefore providing information about the year the data was collated (Table 2).

Table 2 Number of schools offering Chinese and number of students taking Chinese in Australia by State and school type (Orton 2008, p. 11)

States and territories	School type	Number of schools	Number of students (primary and secondary)	Number of year 12 students
Australian Capital Territory	DET	12 (2008)	625 (2008)	150 (2008)
	AIS	1	No data	No data
	CEO	No data	No data	No data
New South Wales	DET	No data	18,532 (2005)	538 (2007)
	AIS	15 (2008)	4,279 (2008)	75 (2008)
	CEO	No data	1,325 (2007)	No data
Northern Territory	DET	1 (2008)	602 (2008)	10 (2008)
	AIS	0 (2008)	0 (2008)	0 (2008)
	CEO	0 (2008)	0 (2008)	0 (2008)
Queensland	DET	No data	No data	194 (2008)
	AIS	41 (2007)	7,021 (2007)	176 (2008)
	CEO	11 (2008)	1,994 (2008)	41 (2008)
South Australia	DET	38 (2007)	5,586 (2007)	211 (2007)
	AIS	22 (2008)	3,547 (2007)	90 (2008)
	CEO	6 (2006)	No data	62 (2007)
Tasmania	DET	11 (2007)	528 (2007)	39 (2007)
	AIS	1 (2008)	No data	No data
	CEO	6 (2006)	0 (2008)	0 (2008)
Victoria	DET	80 (2006)	15,603 (2006)	2,823 (2006)
	AIS	42 (2008)	12,251 (2008)	No data
	CEO	26 (2007)	5,242 (2007)	54 (2007)
Western Australia	DET	12 (2008)	No data	71 (2008)
	AIS	No data	318 (2008)	0 (2008)
	CEO	0 (2008)	0 (2008)	0 (2008)
Total		319	77,453	4,534

DET – Government Sector; AIS – Independent Schools; CEO – Distance Education & Ethnic Schools (& Saturday Victorian School of Languages)

The findings of the report concentrate on four areas (Orton 2008, pp. 4f.)

1. In order to increase numbers in Year 12 Chinese, the retention of classroom second language learners needs to be first priority.
2. Students who learn the language in a classroom should be taught and assessed separately from those students who speak Chinese at home
3. A distinct curriculum and assessment framework should be developed for different learner groups, i.e. those who speak Chinese at home and enter Australian schools in primary, versus those who enter in their secondary years; both separate from the classroom second language learners
4. Innovative development in the teaching of Chinese is urgently required

The report addresses the fact that at the senior secondary school level, many second language learners of Chinese drop out (94 % before Year 12) as the language is no longer mandated. This leaves the teaching and learning of Chinese in senior high school in Australia to be "overwhelmingly a matter of Chinese teaching to Chinese" (Orton 2008, p. 4), and although the numbers of first language users is likely to remain stable, they would form only half of the proposed target of 8,000 by 2020. The report further identifies three main factors for the high dropout rate of classroom second language students of Chinese (Orton 2008, p. 4 f.):

i. The presence of strong numbers of first language speakers, locally born or otherwise, who share their classes and overwhelm them in assessment.
ii. Their lack of success in developing proficiency, which is due to the intrinsic difficulties of Chinese for an English speaking learner, combined with insufficient teaching of certain aspects, and a totally inadequate provision of time needed for the task.
iii. They attempt to learn the language in an often unsupportive environment at school, in their family, and in the community.

It is further stressed that the learning of Chinese is different from learning a European language in that the number of hours required to learn the language to a level of proficiency is far greater than for a European language – 2,220 h for Chinese are contrasted with 600 h for French (Orton, p. 5).

3 The Development of a National Curriculum for Languages

The findings and recommendations forthcoming from Orton's (2008) report, as well as the demands of the *Australia in the Asian Century* White Paper (Commonwealth of Australia 2012) have been addressed in the development of the national Australian Curriculum for Languages. The Australian Curriculum is guided by two key documents; the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (MCEETYA 2008) and the *Shape of the Australian Curriculum* (ACARA 2011c). Referring back to the earlier Hobart Declaration (MCEETYA 1989) and Adelaide Declaration (MCEETYA 1999), the *Melbourne Declaration* acknowledges new demands on Australian education due to global changes as follows (MCEETYA 2008, p. 4):

> Global integration and international mobility have increased rapidly in the past decade. As a consequence, new and exciting opportunities for Australians are emerging. This heightens the need to nurture an appreciation of and respect for social, cultural and religious diversity and a sense of global citizenship. India, China and other Asian nations are growing and their influence on the world is increasing. Australians need to become 'Asia literate', engaging and building stronger relationships with Asia.

The document commits "to supporting all young Australians to become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens" (ibid, p. 7), and to promoting equity and excellence in education. One aspect of active and informed citizenship is described as the ability to "…appreciate Australia's social cultural, linguistic and religious diversity, and have an understanding of Australia's system of government, history and culture" as well as being able to "relate to and communicate across cultures, especially the cultures and countries of Asia" (ibid, p. 8).

Languages, with the caveat "especially Asian languages" are listed as one of the learning areas to be developed for a national curriculum, a basis for *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages* paper.

A first version of the *Draft Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages* was made available by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA 2011a) in January 2011 for feedback from stakeholders across the different states through reference group meetings and submissions. A revised version – *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages* – was then published on the ACARA website in November 2011 (ACARA 2011b) and it takes up again a broader scope for language policy, as it was originally envisaged in the NPL in 1987:

"The *Australian Curriculum Languages* will be designed to enable **all students** to engage in learning a language in addition to English." (ACARA 2011b, p. 1, my emphasis). The paper identifies as a major rationale for language learning the ability for communication in the target language, an intercultural capability and a greater understanding of the role of language and culture in human communication (ibid: 6). Although more instrumental motivations find mention, such as employment opportunities at the individual level and social, economic and international development capabilities at the community level, there is a strong focus on the ability to negotiate the linguistic and cultural diversity of a globalised world. The draft takes up arguments made by Clyne (2005), that being a speaker of English alone is not enough in a global context that has bilingual or multilingual capabilities as its norm. In detail, the rationale for language learning, which underlies the structures and processes as suggested in the draft curriculum, is given as follows:

> Learning languages:
>
> - extends the ability to communicate and extends literacy repertoires
> - strengthens understanding of the nature of language, of culture and of the processes of communication
> - develops intercultural capability; develops understanding of and respect for, diversity and difference, and an openness to different perspectives and experiences

- develops understanding of how values and culture shape world view and extends the learner's understanding of themselves, their own heritage, values, culture and identity.
- Strengthens intellectual and analytical capability and enhances creative and critical thinking. (ACARA 2011b. p. 6)

An important positioning in the *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages* paper is the twofold claim that the teaching of languages other than English is an integral part of the Australian curriculum, making languages a key learning area, but that the distinctiveness of teaching specific languages must not be lost in this approach, stressing the necessity to develop language-specific curricula.

The definition of languages as a learning area as outlined in the curriculum makes explicit mention of Australia's migration history and the related linguistic and cultural practices within the community as well as the importance of the languages and cultures of the Asian region, thus giving a particular focus to language learning in the specific Australian context. It stresses the fact that language learning in primary and secondary education is not necessarily the learning of a foreign language, but may entail the maintenance and development of a language spoken at home or in other social contexts (see typology of language learners below) and that language learning in this context has the potential to contribute to a stronger sense of identity. The proposition of this view of language learning leads to an analysis of different language learner types that will be enrolled in language classes in the Australian education system and it is one of the strengths of *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages* to address these different learner profiles in detail (c.f. Möllering 2014). The following sub-chapter will outline how this is realised in the *Australian Curriculum: Languages Chinese.*

4 The Australian Curriculum: Languages Chinese

The *Australian Curriculum: Languages Chinese* (ACARA 2013) acknowledges the fact that schools are teaching to increasingly diverse cohorts of language learners, including overseas-born Chinese speakers, and that the number of teachers from the People's Republic of China teaching their mother tongue in Australian schools is increasing as well. The curriculum, which refers to Modern Standard Chinese, Pinyin romanisation and simplified characters, identifies three main cohorts of learners:

1. The Second Language Learner pathway for students learning Chinese as a second or additional language
2. The Background Language Learner Pathway for students who have exposure to Chinese language and culture, and who may engage in predominantly receptive use of Chinese at home
3. The First Language Learner Pathway for students who have had their primary socialisation as well as initial literacy development and primary schooling in Chinese and who use Chinese at home

The *Australian Curriculum Languages* (ACARA 2011b) acknowledges that there is variation in proficiency within these groups, in particular in the background speaker profile, but asserts that further distinctions would be impractical for the purposes of the task at hand and that "For all learners of languages in Australia, the different relationship between their learning of the target language and English must be acknowledged. In addition it must be recognised that second language learners will always be on a different learning pathway from first language learners when learning the target language." (ibid, p. 21).

Characteristics of these different groups of learners have been taken into account in the description of distinct pathways in the languages curriculum, and the Chinese curriculum document addresses scope and sequence of learning for the following groups:

Second Language Learners

- Foundation – Year 10
- Year 7 entry

Background Language Learners

- Foundation – Year 10
- Year 7 entry

First Language Learners

- Year 7 entry

The curriculum places great emphasis on the interrelation of language and culture in the learning process and elaborates on this interrelation in detail (ACARA 2011b). The design of the curriculum is strongly influenced by this premise which leads to an identification of different strands of learning that are to be realised interactively in curriculum design:

- **Communicating**: using language for communicative purposes in interpreting, creating and exchanging meaning
- **Understanding**: analysing language and culture as a resource for interpreting and creating meaning
- **Reciprocating**: reflecting upon and interpreting self in relation to others in communication as language users and language learners (self-awareness as user and learner.) (ACARA 2011b, pp. 23–24; emphasis in original)

In the *Australian Curriculum: Languages Chinese* (2013) the strands 'communicating' and 'understanding' are realised and described in detail for the three different learner pathways for the Foundation to Year 10 Sequence, as well as for entry at Year 7.

4.1 Communicating

Using language for communicative purposes in interpreting, creating and exchanging meaning

Substrand	Description
Socialising	Interacting orally and in writing to exchange ideas, opinions, experiences, thoughts and feelings, participating in shared activities through planning, negotiating, deciding, arranging and taking action.
Informing	Obtaining, processing, interpreting and conveying information through a range of oral, written and multimodal texts.
Creating	Engaging with imaginative experience by participating in, responding to and creating a range of texts, such as stories, songs, drama and music.
Translating	Moving between languages and cultures orally and in writing, evaluating and explaining how meaning works.
Reflecting	Reflecting on intercultural language use and how language and culture shape identity.

4.2 Understanding

Analysing and understanding language and culture as resources for interpreting and shaping meaning in intercultural exchange

Substrand	Description	Thread
Systems of language	Understanding the language system, including sound, writing, grammar and text.	Phonology
		Orthography
		Morphology
		Syntax
		Text
Language variation and change	Understanding how the nature and function of language varies according to context, purpose, audience and mode, the dynamic nature of language; and varieties of language.	Chinese and its variants
		Register
Role of language and culture	Analysing and understanding how language and culture shape meaning.	Language choices
		Dynamics of language, culture and place

While all sub-strands are addressed in all learner pathways, the scope of learning differs. The following overview will illustrate these differences using the example of the scope for year 7 and 8 in the different pathways – all with a Year 7 entry – and lay out the differences for each of the sub-strands. There is further variation to be seen when considering the scope of the Foundation – Year 10 pathways for Second language learners and Background language learners as well.

4.3 Communicating

4.3.1 Socialising

Second language learner pathway	Background language learner pathway	First language learner pathway
Oral – Interacting, participating and taking action	Interacting	Interacting
Exchange feelings, ideas and opinions, establish and maintain friendships and participate in group action	Interact with peers and familiar adults, exchanging opinions and feelings and establishing friendships	Interact with peers and exchange opinions and preferences about new social and cultural experiences, adjusting tone, vocabulary and phrasing to influence others
Written – Interacting, participating and taking action	Participating and taking action	Participating and taking action
Correspond and collaborate with peers, relating aspects of their daily experiences and arranging sporting and leisure activities	Participate in planning individual and group action to contribute to school and local community, making choices from available options	Collaborate with peers to plan and organise multicultural projects and events that would benefit their school and local community

4.3.2 Informing

Second language learner pathway	Background language learner pathway	First language learner pathway
Oral – Obtaining, processing and using information	Obtaining, processing information	Obtaining processing information
Locate and share with known audiences factual information about people, places and events from a range of oral texts	Locate and organise key points of information from a range of familiar sources	Interpret the stated and implied meanings in authentic information texts, and use evidence to support or challenge different perspectives
Written – Obtaining, processing and using information	Conveying information	Conveying information
Locate factual information about life in other communities and about aspects of Australian life, including data from graphs and tables, and convey this information to known audiences	Represent factual information related to other learning areas and on topics of interest in a range of texts and formats for different audiences	Use and analyse a range of sources written in simplified and traditional script to identify relevant information and use this information to create purposeful public information texts

4.3.3 Creating

Second language learner pathway	Background language learner pathway	First language learner pathway
Oral – Participating, responding to and creating imaginative experience	Participating and responding to imaginative experience	Responding to contemporary contexts
Express opinions about imagined characters and events seen and heard in contemporary media and performances, and create own portrayals of characters using gesture, action, stress, and modelled phrases	Interact with and express opinions on a range of imaginative texts	Compare how contemporary Chinese media and short stories represent the notion of 'being Chinese', or 'being other' and use this knowledge to present a point of view for an identified audience
Written – Participating, responding to and creating imaginative experience	Creating imaginative experiences	Responding to traditional texts
Respond to simple narratives and create short texts about imagined characters and events	Adapt events and characters from popular Chinese narratives for particular audiences and to create specific effects	Plan, rehearse and deliver presentations of classical literature and famous speeches and use this experience to discuss how cultural values can be translated
		Expressing imaginative experience
		Use particular language features such as dialogue and imagery in short stories, literary essays and plays to create own imaginative representations of experience

4.3.4 Translating

Second language learner pathway	Background language learner pathway	First language learner pathway
Translating/Interpreting	Translating/Interpreting	Oral responding to translation
Translate simple texts from Chinese to English and vice versa, identifying words and phrases in Chinese that do not readily translate into English, using contextual cues, action and gesture to assist translation	Translate short texts and identify words and phrases in Chinese that do not readily translate into English	Identify challenges in and techniques for mediating between Chinese and English

(continued)

Second language learner pathway	Background language learner pathway	First language learner pathway
Creating own Chinese translations	Creating bilingual texts	Creating bilingual texts
Interpret common colloquial phrases and culturally specific practices from Chinese contexts in Australian contexts and vice versa, identifying contextual restraints and considering alternatives	Create simple bilingual texts for different audiences, considering the influence of different roles, relationships, settings and situations	Create bilingual information texts for speakers of Chinese and English in Australia, recognising 'code-switching' and how specific vocabulary and terminology from other learning areas can be translated in different settings, such as for expert or beginner audience

4.3.5 Reflecting

Second language learner pathway	Background language learner pathway	First language learner pathway
Reflecting	Reflecting	Reflecting
Reflect on personal experiences and observations of using and learning Chinese language in familiar contexts, and use these reflections to improve communication	Reflect on personal responses and reactions during interactions in Chinese such as talking with a Chinese adult or interacting online with Chinese peers	Reflect on adjustments they and others make in their everyday language use and connect these adjustments to aspects of experience, culture and roles in Australian society

4.4 Understanding

4.4.1 Systems of Language

	Second language learner pathway	Background language learner pathway	First language learner pathway
Phonology	Recognise the tone-syllable nature of the spoken language, discriminate use of tones, rhythm, and sound flow in interactions, and use Pinyin to support learning the spoken language	Explain the phonological and the tonal features of Chinese including variations in tone, stress and phrasing in different settings	Discuss features of Chinese phonology and compare their own pronunciation with other speakers of Chinese
Orthography	Identify how character structure, position and component sequences relate the form of a character to its particular sound and meaning	Identify features of individual characters and the forms and functions of components in individual characters and in related characters (i.e. 心, 想, 情, 闷) and learning to relate components (部件) and sides (偏旁) to the meaning and sound of characters	Identify and explain the differences in traditional and simplified characters
Morphology			Apply understanding of word morphology and vocabulary choices to interpret and convey meaning
Syntax	Identify and use the characteristics of Chinese word order and explain the use of Chinese-specific grammatical features	Explore features of the Chinese grammatical system	Compare grammatical features such as tense and passive voice are constructed in English and Chinese and identify distinctive features of Chinese grammar

(continued)

	Second language learner pathway	Background language learner pathway	First language learner pathway
Text	Identify the characteristics of familiar text types, noting particular textual features distinctive to Chinese	Text structure and organisation	Text structure and organisation
		Identify how information and ideas are organised in a range of genres, ad compare the textual features of narratives in Chinese and English to determine features which are distinctive to Chinese	Compare writing styles between Chinese authors to identify and explore the purposes and features of text structure and organisation of ideas

4.4.2 Language Variation and Change

	Second language learner pathway	Background language learner pathway	First language learner pathway
Variations in language	Recognise diversity in Chinese language use within different communities and regions, such as dialects, and local languages and character systems	Differentiate features and apply rules for expressing meanings in spoken and written modes in different contexts	Explore assumptions and challenges for language use in new environments, identifying and comparing ways in which sensitive topics are introduced and discussed across languages, for example comparing the Chinese custom of asking direct questions about age, income and other personal matters with the contexts in which these questions are asked in English
Power of language			Identify the features of pervasive language and analyse its effects in advertising
Changes in language use	Identify traditional phrases and contemporary terms in everyday language use and the role of technology in changing the way people communicate	Explore the role of language in passing on cultural values and belief to younger generations and identify changes in language use over time	Analyse features of classical literature in their original and contemporary forms, and apply features of 文言文 and 古文 to their own language use

4.4.3 Role of Language and Culture

	Second language learner pathway	Background language learner pathway	First language learner pathway
Language choices	Explain how language is used to clarify roles and relationships between participants in interactions	Discuss ways in which language choices indicate aspects of social position (such as class, gender and ethnicity) and inhibit or encourage others' involvement or sense of belonging	Analyse the use of language across genders and generations, within and across language communities

5 Discussion

The *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages* is ambitious in addressing the exigencies of language education for the twenty-first century. Angelo Scarino, a leading voice on language education in Australia and beyond and member of the *Languages Advisory Group* to ACARA, has been crucially involved in devising the *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages.* She states (Scarino 2010, p. 168):

> A curriculum for Australia needs to begin with the recognition of the diverse linguistic, cultural and personal life-worlds of students, that is, their intra-culturality; it needs to reflect the lived realities of these diverse students…The curriculum for Australia needs to reflect the relationship between language, languages, culture and learning.

The *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages Chinese* does address the diversity that Australian students bring to their language classrooms in a comprehensive way by providing different pathways of study for different learner profiles and by proposing distinct achievement standards in accordance with the progression of learning in each pathway (for a more in-depth discussion on the role of assessment in Australian languages education see e.g. McNamara and Elder 2010; Scarino 2008). A critical challenge in the implementation process will be the adoption of the languages curriculum by the Australian states and territories and the provision of the necessary resources for a full implementation (c.f. Möllering 2014). One resource that will be vital to the success of the new curriculum is the supply of aptly trained language teachers who can teach to the goals depicted and who can relate to the following notion of language learning (Scarino 2010, p. 171):

> Language learning, learning through language, and learning about language and learning additional languages are interrelated processes that continue to develop from birth to adult life – at home, in the local area, in primary, secondary, and tertiary education, and in the place of work.

The *Australian Curriculum: Languages Chinese* (ACARA 2013) takes this notion into account in that it provides a differentiated curriculum for different learner groups. Not only does it distinguish between Second Language Learners, Background Language Learners and First Language Learners, but it also provides learning sequences for different entry points, outlining scope and sequence for Foundation to Year 10 for Second language learners and Background language learners, and assuming a Year 7 entry point for First Language Learners. The realisation of the different strands of learning outlined above across five different pathways creates a high level of complexity, which needs to be negotiated. The curriculum document puts the onus on schools and teachers to undertake this negotiation:

> Schools will make decisions about which pathway best serves their students' needs, and teachers will use pathways to cater for all learners by making any appropriate adjustments to differentiate learning experiences for their students (ACARA 2013, p. 4)

As we move towards implementation of the new curriculum, the training of Chinese language teachers will need to take this challenge into account and teachers will need to be trained in their choice and use of new pedagogies, to negotiate the challenges of complexity with a high level of flexibility and adaptability.

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Principles and Innovation Design: CLIL Units in Chinese

Jane Orton and Xia Cui

Abstract Achieving a command of Chinese is challenging due to difficulties in acquiring even the fundamentals: tones, characters, and a lexicon with no cognates. Chinese requires more time on task than other languages and to provide that and maintain motivation, the content needs to be engaging. Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), a fusion of language learning with school subject learning, offers a meaningful option. Due to the same inherent challenges, however, deciding when explicit attention to form is necessary and how the unique features of Chinese can be mastered, is complex.

In this chapter a theoretical framework is first established, drawing on the work of Vygotsky, Dewey and other constructivist educational theorists. A unit of CLIL Chinese for teaching the use of an iPad and applications for learning Chinese is then developed according to principles derived from the framework. Concrete steps in design, from choice of content area, establishment of content learning objectives, sourcing of texts, analysis of language, and actual lesson plans, are explained and illustrated. The chapter clarifies many of the difficulties in teaching Chinese and provides a theoretically sound basis for CLIL Chinese unit development that also takes serious practical account of the peculiar difficulties Chinese presents.

1 Introduction

As babies and immigrants of all ages show, *need* and *opportunity* are two very powerful drivers of successful language learning. Contemplating this truth from inside the six-sided box of their classroom, where no one really needs a second language to communicate anything meaningful – that is, anything real or important – and where they themselves are often the only competent user of the language present, many foreign language teachers can only sigh. With even the most enthusiastic learners the task of using the new language is still formidable: a counterfactual

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activity, an endless game of 'Let's pretend' by everyone in the room that lacks the cognitive and affective supports of real life that sustain the efforts of babies and immigrants. And all this usually for just 4 h a week at best, while the sounds and meanings of their first language fill the ears, eyes, mouths and minds of the students for 100+ waking hours a week. When the fact that Chinese takes an English speaker about 3.5 times longer to master than another European language is added to the above, it hardly seems surprising that the learning of Chinese in Australian schools has not been very successful. While widely supported by governments and many schools and parents, Chinese has a particularly high dropout rate following study in the primary years and in the early secondary years.

The work described in this chapter emerged over a 2-year period as part of the authors' continuing engagement with the teaching of Chinese in Australian schools through the Chinese Teacher Training Centre at the University of Melbourne. It was intended to address several program weaknesses that were perceived to contribute to the very low retention rate of second language (L2) students who were learning Chinese only in their day school classroom. One of these was the pervasive use of English by all in the room, the teachers protesting that students could not understand them if they used Chinese, and students rarely ever voluntarily using the target language. A second weakness was the dearth of meaningful activity in most rooms. Students rarely wrote or spoke about things that mattered to them and were often saying things that were not even true, or they were presenting information to people who already knew what they were telling them; and this unreality was compounded by texts and stories peopled by mechanical characters who rarely encountered any real-life friction or doubt or wonder. Thirdly, despite the greatly expanded opportunities to escape the six-sided box and engage in potentially meaningful language use offered by global education sojourns, there was little preparation of students for talking to peers in China about their own lives and interests. Nor in many cases was much advantage being taken of the meaningful practice opportunities offered by digital technology. In working to improve the situation, a further consideration was that virtually all of these generic difficulties and specifically Chinese weaknesses would need to be targeted together, as they all contribute to the problem and also coexist in a dynamic relationship where changing any one of them affects the situation of all the others.

2 Constructing a Principled Foundation

The aim of our work was not simply to repair the situation, but to change some fundamentals within it so that the outcomes would be different. It was thus to introduce innovation, exploiting old and new ideas that could be tackled by some through incremental adaptation of current practices, and more radically by others through switching directly to something quite new. However, just where to begin was not clear, so as preparation we went back to first principles, sifting through fundamental theories of language, of learning, and of language learning in the work of Vygotsky, Halliday, Dewey, Bruner, Wells, Lantolf and others, as well as in our knowledge of

the linguistic features of Chinese and the learning challenges they present to English speakers. This was also a personally useful joint intercultural and intergenerational activity, one through which we shared our individual understandings of the principles, the values we each prioritised, and our practical knowledge, from which we developed a jointly espoused perspective on the task and how it might be achieved. Following this exercise we drew up a coherent, integrated set of parameters and principles from which to proceed. The outcomes of this work are presented below.

2.1 Learning Base

The fundamentals of Vygotky's learning theory is that learning is a mediated process, requiring the use of tools, the most important of which is speech. It is through the speech and goal-oriented actions of others that we are introduced to the cultural resources of our society: the beliefs, values and customs that people there live by (and argue about), and through our own speech and intentional, goal-oriented actions, that we begin to assimilate what we are taught. This appropriation is facilitated by other more experienced members of the society working with us in joint activities which we cannot yet manage on our own. Eventually this scaffolding is withdrawn as we develop the knowledge and skills to function independently. These developments are uneven and the whole process iterative.

As those around us enact the social system in which we are embedded and into which we are initiated, language plays a vital role. Acquiring our language is a means of learning about the world, of acquiring a system of *meaning*. Halliday and Hasan (1985) summed up the outcome of this learning in the following formal description of human language in use:

> We can characterize discourse as the collaborative behaviour of two or more participants as they use the meaning potential of a shared language to mediate the establishment and achievement of their goals in social action. In order to be successful in this endeavour, they must negotiate a common interpretation of the situations in terms of field (what its about) tenor (what the relationship between them is) and mode (how it is to be accomplished) and, in the successive moves through which they complete the exchange of goods and services or information, they must make appropriate choices from their meaning potential in terms of the ideational, interpersonal and textual metafunctions. (In Wells 1999, p. 174)

What then when we interrupt the very successful semiotic system that the learner has established through acquisition of his or her first language, the tool of tools?

2.2 Second Language Acquisition

Standing at very much the same point as we had arrived at above, Pavlenko and Lantolf (2000, p. 156) refer to language learning as 'the struggle to participate in the symbolically mediated worlds of another culture', a process that requires a reconstruction of the self. In the school years, the struggle plays out in quite concrete

terms as learners reconnect with the body they have come to expect will more or less do whatever they want and re-engage with the seemingly simple matter of articulating controlled streams of sound fluently. Even the basics of language acquisition, the capacity to distinguish fine differences aurally and visually, and in Chinese in particular, whole new ways of looking and uttering, plus the demands on memory made by retaining vocabulary, require physical and affective engagement. As well, the social and cultural norms of interaction in the new language, and factual knowledge of other countries and societies, both in the present and historically, not only inform, but carry important potential to help engender student awareness of the structure and history of their own society and the shaping power of its culture over them. Language learning can thus play a strong role in the maturation processes essential to a student's continuing development as a person. Less obvious but also present in the work of learning another language, are the constant need to deal with uncertainty by suspending judgment and seeking further, or finding alternatives, and the gradual appreciation that the new language is not just a set of new words to express the same notions they use their first language for, but an independent set of equivalences, and even new notions.

When we recognise that what is to be learned is a new code which requires exactly the same negotiated interaction set out by Halliday and Hasan describing discourse above, this time mediated by the new language, then we understand the enormity of what we are trying to lead students into and perceive the challenging constrictions of the classroom with only the single competent user available. We cannot provide what babies get, and with their first language (L1) expertise, L2 learners will, anyway, never be on the same path as the infant L1 language learner. One key is to know what beneficial role the students' L1 can play in the acquisition of the L2 and in what ways it creates barriers to mastery. Then activities and resources can be designed which successfully target the new language as an object of learning.

Reflecting on the learning processes described by the research, we recognised that it is not enough just to do as textbooks generally do and present the language accurately, as it is used by first language speakers, and require learners to make their way to this finishing line from their point on the starting line. Instead, at each stage the process needs to be one of constructing meaning. Meaning is to be reached by the learner by undertaking direct action coupled with using appropriate pieces of the new language. Doing this would not, of course, preclude there ever being translation exercises or reflection in the students' L1 on how the two systems function – indeed, these are the proper uses of the students' L1 in an L2 classroom, but they are not the initial steps in the process of mastering the language.

2.3 The Pedagogical Process

Together with these views of language and language learning, we accepted Dewey's (1938) basic principles for classroom teaching that, (1) human beings learn by doing, but that not all experiences are beneficially educative, hence the central

challenge for teachers is to create *fruitful* experiences and organize them in progression to guide students' learning; (2) fruitful experiences will be enjoyable at the time and have a positive impact on later experiences; and, (3) unfamiliar concepts and ideas need to be grounded within the scope of ordinary life-experience if students are to be able to grasp them. Furthermore, as Kierkegaard (1959) pointed out: 'If real success is to attend the effort to bring a person to a definite position, one must first of all take pains to find him where he is and begin there… so that you may understand what he understands and in the way he understands it.' It is a perspective reiterated over decades by Caleb Gattegno in his seminars for teachers: "You must be with them where they are."

Another critically important stage in learning, and one studied in considerable detail by Vygotsky, Piaget and Bruner, is to provide the chance for imaginary play and problem solving play:

> It is the essence of play that a new relationship is created between the field of meaning and the visual field, that is, between situations in thought and real situations (Vygotsky 1978, p. 104).

> What appears to be at stake [in play] is the chance to assemble and reassemble behavior sequences for skilled action… More generally, play seems able to reduce or neutralize the pressure that comes from having to achieve. (Bruner 1975, pp. 81–82).

2.4 Teaching Approach

From these studies there emerged four basic principles of language use and learning processes that we used to guide the choice and design of topic and activities of the Unit presented here: (1) human beings learn by doing; (2) language learning activities need to be meaningful, both literally, and in the sense of holding value for those engaged in them; (3) to be successful, there needs to be frequent opportunity and need to work in the target language; and, (4) learning requires learners to have assistance to achieve what they cannot achieve on their own.

The first three principles pointed us directly to some form of Content Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) program. In the words of its advocates, CLIL is a "dual-focused educational approach" that is a fusion of both language learning and subject learning (Coyle et al. 2010, pp. 41–45). Teaching a regular school subject through the medium of Chinese offered the possibility of providing both need and opportunity to use the language in the here and now of the classroom and to involve activity in the learning processes. CLIL proponents advised that achieving the desired dual-focused education requires 'development of a special approach to teaching in that the non-language subject is not taught *in* a foreign language but *with* and *through* a foreign language' (Eurydice 2006, p. 8). However, there has been very little produced, especially at the micro-level of planning CLIL lessons, on what exactly the special approach to teaching consists of that would allow the structural linguistic knowledge to be acquired and operationalized at the same time as the content learning objectives are being met. Indeed, critics have pointed out that to

date, lacking explicit guidance showing how to achieve the integration of content and language learning in its practice, most CLIL models remain content-led, and weak in setting out and achieving expected linguistic outcomes (Harrop 2012; Nikula et al. 2013).

In addition, there was little in the way of research or resources already available for teaching CLIL Chinese. Compared to European languages and even other Asian languages, Chinese is a long way further from English in terms of sounds and vocabulary and this presents some unique challenges for CLIL work. There are no Chinese cognates, as there are in French, Italian and Spanish (e.g. *histoire*, *musica*, *educación*); and no words exactly the same, as there are in German (e.g. *Finger, Hand, Arm*). Instead, every new Chinese vocabulary item is an unfamiliar word, while characters add a whole extra layer of matter to be learned. The result is a huge and constant load on memory. At the same time, reading and writing are not easily the means of consolidating new language met orally, and their independent acquisition and development slow the whole learning process considerably. For these reasons the language learning objectives in each CLIL Chinese lesson need to be scaffolded in an especially gradual and systematic manner.

2.5 Teaching Method

Deciding to adopt CLIL does not decide the teaching method that fulfils the learning needs set out above. For that we looked especially to the work of Caleb Gattegno (1972, 1976) and The Silent Way. The Silent Way uses target language only and engages in activities and interactions in the room. It is overtly artificial in its first stage, privileging functional language – verbs, prepositions, pronouns, adverbs and conjunctions – needed for carrying out tasks in interaction with other students and the teacher. The fundamental meaning of the new language is established concretely using objects, actions and mime, and the meaningfulness of the activities lies in their intrinsic interest as content and in the enjoyment that comes from students' intensifying self awareness as they grapple with the puzzle-like challenges presented to them. Just as in a game, there is a lot of good-humoured trying and failing, handing the turn to someone else, and a later triumphant re-trying and succeeding. In the Silent Way, language is generally met and mastered orally first, with reading and writing introduced only after some weeks, when a sufficient corpus has been acquired to allow a varied set of literacy activities. The spoken language is retained by the learners due to the intensity and physicality of their engagement in the activities. In the past decade, a suite of studies in cognitive science have validated this aspect of the Silent Way by showing the powerful role that kinesic support can play in achieving comprehensive and sustained learning (e.g. Roth 2001; Kelly et al. 2009; Cutica and Bucciarelli 2009; Macedonia et al. 2010; Macedonia and Knösche 2011). At the same time, whole methods of language teaching based on gesture have been developed, one, the Accelerated Integrative Method (AIM), which is used to teach Chinese in a number of schools in Australia, was created intuitively by

Maxwell (e.g. 1994), the other, developed by a circle at the University of Rome (CILT 2005) for the European Community, was grounded very solidly in studies of gesture's role in cognitive development.

As a Silent Way course proceeds, the content turns to the acquisition of vocabulary. This is done by scaffolding presentation from a starting visual in which the key parts are labelled verbally, then extending these to phrases, which are gradually connected to become sentences. The language used is correct, natural, target language only, but pared down to the essential. This way of tackling vocabulary and the control of complex linguistic structures was also advocated by Widdowson (1978) in his work on reading and writing in a second language. His ideas were extensively developed by writers of resources for the teaching of English for Special Purposes that developed in the 1970s and 1980s, as adults, often professional people, from all around the world needed to learn English fast and well for work. The aim, as Widdowson expressed it, was for them to master "a simple account" of the key propositions and processes of a relevant content area, which comprised all the necessary vocabulary and linguistic structures and concepts, but was expressed in language that was very pared down, but still accurate and natural. At the same time, these students were to be taught gradually to develop their control of formal discourse by learning to join sentences using logical connectors (X happened, *consequently* Y happened) and form sentences into paragraphs using reference to prior items (*This* process enables…). They were also to master certain genres such as writing reports, providing instructions for carrying out a process, doing analysis and classification, etc. This path of graduated development in the mastery of discourse guided the choice of supporting language work, which was incorporated into the Unit teaching of the basic content.

2.6 Choice of Learning Area

ICT is a real subject and offers development along a number of paths. It is part of students' daily life and of likely interest, making a beginning place for Chinese lessons that would be 'where they are'. We envisaged that knowing how to work an iPad (and more) in Chinese would be a useful piece of the basic language that students who were going to encounter Chinese peers and attempt to form buddy friendships with sister school peers would find highly beneficial to have mastered – it would give them something real to talk about, something they might do jointly whereby they would, literally, *relate*, and through that relating, might develop a friendship.

The approach was to prepare the content as a scaffolded sequence of Silent Way lessons, starting with teaching the names of the basic items and functions of iPad use and establishing the rules of 'the game', that is, the rules of the real-life interaction inside the classroom, which would proceed on the following basis: no English, step by step, oral, hands on, and peer assisted, with the teacher able to see where they were up to and tailor assistance.

2.7 Role of the Teacher

To provide 'fruitful experience' involving using the language requires the teacher, firstly, to decide and prepare the challenges to be introduced, examining the language and creating the tasks and resources that initiate action once in class. Although there can be beneficial independent student exploration from the start, without the base of even a 3 year-old's language competence, it is difficult for students to get far in a second language independently. With the lack of cognates and the barrier of unknown characters, independence in learning Chinese is often exceedingly hard to gain. So it was anticipated that action in the Chinese CLIL lessons would only gradually become more student initiated. Once in class, the role of the teacher is to work on the students while the students work on the language (Gattegno 1969). When it comes to providing assistance with the language, electronic resources and other students may often be more available to address a student's immediate language problem than the teacher, and the key task for the teacher will be to assist students in building their own inner criteria for correctness. This mostly takes the form of *supporting* or *challenging*, in what Schaffer (1996, pp. 266–267) calls 'joint involvement episodes'. The former serves to maintain the student's current behaviour and to facilitate it, and in the latter, the adult gears demands to those aspects of the task that lie just beyond the level that the child has currently attained in order to carry the child forward in a series of carefully graduated steps at a pace appropriate to that individual.

In addition to these forms of direct help with the task, 'the teacher and classmates play the emotionally supportive roles of *companion*, *witness* and *audience* to the learner's experience, efforts and performance, and provide a generally safe standard to *compete with* and *assess self against*' (Orton 2003, pp. 26–27). These roles generate the feedback sought by children who call to parents across the room or the park: "Watch me, Mum!" "Look, Dad, *look*!", and say gleefully to siblings: "I beat you!". Access to other people in these roles plays a crucial part in the development of personal motivation, purpose and expertise in learning, as well as in the more fundamental development of the individual psychologically. It needs to be noted, however, especially by those who seek to downplay the teacher's role in these moments in favour of peer interaction only, the teacher can contribute to these social aspects without negative competitiveness and self-interest. While fully supporting the role of peers, it needs also to be recognised that there is always the possibility of intentional or unintentional domination by peers, which not only prevents learners from developing, but reinforces their inability to develop.

3 Summary of Principles

At this point we had completed building an integrated foundation for the design of innovative Chinese lessons. They would be learner-centred, activity-based, directly engaging learners in the new language, related to content of value that was new to

them, and allowing them to struggle and develop through game-like interaction with peers, guided by their teacher. The content would be carefully scaffolded, using pared down but natural language, and the whole would lead to meaningful achievement in that students would be able to do something using Chinese that they enjoyed and could use in interaction with young Chinese they had contact with. Having carefully constructed the introduction of the language and content to be learned, and initiated activity that began where the students were and led to somewhere more masterful, the teacher would be the watchful coach, supporting and challenging as seemed fruitful.

4 Innovation Design

The process of designing units of work in a principled way, grounded in researched theories of language and learning as set out above, is not a simple one of applying knowledge, but rather a process described by Schön (1987) as 'a reflective conversation with the materials', an iterative working back and forth between generalized statements of principle and the options of specific pieces of the substantive content to be learned, the Chinese language needed for presenting and working on the content, and the activities and strategies to be employed in the teaching and learning of it. In this experimental, reflective procedure, the two aspects give meaning to the other, at different levels of abstraction: theory becomes realized in the actual tasks and processes of practice, while the actions of practice become theorized.

5 Developing the Unit

What follows below is a description of this process in the development of two ICT Units comprising a total of 17 lessons, which could be worked on sequentially. The aim was to teach learners to operate the basic functions of the iPad and the language needed to follow and give instructions for using the tablet and employing a set of applications useful in developing Chinese language skills, and to comment on their work and that of others.

Grounded in the principles set out in the first part of the chapter, each lesson was designed to introduce learners to new language for engaging in activities that hold meaning and value for them. In class, the teacher and students have separate, complementary roles: the teacher is there to work on the learners – to set tasks and observe students' efforts to engage – and the learners are there to work on the content, in this case, the iPad functions and applications, as well as the Chinese language needed for using these. More specifically, the teacher's responsibility in the class is to provide what the learners cannot provide for themselves: (i) new knowledge, in the form of instructions for operating the applications and the Chinese language for expressing these; and, (ii) clear feedback on their performance which

is gauged to take into account what might carry the learner to the next developmental level. The teacher does not speak a lot, while the learners immerse themselves in figuring out the tasks and language.

The lessons were developed following six steps: (1) *Choosing the subject*, (2) *Composing lesson content*, (3) *Establishing learning objectives*, (4) *Organizing lessons*, (5) *Designing practice activities*, and, (6) *Selecting the method and techniques for teaching and assessing*.

5.1 Choosing the Subject

Preparing CLIL for a new community of teachers, many of whom would be unfamiliar with the approach and even uneasy about taking it on, meant great care needed to be exercised in the choice of curriculum area to develop. ICT made a good choice for four reasons. Firstly, ICT is a general curriculum subject, which gives it the status needed for CLIL, and it is a subject which can be developed as a virtually endless series of activities, which gives it scope. At the same time, because it is learned in stand-alone operations, it is subject matter that can also be unitized, so that just a certain set of lessons may be done and no more. Secondly, in 2010 a project had been undertaken by Independent Schools Victoria, funded by a National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Project grant, to develop Chinese CLIL lessons for teaching the program, *Learnosity*, which involved learning fundamental computer use and file creation. Rather than set out on a whole new direction, it seemed useful to prepare material that went on from this start. Thirdly, students could be expected to be interested in using technology and learning about applications that would help them with Chinese. Finally, and most importantly, they would be acquiring the language to enable them to talk to sister school classmates in China about using an iPad and other technology, topics of real interest to young people.

Within the field of ICT, the choice to introduce work with the iPad was made firstly, because, as a tool of language learning, the iPad has become increasingly popular among teachers and learners, and is already an essential component for conducting activities in many schools, and thus is a part of students' daily life. Secondly, in other resources recently developed for Chinese (The Dragon Trilogy, http://www.lls.edu.au/), learners need to use some specific iPad functions and applications: *Chinese Chinese*, *Writer*, *QR Code Reader*, *Xiaorui Compass*, the *Yu Dictionary*, and *Google Maps*. It was evident that ICT Units which offered the chance to create some immersion language work to go with using these particular applications would be an additive move, providing opportunity to learn new techniques and new language, as well as ample opportunity to recycle recently introduced new language.

5.2 Composing Lesson Content

Following the dual focus learning principles, the learning objectives were for students to be able to use the iPad and the specific applications efficiently, and to develop the language proficiency to understand and give instructions in Chinese for using the tablet and applications. The first stage in composing the content of the lessons was to gather speech used naturally in performing this content teaching and learning. Without access to that language data in Chinese, this had to be done by first recording teaching the use of the iPad and its specific applications in English. The recording was then transcribed and translated into Chinese, and this text was then checked for authenticity. The final version formed the initial corpus of Chinese language for the Unit.

The text of the initial corpus filled ten A-4 pages and contained more than 6,000 Chinese characters. The next step was to reduce the volume to the minimum needed to introduce and carry out all the required tasks. At the same time, it needed to be natural and accurate Chinese. This pared down corpus would still involve a great deal of language new to students, and with no cognates would still be a considerable burden on memory to absorb.

Analysis of the initial corpus revealed a core sequence of instructions sufficient for using the iPad and its applications. For example, in order to operate the basic functions of the application‘写Xiě’ [‘Writer’], what the learners need to do is (1) 长按启动按钮cháng àn qǐdòng ànniǔ [press and hold the on/off button] to turn the iPad on/off; (2)移动滑块 yídòng huákuài [swipe the slider] to unlock the screen; (3) 点击 ‘写’diǎnjī ‘Xiě’ [click on the *Writer*] to start the application; (4) 点击 ‘play now’ diǎnjī ‘play now’ [click on ‘play now’] to start the activity; (5) 点击汉字 diǎnjī hànzì [click on the character]; (6) 在汉字上写笔画 zài hànzì shang xiě bǐhuà [write the strokes on the character]; (7) 点击‘暂停’diǎnjī ‘zàntíng’ [click on ‘pause’]; and (8) 点击 ‘finish game’ diǎnjī ‘finish game’ [click on ‘finish game’]. Simple, accurate and functionally comprehensive, this same sequence of instructions was all that was needed to get started with several apps.

While extracting the core sequence, one issue that needed to be addressed was the use of synonymous expressions. For example, both 打开 *dǎkāi* and 启动*qǐdòng* mean ‘turn on’ (the iPad). While eventually learners would need to learn both, in the early stages, one term would be sufficient. In choosing between the two verbs, 打开 *dǎkāi* was selected as it can also be used for starting an application, opening doors, windows, lights, books and many other things. (Note: 启动*qǐdòng* [on button] is used as an adjective not verb in the opening sentence 长按启动按钮 cháng àn qǐdòng ànniǔ [Press and hold the on/off button].) Following this principle of selecting the term that would have the widest application, the initial corpus was further reduced by keeping only the higher frequency terms and expressions and deleting any synonyms.

In addition to the language comprising the iPad processes, there was also the language for classroom management and interaction to consider. While at the early stage of the lessons, the teacher would have to rely on using gesture, facial expres-

sion and mime to manage these tasks, as learners became familiar with the lesson procedure, the teacher would gradually increase the use of Chinese for managing the class. In this way, students would be exposed to more natural target language used for real purposes.

The language for classroom management and interaction was available in the results of another CTTC project which was being undertaken at the same time. This corpus had been generated by recordings of L1 Chinese teaching a number of different subject areas in *Putonghua* only, in schools in Melbourne, Hong Kong and Beijing. The set of language obtained comprised that needed for organizing such matters as pair or group activities, for example, 两个人一组, 学生一先, 学生二听, 做动作, 然后交换 liǎngge rén yīzǔ, xuéshēng yī xiān shuō, xuéshēng èr tīng, zuò dòngzuò. ránhòu jiāohuàn [Two learners form a pair, Student 1 speaks, Student 2 listens and mimes the actions. Then swap roles].

5.3 Establishing Learning Objectives

The above procedure produced two sets of language for the CLIL lessons and these formed the basis for the learning objectives of each lesson. The first set comprised the core sequences containing iPad instructions and basic iPad application processes. The instructions were identified as language that the learners would need to understand when spoken to them and be able to say themselves. The second set comprised classroom management language that, initially, students would need only to understand with the assistance of teacher gestures. Later, as they became familiar with lesson procedures and their language proficiency increased, students could be expected to use this language as well. At that point, learning activities could be organized to teach them to use those phrases needed which they had not picked up just from exposure.

5.4 Organising Lessons

Two types of lessons were planned. The first type was for teaching the iPad processes and the language that was to be actively acquired by the learners. The second type was for consolidating their mastery of the language and actions for operating the tablet and its applications, and also for hearing teacher talk in Chinese that they only needed to understand.

Each lesson of the first type contained, on average, 20 new vocabulary items and a sequence of up to 10 instructions for operating the iPad or an application. To enable a high volume of new vocabulary and structures to be learned without writing, the lessons presenting the iPad processes were designed using the tightly structured techniques of the Silent Way, which include learners' speaking and being physically engaged with the meaning of what they are saying. Accordingly, a mini-

mum of extraneous language was to be used while presenting and practising together the language and actions essential for operating the iPad and its applications. To assist in conveying meaning, visual aids in the form of gestures, facial expressions, mime, and images were used to prompt action.

Lessons for teaching the iPad processes followed this sequence:

1. Teacher introduces new words (nouns), with meaning conveyed by pointing to or showing actual objects or images. Students repeat and with practice can gradually name all.
2. Teacher introduces actions, with meaning conveyed by miming.
3. Teach provides spoken instructions and students follow, using their iPad.
4. Teacher prompts students to say the sequence of instructions themselves.
5. Learners in pairs give instructions to each other for operating the iPad, with one speaking and the other performing the required action.

At each point when introducing new language, certain principles were followed which are illustrated in the following excerpt from Lesson One. Note: the first two steps were only mimed due to the slowness of actually opening and shutting down the tablet.

1. Teacher (holds iPad and mimes action): 长按启动按钮 cháng àn qǐdòng ànniǔ [Press and hold the on/off button]. Students mime the action, saying the same phrase.
2. Teacher (holding a picture of the iPad screen, Fig. 1 below): 移动滑块 yídòng huá kuài [Swipe the slider]. Using their own visuals, students mime the action and say the same phrase.
3. Teacher (holds iPad and mimes action): 长按启动按钮, 移动滑块 cháng àn qǐdòng ànniǔ, yídòng huá kuài. [Press and hold the on/off button, swipe the slider]. Students mime the action, saying the same phrase.
4. Teacher (demonstrates using a picture of the iPad desktop icons, Fig. 2): 点击 写 diǎnjī *Xiě* [Click on *Writer*]. Students say and mime the same.
5. Teacher (miming): cháng àn qǐdòng ànniǔ, yídòng huá kuài, diǎnjī *Xiě*. 长按启动按钮, 移动滑块, 点击写 [Press and hold the on/off button, swipe the slider, click on *Writer*]. Students mime the action, saying the same phrase.
6. Teacher (miming): 轻按主按钮,关闭写 qīng àn zhǔ ànniǔ, guānbì *Xiě*. [Click on the main button, close *Writer*]. Students mime the action, saying the same phrase.
7. Teacher (miming): 长按启动按钮, 移动滑块, 点击 '写'. 轻按主按钮,关闭 写 cháng àn qǐdòng ànniǔ, yídòng huá kuài, diǎnjī *Xiě*, qīng àn zhǔ ànniǔ, guānbì *Xiě*. [Press and hold the on/off button, swipe the slider, click on *Writer*. Click on the main button, close *Writer*]. Students mime the action, saying the same phrase.

As the example above shows, meaning of the new language is sought and reached directly in action, not through reference to the students' first language, and this is achieved by demonstrating on pictures or real objects, and by miming. In these lessons, it is important that the students also do the action themselves when speaking,

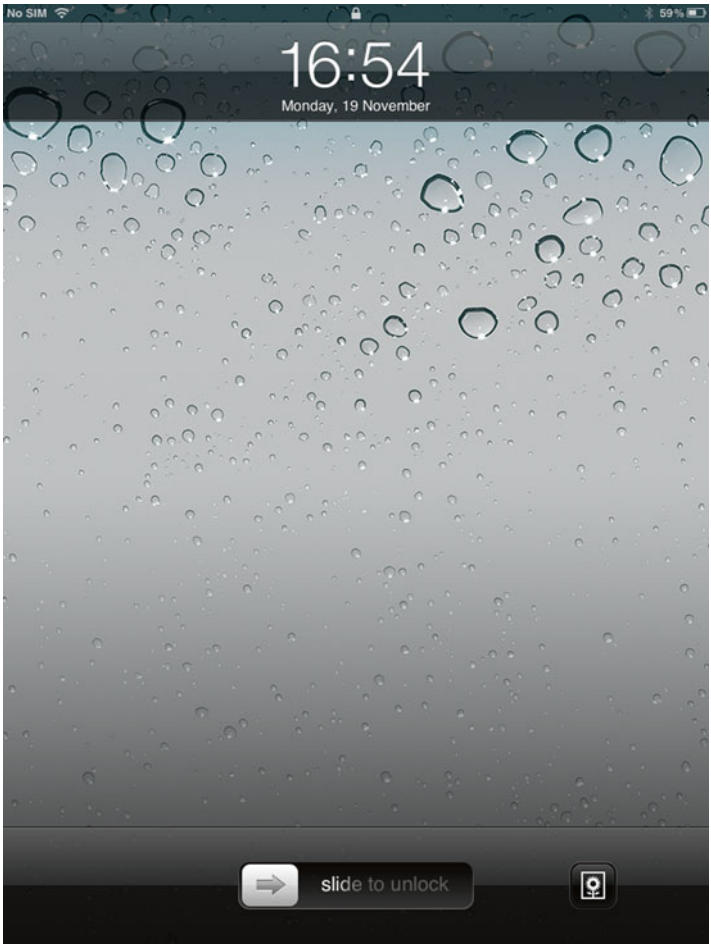

Fig. 1 iPad turned on

as research shows this helps them to anchor the meaning of the words and to lay down sufficient memory to retain them.

In order to scaffold tackling the burden of meeting many new words, the sequence is broken into chunks and the teacher only moves on to the next phrase when the learners are reasonably proficient with the previous one or ones, which means they can produce them promptly and with acceptable pronunciation. To assist longer term retention, the sequences are made longer and longer and are said more and more quickly. Groups or rows of students can be asked to say and mime the sequences, or each side asked to say alternating lines, with one person singled out now and then to perform solo. As choice of words ceases to be a challenge, the teacher raises new challenges, requiring correctly chunking the phrases and eventu-

Fig. 2 iPad desktop icons/Bingo card

ally pushing them to produce flows of fluent, well-phrased utterances, with well articulated discrete sounds and a mix of appropriately stressed and unstressed tonal syllables, each stage accompanied by appropriate action.

Using the Silent Way method, when a student struggles the teacher firstly seeks to see if anyone else can do it and, if so, invites that person to demonstrate for the rest of the class. If no one can do it, they go back to earlier sequences and find the point at which the students got lost. If no one else can help, the teacher then provides the new language again. In this way, the learners can focus on their work on the language with minimal interruption. This way also allows models of procedure to be established and encourages students to expect to learn from one another, not always from the teacher.

Following the principles and procedure exemplified above, the lessons were designed in such a way that the later lessons not only teach the new language and skills for new applications, but also allow previously learned language to be recycled. For example, the nouns and verbs introduced in Lesson One on starting the iPad, 按钮 ànniǔ [button], 滑块 huá kuài [slider], 点击diǎnjī [click], 长按 cháng àn [press and hold], 轻按 qīng àn [press], and 移动 yídòng [swipe], are again involved when teaching how to move applications on the screen, and to use the camera. In these later lessons, students need to employ both the new language and knowledge and what they have learned earlier to produce utterances such as "长按写, 把写移动到屏幕下面,轻按主按钮 chǎng àn *Xiě*, bǎ *Xiě* yídòng dào píngmù xiàmiàn, qīng àn zhǔ ànniǔ" [press and hold *Writer*, move it to the bottom of the screen, and press the main button], and "向下移动滑块,点击红点,开始录像 xiàng xià yídòng huákuài, diǎnjī hóngdiǎn, kāishǐ lùxiàng" [move the slider down, press the red dot, and start video-recording].

Lessons of the second type follow a first lesson such as set out above, by which time the sequence of using the iPad would have been fully introduced and practiced. In the second type of lesson, students work in pairs and groups consolidating their mastery of operating the tablet. In these classes, the teacher goes from group to group observing and using incidental classroom management and interactional language in a natural, albeit still controlled, way. Thus while they explore the functions of the apps, the students are exposed to little flows of language which contain the set expressions and common phrases of the classroom. They understand these through reference to context and demonstration, but only learn to say them themselves over time, as the need arises in a real situation.

An example of this kind of teacher talk, taken from an actual fourth lesson on iPads, is shown below. It occurred after the lesson in which the character writing application *Chinese Chinese* had been taught. Note: the expressions 格子 gézi [grid], 消失 xiāoshī [disappear], and 出现 chūxiàn [appear] that are used by the teacher had been taught in the previous lesson.

1. 今天我们继续用 *Chinese Chinese* 这个应用软件练习写笔画 Jīntiān wǒmen jìxù yòng *Chinese Chinese* zhège yìngyòng ruǎnjiàn liànxí xiě hànzì bǐhuà. [Today we will continue using *Chinese Chinese* to practice writing Chinese characters in their correct stroke order]
2. 请大家启动 iPad Qǐng dàjiā qǐdòng iPad [Start the iPad please].
3. 在屏幕上找到 *Chinese Chinese* Zài píngmù shàng zhǎodào *Chinese Chinese* [Find the app *Chinese Chinese* on the screen].
4. 点击打开它Diǎnjī dǎkāi tā [Click on the app to open it].
5. 点击'开始'Diǎnjī kāishǐ [Click on 'start'].
6. 这个应用有九课。每一课有32个汉字Zhè'er yīgòng yǒu 9 kè. Měi yí kè yǒu 32 ge Hànzì [There are 9 lessons. Each lesson has 32 characters].
7. 现在, 点击 Lesson 1, 开始练习Xiànzài, diǎnjī Lesson 1, kāishǐ liànxí. [Now, click on Lesson One. Start practicing].

While the learners were practicing, the teacher also used Chinese to check on their progress. Some examples of phrases that were said are:

你觉得简单嘛? Nǐ juéde jiǎndān ma? [Do you find it easy?]
你可以点击格子,汉字消失了。Nǐ kěyǐ diǎnjī gézi, hànzì xiāoshīle [Click on the grid, and the character disappears].
再写笔画。Zài xiě bǐhuà [Write the strokes again].
再点击格子, 汉字出现了。Zài diǎnjī gézi, hànzì chūxiànle [Click on the grid, and the character appears].
看一下,你写对了吗? kàn yí xià, nǐ xiě duì le ma? [Have a look. Did you do it right?]
你写了几个汉字? Nǐ xiěle jǐ ge hànzì? [How many characters have you written?]
这个汉字是什么意思? Zhège hànzì shì shénme yìsi? [What does this character mean?]
你写得很好。Nǐ xiěde hěnhǎo [You wrote well].
再写一次。Zài xiě yícì [Write it again].

Although in all lessons using a Silent Way approach the teacher speaks very little, compared with the lessons which focus on teaching comprehension and use of a core sequence for operating the iPad or its applications, in these second type of lessons the teacher speaks more and gradually introduces general classroom language for understanding. These lessons also give students the experience of hearing short but whole flows of language, spoken normally, many of which present useful formulaic expressions. Understood from common sense and general knowledge, assisted by face, voice and gestures, as well as demonstrations, teachers can get across a great deal of information without recourse to English. Because of the contextual support, and because there is natural repetition of a great deal of this kind of language in the room, students gradually begin to recognise phrases and Chinese begins to have meanings attached to situations and actions, not to English. Eventually they begin using this 'untaught' language them themselves. Students can sometimes find this a challenging way of working, but also engaging in a game-like way, and very rewarding when they succeed.

5.5 Designing Practice Activities

In addition to acquiring the new words and phrases for using the iPad and a growing set of applications, students' control of Chinese needs to continue to be developed and reading and writing also need to practiced. Students do not need to be able to write everything said in the iPad work, but in the Unit commonly encountered object names were introduced using labels, and then phrases composed of verbs and nouns used in written instructions were added. Some key terms encountered which were likely to be of immediate wider use in their learning of Chinese were also identified and became the focus of special work. Activities designed for language development using such expressions vary and only sample activities for teaching were developed for the Unit. They are intended to provide models for teachers as to how students can be shown that the language learned and understood within the content area of CLIL lessons can be of broader value.

Examples of language in the iPad Unit that are taught in written form include the names of several common applications, phrases for positioning objects in rows, and individual expressions like 拿稳 *náwěn* [hold steady] and 对准 *duìzhǔn* [aim/point at], which occur in reading QR Codes (Lesson Ten). To practice these two expressions, short dialogues were created which the teacher says and mimes first and has the learners repeat. Then the learners practice saying the dialogues in pairs. The participants are given names and identities and then act out the dialogues. All the dialogues involve participants in a little negotiation, even a moment of friction, which offers expressive scope. The dialogues thus serve well as realistic role plays, and in addition to phrase and structure practice, they allow work on the basic oral skills of sound and tone production, fluency and pace, as well as facial expression and movements of the body, including gestures. The sample dialogues created for 拿稳 *náwěn* [hold steady] are shown below.

A: 喝点儿水吧。Hē diǎn'er shuǐ ba. [Have some water.]
B: 谢谢。Xièxie. [Thank you.]
A: 把杯子拿稳!Bǎ bēizi ná wěn! [Hold the cup steady.]
A: 我想要照照片。Wǒ xiǎng yào zhào zhàopiàn. [I want to take a photo.]
B: 坐在这儿。Zuò zài zhè'er. [Sit over here.]
A: 哎呀,在车上不容易拿稳相机。Āiya, zài chē shàng bù róngyì ná wěn xiàngjī. [Oh, it's not easy to hold the camera steady on the bus.]
A: 我需要把书放在那儿, 在上面。Wǒ xūyào bǎ shū fàng zài nà'er, zài shàngmian. [I need to put this book up there.]
B: 站在椅子上。Zhàn zài yǐzi shàng. [Stand on the chair.]
A: 嗨,把椅子拿稳! Hēi, bǎ yǐzi ná wěn! [Hey, hold the chair steady!]

Other language development activities developed comprise a series of Silent Way rod exercise for the learners to practice the language used for positioning objects, as, for example, in the photos in Fig. 3 below, where the rods are to be set out and then described. For example, 红的积木在蓝的上面hóng de jīmù zài lánde

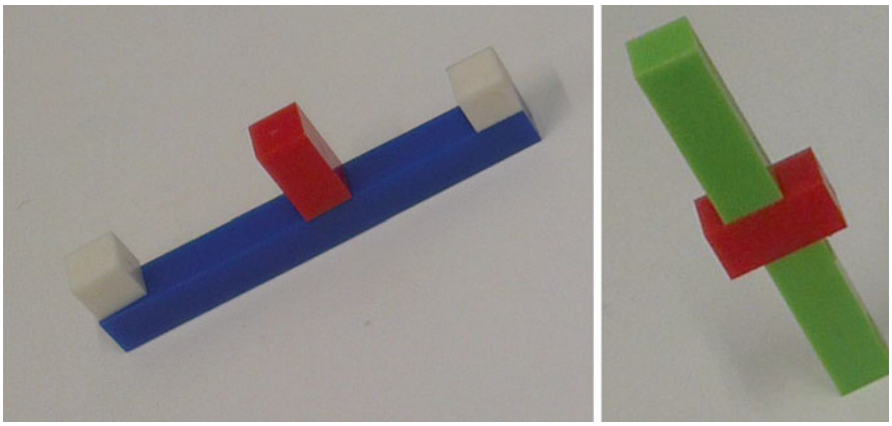

Fig. 3 Two examples of rod structures for teaching the language of positions

shàngmiàn [The red rod is on top of the blue one], and 红的积木在两条绿的中间 hóng de jīmù zài liǎngtiáo lǜde zhōngjiān [The red rod is between the two green ones]. These phrases and elaborations on them are immediately useful in identifying the position of icons on an iPad screen, among other things.

Another set of language activities developed from the base of the iPad sequences is in the form of games, such as App Icon Bingo (See Fig. 2), designed to practice and recycle the Chinese names of applications that students might commonly use.

5.6 Selecting the Method and Techniques for Teaching and Assessing

All the lessons in the CLIL Units have been designed to be taught using Chinese only. To do this successfully, it is necessary to ground meaning in observable action, or visible objects and features. Learners form hypotheses as to meaning and gradually become certain as the teacher applies the new term to further instances. Thus, for example, having introduced *ànni*ǔ as the on-off button on the iPad, the teacher also names as *ànni*ǔ, the light switch in the room and the on-off switch on her phone, and asks learners to name the power point switch and other power buttons/switches in the room. This form of 'side extension' to show the meaning of language being taught for the specific topic, is a natural part of the core language and content lessons.

Gestures, facial expressions and mime used by teacher and learners are involved in conveying and confirming meanings. The use of gestures greatly supports both comprehension of meaning and the retention of word and meaning. Using gestures also to direct the processes of the lesson reduces the intrusion of the teacher into the concentration of the student on the activity. To realize the benefits of using gestures and mime, the movements need to comprise simple and unambiguous actions and each be used consistently for the one meaning.

The use of images is found in all lessons. These, accompanied by actions, first allow the Chinese language to be connected to meaning, instead of going through translation to English. The pictures are also used as prompts for learners' speaking so that the teacher can avoid intruding into the learners' ownership of the central speaker role. The four images shown below (Fig. 4) are used when introducing the sequence for the first character writing app, and later also as prompts for learners to produce the same sequence.

1. 点击写diǎnjī *Xiě* [Click on *Writer*]
2. 点击'play now'diǎnjī 'play now' [Click on 'play now']
3. 点击'九'diǎnjī 'jǐu' [Click on 'nine']
4. 在'九'上写笔画zài 'jǐu' shàng xiě bǐhuà [Write the strokes for 'nine']
5. 点击'暂停'diǎnjī 'zàntíng' [Click on 'pause']
6. 点击'finish game' diǎnjī 'finish game' [Click on 'finish game'].

Learners are encouraged to use their new language and to check assumptions and explore meaning boundaries in action, while the teacher watches and listens.

Fig. 4 Visual prompts for demonstrating and eliciting the sequence of actions for opening the application

Feedback is given using nonverbal vocal expressions, facial expressions, hands, or by indicating another student who is on the right track. If a meaning is not grasped, then the expression is left for another time, or a quite new attempt made to convey its meaning. In all cases, English is not an option.

6 Conclusion

The principled design of innovative teaching and learning Units for CLIL in Chinese described here has been tested in practice with learners on a number of occasions, in both dedicated trialling sessions and with students in regular classes, taught by their own teacher. The lessons have been successful in the ways anticipated in the underlying design based on the researched principles of learning and language.

The initial lessons were taught to a group of 16 volunteer students from across Years 9–10 over two consecutive mornings. These classes were observed by 14 day-school teachers of Chinese. The students, who did not know one another prior to the session, took part with an alacrity that surprised even us. They readily confined themselves to using just Chinese, and accompanied by giggles and groans, challenged themselves and one another with the length of their instructions, and revealed the effort involved by letting out whoops of triumph when they got through the task successfully. What was most notable in their feedback was their enjoyment of the *engagement* involved, one, for example writing: *The iPad activity was the most interactive* [I've ever done]; another: *The class was never boring; and another again*: U*sing iPads but in Chinese was a very fun activity*. One said about the lack of English and the use of physical activity: Alth*ough I was taught many words I hadn't heard before, it was easy to learn because we performed activities/hand movements*. Another thought the choice of content was *very interesting and accessible* and also relevant: *since we use iPads at school I can use it again at school*. In his spoken feedback one participant even went so far as to declare, unprompted, that working in that way *was educational*.

The teachers observing were equally impressed by what the students showed themselves to be capable of, how they engage and persisted, and their clear enjoyment of meeting the challenges presented. They also noted the relevance to students' life, language meaning successfully established in action instead of translation, and the consequent use of Chinese only. Those who have used the iPad Unit in their own classes have been equally positive in their feedback.

CTTC staff involved have continued to work in the way set out here, collaborating on similar development of CLIL Chinese units of work in Science and Social Studies for the secondary immersion Chinese program at Auburn High School in Melbourne, Australia, where student development has been equally positive.

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Fostering Effective CFL Education Through Autonomous Learning: Learners' Perspectives

Danping Wang

Abstract The study presents an examination of autonomous learning in the context of Chinese as a Foreign Language (CFL) in Hong Kong. This chapter posits that the introduction of innovation in CFL pedagogy development must be supported first by an understanding of learners' autonomous learning ability. As CFL pedagogy has long been dominated by teacher-centered and textbook-driven approaches, there has been a lack of attention to learners' perspectives. The chapter takes both an epistemological and practical enquiry into CFL learners' perceptions, individual goals and self-directed methods in their study. To understand CFL learners' autonomous learning, the study adopted an interview narrative research method, supplemented with documents review of their learning materials and course work. The chapter begins with a brief review of autonomous learning research and introduces its current development in CFL teaching and learning. From the analysis of interview data, five particular areas of interest were identified: learners' perceptions of the Chinese language, the Chinese culture of learning, Chinese teachers, learning materials and a community of learning. The chapter ends with practical suggestions to help teachers and learners foster a learning-centered culture and effective CFL education through autonomous learning.

1 Introduction

Autonomous learning has been recognized as a goal of education and established as a mainstream field of research and practice in Second Language Acquisition for over 30 years. In his report to the Council of Europe, Holec (1981) defines autonomy as "the ability to take charge of one's own learning" (p. 3). To particularize, the responsibility for every aspect of one's learning includes (1) setting the learning goals; (2) identifying and developing learning strategies to achieve such goals; (3) developing study plans; (4) reflecting on learning; (5) identifying and selecting

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relevant resources and support; (6) assessing one's own progress. That is to say, an autonomous learner is capable of establishing "a personal agenda for learning" (Little 1994, p. 431), and "making all these decisions concerning the learning with which he is or wishes to be involved" (Holec 1981, p. 3). Autonomous learning entails motivation (Dickinson 1995), capacity (Little 1991, p. 3) and adequate knowledge about self and learning (Ho and Crookall 1995).

Autonomy in learning may be defined in different dimensions in language education (Benson 1997), for example, pedagogical, psychological and political dimensions. Holec (1981) sees autonomy more as a pedagogical capacity that learners need to develop through "learning to learn" programs in self-access centers. Little (1991) has introduced the psychological dimension of autonomy. He argues that "It (autonomy) presupposes, but also entails, that the learner will develop a particular kind of psychological relation to the process and content of his learning" (p. 3). The psychological dimension emphasizes broader attitudes and cognitive ability which enable the learner to take responsibility for his or her learning. Lastly, Benson (2001) proposes a political and social dimension to define and develop autonomy. He adds that "the content of learning should be freely determined by learners" (p. 49). In addition to how and when to learn, autonomous learners should be able to decide critically what to study. Indeed, autonomy can be considered a human right and a fulfillment of citizenship in a democratic society. Likewise, Candlin (1997) refers to autonomy "in language, learning, and, above all, in living" (p. xiii). Within the three dimensions, many studies have been done in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) to depict the characteristics of successful learners (for example, Candy 1991), and their management of self-developed strategies (e.g., O'Malley and Chamot 1990) through quantitative survey and ethnographic approaches.

2 Autonomous Learning Research in CFL

Research on autonomous learning in EFL has engendered impact on curriculum development and teacher education (Benson 2011b). Recognition and practice of autonomous learning in CFL however remain under-developed. The idea of learning autonomy was introduced to China in late 1990s (Ding 2010, p. 165). Ding's book is the first scholarly work on studying learners of Chinese as a second or foreign language. However, as an introductory course material, this book is limited to summaries of basic concepts on studies of language learners, whereas only a few studies on CFL learners were included. According to Ding's statistics, China National Knowledge Infrastructure Database (CNKI) has recorded less than ten articles on CFL teaching and learning. These studies were exclusively in the pedagogical dimension of autonomy research and are mainly about cultivating the motivation for Chinese learning in ethnic minority students in China. Apart from this, CFL research has been dominated by studies on Chinese linguistics, with limited attention to learners' individual capacities to be responsible for their own learning.

Therefore, the fostering of learner autonomy has the potential to throw fresh light in the field of CFL research.

There are at least two good explanations for the slow development of research on autonomous learning in CFL. Firstly, the recognition of importance of autonomous learning research involves a shift of research paradigm from structuralism-oriented to human-related, individual-focused and experience-informed. In the latter paradigm, narrative inquiry is recognized as a good research method to investigate the individual learner. However, narrative inquiry was not common in CFL research in China until 2010 (Sun 2010) and still is not widely recognized and adopted in empirical research. Nevertheless in recent years, narrative research on CFL learners (Duff et al. 2013; Lester 2010; Ilnyckyj 2010) is emerging in other countries where individual accounts of learning are valued and accepted as a valid and important research approach.

Secondly, research methodologies and instruments on individual learners require well-trained research skills to collect reflective data, usually through personal contacts, in a fluent and shared common language. A lack of a lingua franca between teachers/researchers and learners has impeded the development of qualitative research on CFL learners (Wang 2014), particularly in fully constructing an autonomous learning profile for successful learners of Chinese. Given the fact that most of empirical studies on CFL learners in China are conducted quantitatively through questionnaire surveys or classroom experiments (Ding and Wu 2011), CFL learners' individual voices have not been heard in describing and explaining their understandings of the Chinese language, encounters of Chinese teaching pedagogies, difficulties in learning as well as strategies they develop to cope with difficulties.

Despite the large influx of CFL learners within and beyond China, narrative research on individual CFL learner's autonomous learning experience remains scant. To this end, this study attempts to explore autonomous learning in a small sample of CFL learners in the hope of offering new perspectives of pedagogical innovation for Chinese teachers and teacher educators.

3 The Study

Narrative inquiry (Clandinin and Connelly 2000) is an effective methodology to capture the unique ways that people deal with their ideas, feelings, beliefs, challenges and motives related to individuals' actions. Drawing on a narrative inquiry, this study investigates how CFL learners develop autonomous learning skills in Hong Kong where the dominant vernacular is not Mandarin Chinese. Specifically, the study examines excerpts from eight learners' personal accounts of learning trajectories, through interview, to elicit their understandings of the Chinese language, evaluations of the Chinese pedagogy and their learning strategies developed in specific social contexts.

3.1 Participants

This study presents interview records from eight adult learners who enrolled at an upper-beginner level language program in a university in Hong Kong. The course they took offered 44 contact hours, 4 h per week, 2 h each time. By the end of the course, students would be encouraged to take HSK level 2 to evaluate their learning outcome, however, they were not required to pass any qualification test to pass the program. Before agreeing to participate in this project, all of them have had at least 3 months of experience of learning Chinese with native Chinese teachers in formal classroom learning settings. They were selected to participate in this study mainly due to their determination to continue their study of Chinese in Hong Kong and also willingness to share their learning experience (Table 1).

Their language learning histories and stories were analyzed to portray their learning profiles as autonomous learners in CFL learning. The study's research questions enquired into the basis of their learning experience: their perceptions of the Chinese language, the Chinese culture of learning, Chinese teachers, learning materials and a community of learning.

3.2 Context

Learning context determines learners' autonomous learning practices. Unlike Mainland China where Putonghua (i.e. Mandarin Chinese) is taught and spoken as the only official and working language, Hong Kong is a multilingual society, where the mostly widely spoken language is Cantonese. 89.5 % of the Hong Kong population speak Cantonese as their daily language and only 1.39 % of the population speak Putonghua according to latest Population Census in 2011. In such as linguistic environment, many CFL learners in Hong Kong struggle to learn Mandarin Chinese rather than the vernacular in that they believe Mandarin Chinese would enable them to communicate with a greater majority of Chinese people from the Mainland China. In addition, as a financial centre of Asia, Hong Kong has

Table 1 Personal information of participants

	Gender	Age	Home country	Occupation
S1	M	20–30	Australia	Journalist
S2	M	30–40	United States	Student
S3	M	30–40	United States	Businessman
S4	M	20–30	United States	Student
S5	F	30–40	Ireland	Housewife
S6	F	20–30	Sweden	Student
S7	F	30–40	South Africa	Housewife
S8	F	20–30	Belgium	Student

increasingly attracted transnational corporations and lawyers, bankers and investors at executive level who have close business relationship with companies in Mainland China. As a result, the number of CFL learners is rapidly increasing over the years in Hong Kong. Thus, operating with strong autonomy within the People's Republic of China, Hong Kong provides a special social and linguistic context for CFL research for its role in bridging and mixing pedagogic discourses and practices in both Chinese and Western style. Investigating how CFL learners develop autonomous learning to cope with the learning context in Hong Kong will help all CFL teachers and educators develop a context-specific curriculum and pedagogy.

3.3 Data Collection

All these participants are fluent English speakers, though not necessarily native English speakers. This included participants who are from English speaking countries and European countries.

A semi-structured interview (see Appendix 1 for interview questions) was employed as the main method for collecting narrative data. In order to enrich our understanding of how adult learners learn outside the classroom, every interview was over one and a half hour long. Participants were interviewed near the end of the course. The audio-recordings of each interview were fully transcribed and the interview transcripts and field notes coded and analyzed (Creswell 2008, p. 434). As interview transcriptions were reviewed, concepts or themes with similar properties were grouped together. The conversations were conducted in English. All names are pseudonyms.

4 Findings and Discussion

Little (1995) indicated that "All genuinely successful learners have always been autonomous" (p. 175), though the definition of 'success' varies in different contexts. The traditional definition of successful or good language learner looks at the proficiency level that a learner can achieve. However, measuring autonomy is notoriously difficult in that it involves "various aspects of learning" (Benson 2011b, p. 65). Participants in this study have arrived at different levels of proficiency. Nevertheless, each of them has demonstrated learning autonomy and confidence in learning and using Chinese in Hong Kong. Five themes identified in the analysis of the data of this study are worth particular attention and discussion. In the following section, I will focus on autonomous learning of CFL learners from five aspects. These are learners' perceptions of the Chinese language, the culture of CFL teaching, the role and pedagogy of CFL teachers, CFL learning resources, and the development of a community of learners.

4.1 Learners' Perceptions of the Chinese Language

Griffiths' (2008) collection of studies of good language learners begins with a chapter on motivation (Ushioda 2008), which is commonsensically regarded as the prerequisite for learning a foreign language well. As Corder (1967) argued, "given motivation, it is inevitable that a human being will learn a second language if he is exposed to the language data" (p. 164). But, however fundamental motivation is, it is subject to a precondition that whether a learner perceives the language as learnable in light of his or her learning capacity and resources. That is to say CFL learners' perceptions of the learnability or accessibility of the Chinese language will largely determine how much effort they will make to learn Chinese.

The Chinese language has long been described as ideographic and pictographic, and "extremely difficult" to learn for learners who speak Indo-European languages and use alphabetic scripts (DeFrancis 1984). Shades of Orientalism persist in the Chinese language being portrayed as "incommensurable" and "inscrutable" (Casas-Tost and Rovira-Esteva 2009), English expressions and idioms such as "It's all Chinese to me" (something not understandable), and "Chinese wall" (information barrier). These all imply the impossibility of mastering the Chinese language and culture. These views have influenced how learners perceive the Chinese language, how they assess the possibility of learning Chinese (Tong 2000). But autonomous learners in this study sensibly adjust their views, build connections with their knowledge of other languages, and discover fascination and challenge in the study. As some participants put it:

> The first impression I have is: it is difficult to learn. It sounds strange for my ears. It is just not like any European language. But as I started to learn it, it became more likely a European language. I found it more like French, to be honest, maybe because of the structure. (S3)
>
> For beginners, it is interest to start, the grammar is not important. […] But it is not like you learning German, or Dutch. […] So I mean Chinese is relatively easy in terms of grammar. With Chinese, I feel like that's some people say Chinese is simple because there is not too much grammar. (S8)
>
> No, not really [the most difficult language to learn]. The lack of, the general lack of tense, for example, is just as one big bonus of learning Chinese. And so many connective words, just not required as well, you can put together four words and create a very long sentence, you know. Quite amazes me. (S6)
>
> I guess the first impression was it seems very amazingly complicated. But then once started studying for the first two years or so, the progress is very fast. […] I wouldn't say it's the most difficult language. It's just different, and unfamiliar. (S1)

It is necessary to note that autonomous learning research in EFL does not need to deal with the 'difficulty' problem because the spread of English as a global language has demonstrated that English can clearly be learned and used as a basic skill in communication. Nevertheless, in the case of CFL, examining a learner's perceptions of the Chinese language may help understand to what extent he or she is determined to invest time and effort in learning.

From their statements above, it can be seen that the participants in this study expressed their perceptions of the Chinese language in a sensible way. To use one of

the participants' words, Chinese is the "not the most difficult language", but just very "different and unfamiliar" from their first languages, which could require longer time but definitely be conquerable. Interestingly, when they were asked to describe from whom they heard statements like "Chinese is the most difficult language in the world", two said from their friends who have never studied Chinese, and six said from their Chinese teachers. If CFL teaching and learning are to foster an autonomous learning spirit, Chinese teachers must refrain from excessively emphasizing the uniqueness of and the high level of difficulty in learning the Chinese language, but to focus on positive innovative and effective approaches to help learners learn Chinese successfully.

4.2 Learners' Perceptions of Chinese Culture of Learning

Autonomous learning is exercised within the context of specific cultures. To help learners develop learning skills for autonomy, the particular classroom setting and its culture of learning, need to be understood and taken into account. This can facilitate or inhibit the acquisition of 'skills for autonomy', and thus assist or impede the development of autonomy (Ho and Crookall 1995, p. 237).

In a traditional Chinese learning setting, knowledge is seen as something static and which is to be transmitted by teachers (Chan 2001, p. 507) rather than discovered by learners through their own reflection and methods. Murphy (1987) claimed that contemporary Chinese education leaves little room for freedom or expression, independence, and self-mastery and creativity. However, Pierson (1996) cited Chinese scholars' remarks from Song Dynasty (C.E. 960-1279) to exemplify that the idea of autonomy in learning is in fact ingrained in Chinese thought.

> The youth who is bright and memorizes a large amount of information is not to be admired; but he who thinks carefully and searches for truth diligently is to be admired. (Lu Ting-lai 1137–1187)

However, even though the notion of autonomous learning appeared as early as the Song Dynasty, it may not necessarily be actively practiced in contemporary China. Indeed, there is little evidence of teachers' intention to cultivate autonomous spirit or individual power in Chinese education.

In this study, one participant shared his impression of teacher intention:

> I must say I can never persuade my teacher to give up on writing practice. You know, basically, my work doesn't require me to learn how to write. And I personally have no interest in mastering the Chinese writing system. I have my own timetable, you know, to get fluent in speaking first so that I can use Chinese in China for work. But every time, my teacher would try to convince me of how important it is to learn Chinese characters. I understand my teacher has a caring heart but I just hope I could follow my own schedule on learning. (S3)

In the context of EFL, Pennycook (1997) has defended the universal nature of autonomy and his argument was to help students "find a voice in English" (p. 48).

Likewise, almost exclusively in EFL context, Palfreyman and Smith's (2003) collection of papers have carried the discussion of autonomy and culture beyond appropriate pedagogies and national/ethnic categories. The capacity to learn independently and the idea of autonomy is relevant to learners from both Western and non-Western cultures. This paper does not dispute this, but wishes to draw attention to the difference between "teaching English to Chinese students" and "teaching Chinese to non-Chinese learners", particularly Westerners in general. The two teaching domains may not share the same fundamental beliefs and values concerning "individual, egalitarian authority, and the purpose of life and the role of education" (Orton 2011, p. 163). Given the social and political dimension of autonomy, the question of how CFL education would embrace autonomy as an educational goal may be difficult to answer.

4.3 Learners' Perceptions of Chinese Teachers

Rogers (1969) is perhaps the earliest scholar to summarize the relationship between learners' self-directed learning and teachers' role. He argued that "the function of the teacher is to facilitate learning in the student by providing the conditions which lead to meaningful and significant self-directed learning" (p. 103). In the current study, it was discouraging to hear that the pragmatic purpose attending a course that was taught by a native Chinese teacher was only to maintain a constant listening practice, rather than seeking an enlightening learning experience. In this study, participants hesitated to acknowledge that their teachers have inspired them about learning Chinese or encouraged them to express their understandings of Chinese culture. In many aspects, participants in this study found their Chinese teachers "hardworking", "nice" but "very traditional".

> Chinese teachers are very young. So, their ability to communicate to adults is limited by their age. The minute I walk into a classroom, I can tell if they are trained to teach high school students or older. […] I'd love to hear them talk about Chinese culture, tell us stories about China, but I can tell they are all very careful about what they say in the classroom. (S5)
>
> Chinese teachers follow textbooks. Um, if they are very, very good, they will have additional supplementary materials. If they are excellent, they will bring in the media. They will bring in visual media, ah, little clips on YouTube, ah, you know. […] They are good, but I just don't really like the idea of spending two hours reading textbooks. (S7)
>
> I like it, and I think I learn the best when it's more interactive. Because it gives, it engages the people and engages the material. And so, what's happening right now is there is no engagement. […] More power is vested to the teacher and less is emphasized on the interactions between students and among the teachers. So in the States, you have, like individual, like, and you have kind of a, more of balanced between individual and group learning. Whereas here, it is a lot of more didactic where the teacher talk and you listen. (S4)

From these participants' remarks, we may observe that their Chinese teachers seem to have established themselves as the sole source of power, authority and control in the classroom. This traditional role of teachers impedes the growth of learner

autonomy in the CFL language classroom. Confucius classics, underlying some teachers' training and beliefs, propose even stronger counterarguments to autonomy, such as extolling the status of Chinese teachers.

> 凡學之道, 嚴師為難。師嚴, 然後道尊; 道尊, 然後民知敬學。 (禮記 學記)
>
> In pursuing the course of learning, the difficulty is in securing the proper reverence for the master. When that is done, the course (which he inculcates) is regarded with honour. When that is done, the people know how to respect learning.
>
> (Record on the Subject of Education, Book of Rites)

In probing the question of whether Confucianism can add value to democracy education, Yung (2010) has considered that there is a clear distinction between "Confucianism as an ideal or philosophy" and "Confucianism in practice". Whereas the former one is praised as the philosophical source that nurtures social harmony, the later one proves that Chinese society tends to respect and maintain hierarchy. According to Yung (2010), the "Confucianism in practice" seems to have little to offer democracy and autonomy, and even obstructs contemporary education that emphasizes free and critical thinking. We see this reflected in participants' perception that their teachers' knowledge about the Chinese language is adequate, but their knowledge about language learning seems to carry many assumptions, such as confusions about L1 and L2 learning, children and adult learners. Some learning tasks designed by teachers were regarded inappropriate or inefficient. For example, participant (S5) said that:

> We had a substitute teacher came in one day and she was clearly only used to teaching younger kids. […] So she comes into a class of adults who are like 30s to 40s and she started clapping. You know, she started going b, d, t, b, d, t, and she wanted us to clap again. […] I don't mind, but I think it is one of those things that might put an adult learner off learning. (S5)
>
> In this class, the only real interaction that we have is we might start our lesson out reading a chapter. That's the only time we only are instructed to say things so our responsibility to read one sentence in the passage and then it kind of ends there and then the teacher will talk for several hours about the different parts. The teacher will talk about for the rest of the course about the different parts. She will be like, "hey, we see this word and this is the meaning behind it and this is how it's used in this sentence." But what I often do is to make up my own. (S4)
>
> I really do like my teacher but I sometimes do not really agree with her methods in teaching. We are adults, right. But sometimes, I feel what she does is babysitting. […] She has assumptions about language learning, sometimes. […] But I don't think I should challenge a teacher in a Chinese class. (S7)

Yang (1998) points out that it is a teacher's role to "remove students' misconceptions by providing knowledge or illustrations concerning the nature and process of second language acquisition" (Yang 1998). Considering our participants are adult learners, who had experience of learning more than one foreign language in addition to English, their knowledge of language learning is no less than their teachers, and sometimes more realistic and practical.

In a recent study, Wang et al. (2013) argued that CFL teacher education remained dominated by traditional training models which focused on teacher knowledge of

linguistics theories, with limited attention to pedagogy and learning theories. Orton (2011) also claimed that Chinese teachers educated and trained in China understand little of the "dynamics of Western social life" (p. 162), and thus found it difficult to "teach in a way that Western learners can relate to well" (Orton 2008, p. 28). However, according to Little (1995), language teachers are "more likely to succeed in promoting learner autonomy if their own education has encouraged them to be autonomous" (p. 180). So if we hope to achieve progress in the promotion of learner autonomy, Little believes we "must now bring our focus of concern back to the teacher, and especially to the way in which we organize and mediate teacher education" (Little 1995).

Interestingly, Chinese teachers, when they are engaged themselves as learners in learning activities, have demonstrated ability to study languages in a self-directed way. For instance, Wang (2012) investigated a group of CFL teachers in China who have developed effective strategies and pedagogies to learn English through regularly watching English TV drama. However, their personal strategies to learn English and their CFL teaching practices seemed to have been kept separated. CFL teachers should include themselves, transfer their own personal learning strategies to developing student autonomy in their CFL classroom, and actively organize, guide, and participate in a community of autonomous learning with their learners.

4.4 Learners' Perceptions of Chinese Learning Materials

Resource-based learning is one of the major characteristics of autonomous learning. Learners' independent interaction with learning resources offers opportunities for them to self-direct their learning and develop the skills and dispositions associated with autonomy through experimentation and discovery (Benson 2011b, p. 127). In this study, participants were instructed to bring all their learning materials, physical and digital, to the interview. In the absence of any self-access language center, it was not surprising to find that participants owned a great variety of learning materials including handmade flashcards, newspaper clippings collections, children's picture books, photocopied book chapters, handouts from language classes, and textbooks for different learning purposes from different countries. In addition, all participants emphasized the importance of online and offline multimedia resources, which provided them with sufficient opportunity to hear the target language and freedom to choose their favorite learning contents. All participants had language learning applications installed in their smartphones. Some popular ones include "Chinese Pod" (short audio or video lessons), "Anki" (flashcards), "Quizlet" (online course and quiz), "Skritter" (learning and practicing Chinese characters), and various e-dictionaries between Chinese and their first languages. It is also common to see an assortment of learning materials that participants have used but found unhelpful to their study. The participants were invited to share their learning experience with the dossiers of learning materials.

> I haven't seen any good textbooks, to be honest. […] Textbooks are more suitable for university students. Topics are all about dormitory, room cleaning, introducing family members. I don't think I'll ever use the word like "su she (dormitory)". […] So whatever is useful, I'll just use it. (S3)
>
> This is my strategy. Um, flashcards, always came, um, always came in handy. […] But for the longest time, like I said, they were all the same colour and they would have the tone marks on the back. But now, they are colour coded. (S2)
>
> I have tried to use what [flashcards] I bought in the bookstore in Hong Kong but I am seriously frustrated with them. I can't really tell if it's simplified or traditional Chinese, it's Cantonese expression or Mandarin. […] I think you have to make them by yourself. I don't think buying them in a store is helpful. (S6)

In a recent study, Mo and Dong (2013) found that, in the multimedia milieu, autonomous learners tend to prefer learning contents presented by multimedia rather than textbooks and other traditional forms of learning materials. However, learning through multimedia resources requires not only preferences and familiarity with technology but also pedagogies to facilitate and guide autonomous learning for learners to carry on in an efficient and effective way. As Benson (2011a) pointed out, language learning beyond the classroom always involves pedagogy. To support autonomous learning, Chinese teachers need to know and provide proper learning materials with proper instructions (Mo and Dong 2013, p. 1088), rather than passively waiting for learners to discover learning resources themselves.

4.5 Learners' Perceptions of CFL Learning Community

Rogers (1969) has suggested to develop a "community of learners", where curiosity is freed, the sense of inquiry is opened up, everything is open to questioning and exploration. In his words, "out of such a context arise true students, real learners, creative scientists and scholars and practitioners, the kind of individuals who can live in a delicate but ever changing balance between what is presently known and flowing, moving, altering problems and facts of the future"(p. 105). Likewise, Benson (2011b) argues that autonomous learning does not imply studying language in isolation from teachers and each other (p. 14); instead, it entails collaboration and interdependence to develop a community of autonomous learners.

CFL teachers and teacher educators also need to consider the importance and relevance of helping learners develop such a community to facilitate learning and learning how to learn from each other. One of the participants expressed his ideas of studying together with other learners of Chinese.

> For about 6 months, I was very diligent about learning on my own. But after about 6 months, I became a little bit depressed actually. Because I knew that I didn't really like my current situation and no people to practice with and it just kind of made me sad. I knew in the long run, it was going to hurt me. (S2)
>
> No, I wouldn't [sign up for another Chinese course]. I do like to study with a native Chinese teacher but I didn't really enjoy my last class. My teacher was very sweet, but her teaching is […]. I have been studying by myself since last year […]. I'd rather study with a

native Chinese teacher on Skype (a telecommunication software) or attend a study group for free. (S1)

Clearly, participant S1 has admitted that the reason he chose to study Chinese independently was due to some disappointing encounters with their previous Chinese courses or Chinese teachers. Participants decided to take charge of their Chinese study by trying alternative ways of learning. Participants expressed their hope for having a community of learning where they can share their learning experience and learn from a variety of people.

4.6 Helping Language Learners Become Autonomous

With the growing profile of self-made polyglots, Benny Lewis' strategies for "being fluent in three months" have encouraged some of the participants in the project. Aiming at destroying 20 common language-learning myths, Lewis (2014) claimed that "I can confidently say that any person on earth can learn a foreign language". Lewis believes that "when our mentality, motivation, passion, and attitude are kept strong, we have the momentum required to charge on towards language fluency" (p. 23). With a growing number of extraordinary autonomous learners, the task to redefine the role of teacher becomes rather urgent.

Although the scope of the study is limited, this study highlights that Chinese teachers need to transform their professional roles from an authority to a facilitator in the classroom. In this study, interview data has suggested six particular areas for Chinese teachers to foster effective CFL teaching and learning through autonomous learning.

1. Develop knowledge about the Chinese language, second language acquisition and learning theories
2. Allow learners to set up their own goals of learning or help learners set up a realistic goal
3. Help learners realize their learning potential and develop their individual learning strategies
4. Keep abreast of new technologies for mobile learning, and get to know their students' learning strategies from their out-of-class learning activities
5. Elicit learners' evaluation of their learning experience and outcomes
6. Help learners identify suitable learning materials and provide sufficient guidance and support

In sum, future research needs to place more emphasis not on "teaching how to teach" but on "teaching how to learn", as Holec (1981) called for. In terms of fostering autonomy in CFL teaching and learning, it would involve teachers to be open-minded and observing, understanding and, when necessary, learn from their students. Furthermore, it is important for teachers to realize the potential power of

learner autonomy, to know what is available, to support and exploit the possibilities, and to incorporate it into their learning environment. We must recognize that language teaching is "helping learners become autonomous" rather than "domesticating the foreign" (Lo Bianco 2014), that is, producing a clone native speaker who can speak, think and act exactly as a native speaker. We also need to involve more "voice" from learners in the field of research, teacher development as well as curriculum development, and "conversation" between teachers and students during their collaborative effects to bridge the cultural boundaries.

5 Conclusion

The study has discussed autonomous learning in CFL teaching and learning with learning narratives from eight autonomous learners. Drawing on this narrative research and theories of learning autonomy, the study attempts to sketch characteristics of learners in the CFL context. Some shared attitudes and abilities include that: (1) learners moderately evaluate the difficulty of learning Chinese and their capacity for language learning; (2) learners persistently pursue their learning in spite of disapproval, failure, and lack of favorable conditions and proper learning materials; (3) learners critically evaluate and modify their learning strategies; (4) learners skillfully and strategically select and study learning resources in all forms; and (5) learners are willing to share their knowledge and skills with peers and eager to build closer connections with Chinese speaking community.

In introducing autonomous learning research into CFL context, we note that we cannot just borrow the concepts developed in EFL. Given the sociocultural background to CFL, we cannot take for granted that autonomous learning will flourish in the same way as it does in other disciplines that have stronger philosophical, sociocultural and educational underpinnings of personal autonomy, and less constraints on individual freedom. This chapter suggests that CFL must find its own approach to encouraging and practising autonomous learning in CFL classroom.

2015 is the year of the 40th anniversary of the publication of Joan Robin's (1975) influential work "What the 'Good Language Learners' can teach us." It took Robin many years to find a publisher for the work, largely because academia was not ready to embrace the idea that learners can learn without a teacher (Cohen 2008, p. 8). It may also be a long-term endeavour for Chinese educators to realise that the goal of education is to foster autonomous learning. The CFL field needs to "seize the day" and engage with new perspectives on autonomous learning in CFL. I hope this chapter will contribute to raising teacher awareness of the power of autonomous CFL learning and encourage new enriched CFL teaching without boundaries.

Appendix 1

Probing Questions

1. Can you please tell me about your experience of learning Chinese?
2. What is your goal of learning Chinese?
3. How do you like learning Chinese in Hong Kong?
4. What do you do if you find the environment provides little exposure?
5. Do you think you are a successful Chinese learner? Why or why not?
6. What do you think about the Chinese language?
7. What was your impression of the Chinese language?
8. Do you agree or disagree that Chinese is the most difficult language to learn?
9. Do you prefer to study with a teacher or by yourself? Why?
10. How do you like the learning materials? Would they help you study by yourself?
11. How different is the learning of Chinese from your prior experience of learning another foreign language, for example, French or Spanish?
12. How do you like the Chinese courses you took in Hong Kong?
13. How do you like your Chinese teachers?
14. How do you like their teaching methods?
15. How well do you deal with the difference of teaching styles?
16. What do you think they can do to teach more effectively?
17. Can you please tell me a few learning strategies that you think are very helpful?
18. How do you like digital technologies? Do you use them for learning Chinese?
19. Could you introduce me a few good software/applications that you would recommend to other students?
20. Would you like to continue in this program? Why?

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Maximising Language Socialization and Learning Strategies Through Study Abroad in China

Linda Tsung and Penny Wang Hooper

Abstract Language socialization is concerned with how second language learners are socialized to be competent members in the target culture through language use and how they socialize to use the target language (Ochs E, Indexicality and socialization. In: Stigler JW, Shweder R, Herdt G (eds) Cultural psychology: essays on comparative human development. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp 287–308, 1990; Ochs E, Schieffelin BB, Language acquisition and socialization: three developmental stories. In: Shweder RA, LeVine RA (eds) Culture theory: essays on mind, self, and emotion. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp 276–320, 1984; Ochs E, Schieffelin BB, The impact of language socialization on grammatical development. In: Fletcher P, MacWhinney B (eds) The handbook of child language. Blackwell, Oxford, pp 73–94, 1995). This paper draws on the framework of language socialization and learning strategies and focuses on Australian adult students learning Chinese as a second language and their process of becoming culturally and linguistically competent members in Chinese society through study abroad in China. The data is collected from 11 students from an Australian University who participated in a 1 year study abroad China program in 2012. Three surveys were undertaken, before the students departed, during the study abroad program, and a final survey after the study abroad program. In-depth interviews were conducted with students after they returned to Australia. The study explores the effectiveness of language socialization and identifies learning strategies affecting students' success or failure in the in-country program. In particular the study hopes to identify the relationship between language use and the cultural contexts of communication. The findings highlight areas for innovative improvement and maximization of opportunity in future study abroad Chinese language learning programs in Australia.

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1 Introduction

With the rise of China's world economic status, teaching and learning Chinese as a second/foreign language has become increasingly popular both in China (Lu and Zhao 2011; Tsung and Cruikshank 2011) and outside China (Lo Bianco 2011).

An extensive body of research has reported that frequent and sustained interaction with native speakers functions as an important facilitator for overall language gains (e.g. Regan 1995; Huebner 1995; Yager 1998). For this reason, in country programs offered by educational institutions have become an integral part of foreign language students' academic experience (Allen and Herron 2003; Wang 2010), and are advocated to serve as an essential component of Chinese language curriculum (Kubler 1997). To foster the development of learners who can achieve fluency in Chinese, many universities outside China have been developing innovative programs offering their students a period of time studying in China. To achieve better understanding of how to maximize learning potential in these enriching experiences, is the focus of this chapter.

Earlier study abroad research literature sheds light on the positive value and the short comings of both the linguistic and cultural aspects of in-country language study programs. Inconsistent results reported in many studies highlight the complexity of language acquisition within the study abroad context. Though not all agree, many investigations in study abroad contexts have suggested that those who undertake study abroad programs have generally demonstrated significant gains in oral proficiency in the target language (Collentine 2004; Dewey et al. 2012; Hernandez 2010; Lafford 2004; Llanes and Munoz 2009; Segalowitz and Freed 2004).

There is, however, a dearth of studies investigating learners' language socialization and learning strategies during study experiences in China, in particular in the spoken aspect of Chinese language acquisition. Most documented study abroad research has focussed on languages other than Chinese, for example, on Spanish (Hernandez 2010; Isabelli-Garcia 2006; Mendelson 2004), and on French (Allen 2010; Magnan and Back 2007; Wilkinson 2002). As an examination of experiential in situ learning, this study represents a departure from teacher – student roles in Chinese classroom learning and pedagogy. It examines individual and social perspectives, in the hope of contributing to the knowledge of second language acquisition (SLA) in Chinese study abroad contexts.

2 Language Socialization, Learning Strategies during Study Abroad

Language socialization is a branch of linguistic anthropology grounded in ethnography and is concerned with how second language learners are socialized to be competent members in the target culture through language use and how they socialize to use the target language (Ochs 1990; Ochs and Schieffelin 1984, 1995).

Language socialization theory emphasizes the crucial factor for learners learning through mediation and interaction in different social environments. It is a generally held view that for many foreign language learners, study abroad in the country where the target language is spoken can be extremely beneficial toward their L2 (second language) acquisition as it affords them great opportunities to access native speakers and enables them to use the language they learn in a more naturalistic environment. One of the early studies on study abroad was done by Carroll (1967) who found there was a strong and positive link between study abroad and L2 skill attainment, as he puts it: "those who do not go abroad do not seem to be able to get very far in their foreign language study, on the average, despite the ministrations of foreign language teachers…" (p. 137). However, other researchers have argued that "learners may not magically become fluent speakers simply by being surrounded by the target language" (Isabelli-Garcia 2006, p. 231).

Over the years, there has been much investigation of various elements of language socialization in the social context of both classroom and beyond. There has been a growing body of studies devoted to the role that social networks have played in the development of learners' L2 proficiency beyond the classroom. By collecting data from 65 high school immigrant students who studied Swedish as their second language in Sweden, Wiklund (2002) compared the impact of three differently oriented social networks (i.e. toward Swedes, other ethnic groups and their own ethnic group) on their L2 proficiency including speaking production. She found social networks facilitated students' L2 use, and those who engaged in broader networks tended to outperform those who did not.

There are also studies addressing the connections between learners' social networks and language proficiency during study abroad. Many of them focus directly on the advantages of interacting with native speakers of the target language and their language gains. Castaneda and Zirger (2011) identified their participants' sources of social networks during study abroad in Spain. They found there were three entities of social networks that students integrated into, host family, community and school. They accessed and practiced the language by extensively integrating with members of the host family (e.g. parents, children, family relatives, etc), the community (eg. vendors, strangers, etc) and the school (e.g. teachers, students etc). Conversing with these people resulted in their improved oral proficiency in Spanish.

Cubillos et al. (2008) also studied learners' self-perceived Spanish skills during study abroad in Spain and Costa Rica. They found that the students developed high levels of confidence when interacting in Spanish and gained high levels of listening comprehension skills due to frequent social interactions with native speakers. The study abroad students of German in Badstubner and Ecke's (2009) study also reported that oral interaction with native speakers through the tandem program was beneficial. Here the study abroad American students learnt German from their German tandem partners and in return, their partners learnt English from them. Isabelli-Garcia (2006) found her study abroad students who constantly sought opportunities to interact with native speakers as well as building and extending social networks in the host culture gained more linguistic knowledge in L2 and advanced their levels of oral proficiency than those who did not.

Dewey et al. (2012) offered a study with a group of learners of Japanese. Their survey data showed that after a period of study abroad in Japan, the students perceived themselves to become more active participants in conversations. The students who obtained greater gains in speaking proficiency were the ones who belonged to more social groups and spent more time speaking with native speakers. These students were also the ones who had lower levels of proficiency prior to their departure and had longer sojourn times. Comparatively, those who were at higher levels before study abroad and stayed less time abroad reported less gains.

One particular interview study was done by Wu (2008) in China as a study abroad context. Although his participants made efforts to talk to native speakers of Chinese as much as they could in their home country Italy, the opportunities were scarce. In China, however, the scope of people they talked to was widened. Not only did they intensify their contact with newly found Chinese friends, and other Chinese people in various social settings such as shopping; taking a taxi; buying train/flight tickets etc, but also they communicated in Chinese frequently with other learners of Chinese outside the class. According to these students, there were many advantages to using Chinese with their fellow students:

(a) They were all students with limited Chinese capabilities, so their conversations would not cover a vast range of topics;
(b) They shared the same experiences as learners of Chinese, and therefore the topics they could talk were often predictable;
(c) They were far less anxious when talking and understood each other better compared with talking to native speakers whose Chinese accents was more variable.

The same finding came from in Magnan and Back's (2007) study of some of their American university students of French during study abroad in France. Apart from interacting and conversing with host family members, students had a tendency to socialise and speak French with their American classmates, believing this would also improve their abilities in spoken French as they could provide feedback to one another.

The findings from the above two studies were significant, for they demonstrated that accessing a variety of language socialization opportunities for L2 learning, including both native and non-native speakers, not only applies in the home country learning environment (as found in Wiklund's (2002) study), but also in study abroad contexts.

Although the studies on the effects of language socialization on second language acquisition were implicated with different languages in different study abroad countries, they manifested that an out-of-class social network is an indispensable means to help learners pursue a new language whether learning takes place at home or abroad. Learners who actively take advantage of language socialization can benefit enormously from it, for it provides "information, support, feedback and models of learning…" (Palfreyman 2011, p. 19).

3 Learning Strategies

Learning a spoken foreign language in an environment in which the target language is not spoken is always a great challenge for many learners.

The improvement in the students' attainment in a second language also has a lot to do with the learning strategies learners undertake in the natural linguistic environment they are in. It is commonly understood that study abroad alone cannot improve learners' learning environment without learners' effective use of learning strategies. Research studies have found that study abroad exerts a profound influence on learners' learning strategies (Gao 2006; Wu 2008) and motivation (Allen 2010; Isabelli-Garcia 2006), which in turn can affect their target language acquisition.

One of the most noticeable studies of language learning strategies (Oxford 1990) defines learning strategies as "specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferrable to new situations" (p. 8). For her, the main goal of learning strategies is to assist learners to engage in meaningful and authentic communication and "stimulate the growth of communicative competence" (Oxford 1990, p. 8). Oxford developed a model of "Strategy Inventory for language Learning" (SILL) which aims at finding out the strategies learners use while learning a foreign or second language.

By using the SILL created by Oxford, Wharton (2000) carried out an analysis in strategy use of university learners of Japanese and French as foreign language in Singapore. The participants reported their most frequently used communication related strategies were guessing the meaning of unfamiliar words; using gestures or first language when stuck; asking others for words if stuck; asking others for the correct language. Moreover, the study found there was a linear relationship between language proficiency and students' use of learning strategies. The more strategies a learner used, the more proficiency he/she developed with the language.

It is interesting to note that first language-based strategies were regularly used by these participants. Though not discussed in the paper, it is understandable that the use of first language-based strategy would be common in such "input poor environments" (Wharton 2000, p. 205). Switching from learner's second to first language strategies would improve the flow of the conversation. However, the results can be rather different if learning occurs in a target language input rich environment as found in Lafford's (2004) study in a Spanish context where the majority of learners' target language production took place during the interaction with native speakers who had little command of learners' first language (English). Consequently learners use of their first language as a strategy to overcome difficulties in communication was significantly reduced.

The relationship between strategies and learners' target language learning success was studied by Adams (2006) in study abroad contexts. Though students were engaged in the study abroad program in various countries of the world such as France, Spain and Austria etc, and for different lengths of time, ranging from 2 to 4 months, the researcher discovered there was still a common characteristic among these students, that is, the students who regarded themselves as having gained substantially in L2 proficiency were the ones who increased their strategy use. Just like

Wharton's (2000) study, the finding buttresses Oxford's (1990) assertion that students who effectively deploy a large range of strategies are much better language learners than those who do not.

Griffiths (2008) compared low and high proficiency levels of learners' strategy use in an English language school in New Zealand. She found that a high level of students used language learning strategies more frequently than the low level of students. In addition, the high level students recognised the importance of "human resources" (p. 91) in their learning. They frequently talked to the teacher, other students as well as native speakers. They also watched TV or movies and listened to songs, recognizing that language learning in such contexts could be attained through entertainment and fun. It appears that using aural media is a favoured strategy by study abroad students in this English – speaking, western cultural environment.

Changes in learning context could lead to the changes in learners' strategy use. A particular investigation on this was done by Wu (2008) whose study focused on learners' perceptions of their strategy use in oral Chinese in two different social contexts: Italy and China. Fifty-two Italian students of Chinese in Shanghai were recruited and interviewed. The study found that the learners naturally relied more on social and interactive strategies in China compared to the language learning software that was one of the few opportunities for language practice in Italy. Wu's study also drew attention to students' use of communication strategies in China. When talking in Chinese, learners would:

(a) ask others to repeat or repeat slowly;
(b) ask others to explain in different ways including simplifying the language that has been used;
(c) guess what others have said;
(d) ask others to use their first language if unsuccessful in Chinese;
(e) use synonyms: different words or sentences;
(f) use gestures, etc.

The purpose of using learning strategies is to build up learners' communicative competence and empower them to communicate with other people in particular native speakers more confidently and effectively. The above studies have identified strategies that learners adopt when speaking in a foreign/second language, and demonstrated that a good language learner tends to use a wide variety of strategies to improve his/her language proficiency. The studies have showed "that learners' strategy use is dynamic and varying across contexts and hence is a temporally and contextually situated phenomenon" (Gao 2006, p. 56). The environment which learners reside at certainly shapes the ways in which the learning strategies are utilized.

4 Current Study and Methodology

This paper investigates learners' language socialization and learning strategies used in the process of learning Chinese. In particular, the research questions for the study are as follows:

- What importance do learners give to language socialization, i.e. talking to people outside of class? And why?
- To what extent do learners perceive any changes in their learning strategies in a study abroad context?

A computerised online questionnaire survey was used as the research instrument to collect data from the students, which allowed us to discover whether and to what extent the 11 participants' perceptions of their acquisition of oral Chinese in China had changed. The survey consisted of three parts which were written in English. The following details each part of the questionnaire:

Part One: Student Background Information. This part contained three segments. The purpose of the first segment was to gather general information about the students, their gender, age, academic major, and country of birth. The second segment elicited language information, asking students about the language(s) they spoke at home and who they spoke the language(s) with, and whether they spoke Chinese with members of the Chinese community in Australia.

The third segment was specifically about students' Chinese language study prior to their study abroad. The questions focused on which levels of Chinese the students had reached at the home university, whether they had studied Chinese in a country/region where Chinese is the official language and the length of time they had studied.

Part Two: This survey explored individual students' orientation regarding learning strategies, while learning to communicate orally in Chinese. Learning strategies (12 items) were adapted from the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (Oxford 1990).

The 12 items that were used to measure students' language strategy use in oral Chinese were as follows:

1. I watch Chinese TV shows and see movies, and imitate the way native speakers talk;
2. I try to find as many ways as I can to speak Chinese;
3. I initiate conversations in Chinese as often as possible, and ask questions to maintain dialogue;
4. I direct the conversation to a topic for which I know the words in Chinese;
5. I make guesses when I hear unfamiliar words and expressions;
6. I try to guess what the other person will say next in Chinese;
7. I pay attention when someone is speaking Chinese;
8. If I do not understand something in Chinese, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again;
9. I ask the other person to tell me the right word if I cannot think of it in conversation, and correct me when I talk in Chinese;
10. When I cannot think of the correct expression to say, I find a different way to express the idea;
11. If I am speaking and cannot think of the right expression, I use gestures or switch back to English;
12. I practise Chinese with other students.

Using a 5-point Likert-type scale, the students were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with statements listed by selecting among "strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree". Descriptive analysis was adopted to examine the insights arising from the collected data.

The questionnaire surveys were delivered Online. Part One of the survey was only completed once in the first survey of the series. Part Two was sent three times, that is, prior to, during and upon completion of students' study abroad. Part Three; the interviews with each student, were conducted only once at the end of their study abroad experience.

The collection of data conformed to the following procedures:

(a) An email was sent to the participants in January 2012 to request them to fill out the first questionnaire of the survey series (background information and learning strategies) via an online study abroad survey forum where the survey was hosted, and noting it should be completed before the commencement of the new semester in China.
(b) A second email was sent to them in late May 2012 to ask them to do another survey (Learning strategies only) on the same site and requesting that it should be finished before the mid-year break in July.
(c) The third email was sent in early December 2012, and the participants were asked to complete the final survey of the series (learning strategies) before departing China.

They were also invited to a face-to-face interview with the researcher at their choice of time and venue on their home campus. The data gathering from the interviews took a period of 4 weeks between December 2012 and January 2013.

5 Findings

5.1 Student Background Information

Participants in this study were 11 learners, 2 males and 9 females ranging in age group between 18 and 25. The majority of students were born in Australia and declared English as their first language. They were from various academic backgrounds, majoring in law, tourism, and many other disciplines. By the time the survey was conducted, their experience in Chinese language learning was 2 years.

5.2 Learning Strategies

Survey results revealed certain learning strategies were more favoured by the students and experienced more changes than others. In relation to productive skills, in the first survey, the most significant strategy use was in item 11 "If I am speaking and cannot think of the right expression, I use gestures or switch back to English"; followed by item 10 "When I cannot think of the correct expression to say, I find a different way

to express the idea". These two items were also ranked as the most frequently used strategies in the second survey except the rank order was reversed. In the final survey at the completion of their study abroad experience, while item 10 was still ranked highly as their most frequent used strategy, item 11, however, dropped its position. This indicated that after a year of study abroad, the students became increasingly competent with their oral skills in Chinese; they no longer needed to rely on English or gestures to get their messages across. Increasingly the students learnt to maximise their opportunities to speak. They also learnt to initiate, maintain and direct conversations (Item 3 & 4), and to seek help in conversations (Item 2 & 9). The increased use of strategy particularly occurred in item 12 "I practise Chinese with other students". Its rank moved from a very low position in the first survey to a relatively high position in surveys two and three, which demonstrated that the students went from being less willing to communicate in Chinese with their fellow students to becoming more inclined to do so. This phenomenon could be caused by the environment in which students were involved as well as the level of proficiency students had in Chinese at time of each survey. In China, with a large number of international students around them, and their increased proficiency in Chinese, the students would be encouraged to engage in more conversations in Chinese with their fellow students than they would have in Australia. There was no significant change with item 1 "I watch Chinese TV shows and movies, and imitate the way that native speakers talk" which was given a low ranking across the three surveys: the least used strategy in surveys two and three, and the second least used strategy in survey one. This may indicate that most students believed that their proficiency in Chinese was not sufficient to fully comprehend TV shows and movies in Chinese at all three points of the survey, that watching TV and movies was not a beneficial strategy in the acquisition of Chinese language, or it could have simply been that their interest in the content of Chinese TV and movies was not as great as alternative social and entertainment activities available to them.

With receptive skills, the most frequently used strategy was item 5 "I make guesses when I hear unfamiliar words and expressions" and item 7 "I pay attention when someone is speaking Chinese". No significant change was found in these items in all three surveys. Item 8 "If I do not understand something in Chinese, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again" gradually emerged as one of their favoured strategies. The plausible explanation for this is that in the first survey, when the students' linguistic resources were limited, and they had yet to engage directly with Chinese native speakers in-country, it was seldom necessary for them to ask people to repeat or slow down. It was logical that it became their favoured strategy once in country and engaging in social interaction with Chinese native speakers on a regular basis (see Fig. 1).

As for students' overall perceptions of strategy use in acquiring oral Chinese at three stages of their study abroad, the results revealed that the general move in strategy use from medium use[1] (2.4–3.5) in the first survey to high use (3.5–5.0), in the second survey and even higher use in the final survey suggests that study abroad

[1] Based on a mean of all respondents, Oxford (1990) defines three categories of strategies on SILL (Strategy Inventory for Language Learning) items: high, medium and low. A high strategy use is in the range of 3.5–5.0, medium use is between 2.4 and 3.5 and low use is 1.0–2.4.

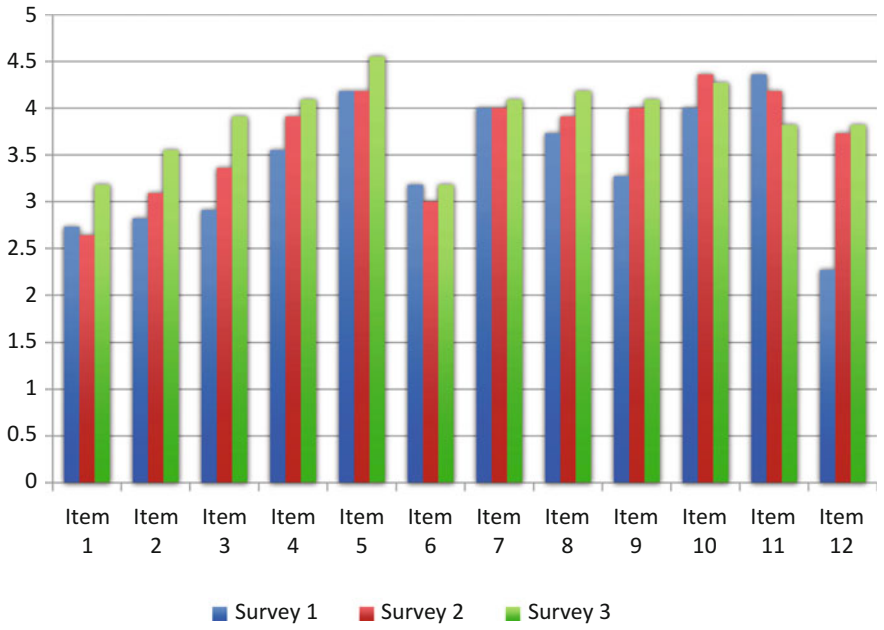

Fig. 1 Students' use of learning strategies during study abroad in three surveys

Table 1 Students' overall perceptions of strategy use in three surveys

Survey	Mean score	Standard deviation	Strategy use category
Survey 1: Pre-ICS survey	3.42	0.81	Medium use
Survey 2: Mid-ICS survey	3.7	0.71	High use
Survey 3: Post-ICS survey	3.89	0.84	High use

provided students with opportunities to actively explore and engage in a large variety of strategies which would maximise their Chinese language learning (Table 1).

Overall the change in linguistic environment from Australia to China clearly appears to be the most significant contributing factor for their changes in strategy use when communicating orally in Chinese.

5.3 The Interviews

Responses to the interviews in relation to their in-country experience showed that most students in the study were actively involved in language socialization activities by participating in social activities with native speakers in country. The study abroad

program provided opportunities for the students to get to know more Chinese people as well as those international students whose first language was not Chinese, and enabled them to improve their proficiency in oral Chinese through socializing and interacting with such people, as students 9, 10 and 1 explained:

For me, it (strategy use) has changed, because in Australia, I relied a lot on my Chinese class [to practice my Chinese]. In China, as I joined more clubs, I got to know more people; I relied on more of my Chinese friends to get the fluency of speaking (S 9)

I joined a Frisbee club in the city. We played tournaments outside, so I met Chinese people in the tournaments. They tried to practice English with me, and I tried to speak Chinese with them. (S10)

When I studied Chinese in Australia, I did not get much opportunity to practice Chinese, whereas in China, I spoke a lot more as a way of practicing. I spoke Chinese with international students, mostly the students who couldn't speak English, like Japanese and Koreans… I made some Chinese friends there, they could not speak English, and so I spoke Chinese with them. (S 1)

All the students valued oral interaction with native speakers outside the class very highly. It helped them overcome the limitations of classroom learning, and it played a significant role in developing their oral skills, as stated by one student: "that is the fastest and the most effective way of improving spoken Chinese". (S8) They saw themselves doing so "often" or "very often" when in China, mainly talking to local Chinese people. There are two major benefits:

First, it enabled them to experience the authenticity as well as the variability of genuine spoken communication and to extend their knowledge beyond that which is covered in the textbook.

In class, it is textbook focused. When you go outside, people speak a lot faster, use a variety of words that don't come across in the textbook. (S 5).

You pick up colloquial language. You get to experience different accents and different speeds of conversation. I developed some friendships with local Chinese people and feel that chatting with them caused my spoken Chinese to improve even faster than just participating in class. (S 2).

Second, it affords them an opportunity to cement what they have learnt in class practically.

Classes equip you the structures and words [of the language]. Classes are not applications… Restaurants, shops and cabs are the places where I developed my communication skills. (S 3).

When I was travelling in China by myself for a month, I forced myself to think Chinese and to speak Chinese. I remembered phrases a lot more when I kept using them. And it increased my confidence as well. (S 8)

Though there were benefits for students to interact and communicate with their fellow students outside the classroom, not only with those whose first language is not English, but also with those coming from the same home university for practice purposes. However, some students pointed out that the value of speaking to other students in Chinese as a means of improving their oral Chinese was not as great as speaking to native Chinese. To quote one student:

It can also cause danger, because I get into the habit (of thinking) what I am saying is correct, but a lot of time, it is incorrect. (S 7).

While a majority of the students said in the interview that they either did not watch, or watched very little, Chinese TV or listen to Chinese radio, four students reported otherwise.

I did see some TV dramas. I imitated their accent. When I was in Australia, I didn't. (S 11).

I only watch Chinese TV after I went to China. Having the subtitles [in Chinese] really helped. I became more confident and interested in what I was watching. (S 9).

In China, in my spare time, sometimes I left my TV on, the news in the morning. I didn't force myself to listen to it or watch it, but I absorbed it as much as I could. In Australia, Taiwanese dramas are very popular, but it's not accessible. (S 8).

When I was in the taxi, the taxi driver might have the radio on; I just tried to listen to it. It is exciting when I picked up phrases. In Australia, I wouldn't have done that at all. (S6).

Students' language socialization displayed close links with the change of learning strategy use. The longer they stayed in China, the better they became at using opportunities to socialize with native speakers as a means of developing their proficiency in Chinese, as articulated by the strategies outlined by the following students:

Before if anything I couldn't understand, I just sat solitarily and pretended I did not hear. As skills improved, vocabulary increased, there was a confidence. Now I would ask people to stop and ask them what that means, ask them to try to explain a word in a way that I can understand. (S 3).

Before if I could not understand, I would simply say "请再说一遍" (Please say it again.) now I am more forward in terms of my learning. I can express myself more…If they don't understand what I say, a phrase I use a lot is "比如说"(For example), I try to give an example. (S 7).

When I first got there, even if I asked them to speak again; they probably still used other Chinese I couldn't understand. I usually gave up. Now I can ask them to explain it for me or ask them to speak slower. (S9).

At the beginning, I felt so out of league, I was not asking people to explain themselves because there was no way I could understand. Now I would ask people to say it again or say it "简单一点" (can you make it a bit of simple) (S1).

At the beginning, when I didn't understand, I was like I can't be bothered. Now I would ask people to clarify, just to explain again. (S 6).

The interview data supports the survey data to indicate that language socialization during study abroad in China helped the students widen their strategy use in social contexts in which using Chinese was both desired and essential.

6 Discussion

The data have suggested that generally the students' perceived themselves to have changed from moderate to more frequent strategy users over the year. Research studies have shown that better language learners are the ones who frequently use a wide range of strategies (Oxford 1990), and there is a linear relationship between students' self-rated proficiency and the use of a large number of strategies (Adams 2006; Wharton 2000). Although it wasn't the focus of this study to determine the relationship between strategy use and language proficiency, the link was evident as the students perceived an increase in their Chinese oral capacity as well as an

increase in use of a varied repertoire of social interaction oriented strategies during their time in China. Thus, it is plausible that while their advancement in oral ability was partially attributable to strategy use, the strategies necessary to communicative effectively in diverse social contexts became more apparent as they became more proficient and confident in communicating with native speakers.

The primary changes in strategy use that emerged from the study were related to strategies associated with social activities with native speakers. Some strategies experienced a minimal change, for example, the students always tried to 'express an idea in a different way if they couldn't think of the correct expression to say', and they also tended to 'make guesses when they heard unfamiliar words and expressions'. These strategies remained their favoured strategies throughout the year. Other strategies, however, underwent significant changes. First, students' use of first language-based strategies and gestures gradually reduced. Before and at the early stage of their study abroad, they relied heavily on their first language (English) use. As some of the students commented in the interview, when they first arrived in China, they always asked people whether they could speak English, something they felt they could fall back on if they had difficulty expressing themselves in Chinese. Such a situation dissipated as they gained more confidence in the language. Previous research has found that the use of first language and gestures is one of the most frequently used strategies by learners who study a new language in the country where the target language is not spoken (Wharton 2000). Students' use of first language tends to drop dramatically when studying abroad due to frequent encounters with native speakers of the target language (Lafford 2004). Clearly, a poor or rich linguistic environment, as well as an increase in proficiency influences learners' choice of strategy use.

Second, a noticeable change also occurred in the strategies of 'asking the other person to slow down or to say it again' and 'asking the other person to tell the right word or to give error correction'. The students' use of these strategies changed from medium use to high use. As reported by some students, at the beginning of their study abroad, when they could not understand what their Chinese interlocutors said, instead of asking them for help, they would pretend they did not hear or would not bother. Tarone (1977 cited in McDonough 1995) describes these behaviours as forms of "avoidance", a strategy that novice learners tend to execute in communication, but it was no longer the case at the end of their study. They learned to ask people to repeat, to say it simply or to explain. This finding was in keeping with Wu's (2008) investigation with a group of Italian students studying Chinese in China, which demonstrated that an increased linguistic competence due to study abroad enabled students to be more pro-active towards their strategy use, and more active in seeking social interaction with a range of speakers, particularly native speakers in their own social contexts.

Change in strategy use was therefore directly related to opportunities for social interaction, in particular with native speakers. This strategy use was congruent with one particular aspect of social strategies defined by Oxford (1990). According to Oxford, "language is a form of social behaviour; it is communication, and communication occurs between and among people. Learning a language thus involves other people and appropriate social strategies are very important in this process". Indeed,

social strategies are vital in facilitating second language acquisition among learners. Researchers such as Dewey et al. (2012) found in their study that social strategies were their respondents' most frequently used strategies when studying abroad.

The current study also showed that students' perception of "practicing Chinese with other students" changed from being the least preferred strategy in the first survey to becoming highly frequently used strategy in the subsequent two surveys. There were two likely reasons: prior to their study abroad, students were less motivated to practice using Chinese when surrounded by fellow students who shared the same first language, English. In China, however, socialising with students from various corners of the world with different language backgrounds encouraged or even forced them to communicate with one another in Chinese. In addition, before going to China, a majority of students (7 out of 11) surveyed considered their level of proficiency in oral Chinese was at the beginner's level thus, a successful communication in the target language might not be achieved when talking to other learners of Chinese. After a period of study in China, most students regarded their level of proficiency as intermediate level or advanced level. This improved Chinese proficiency gave them the confidence to socialise in Chinese, and thus motivated them to branch out to talk with other students in Chinese more, as well as with native speakers in the broader community.

The study abroad program provided a most favourable environment for students to speak Chinese native speakers of Chinese. As revealed in the interviews, students joined local clubs and made local friends there. The extracurricular activities provided natural settings in which to socialise with Chinese-speaking peers and engage in authentic communication with them. The finding was supported by previous studies (e.g. Wu 2008) that learners tend to apply more social and interactive strategies when study abroad in order to maximise their gains in the target language.

In relation to the use of the resources of Chinese TV, movies and radio programs, the students indicated a low use of these resources in all three surveys. Understandably, to fully comprehend the contents of these resources is always challenging for language learners as not only do they have a high demand on linguistic skills lexically, grammatically and semantically, but also they cover a wide range of topics: political, cultural, social, financial and environmental and so on. Four students did claim that their application of strategies through these resources increased remarkably while studying in China, which was in agreement with the finding of the study by Allen (2010) that students were very positive about learning through these non-interactive activities during study abroad. Griffiths (2008) discovered in her research that watching TV or movies was actually one of the more frequently used strategies by high level students rather than the low level students. The four students who did claim increased use of media had reasonably or far more advanced proficiency levels in Chinese than other participating students. This may explain why these students found these strategies more beneficial to them.

As a result of study abroad, students widened their selection of strategies used to improve their proficiency and enhance their social engagement with the community of Chinese speakers in which they lived. This was mainly reflected in the use of communication and social strategies that improved their linguistic skills in Chinese

and provided favorable social environments in which to interact, socialise and build their proficiency in Chinese. While strategies involving social interaction were used by all students, the use of strategy through non-interactive activities such as watching TV, movies etc. was only appreciated by the higher levels of students as they were more exploratory and linguistically more capable of meeting new challenges. These findings provide some insights into learning strategies preferred or applied by students which may need to be given more attention in teaching at home institutions in order to ensure that learning through study abroad can be as profitable and efficient as possible.

In the interviews all of the students indicated unanimously that speaking Chinese to people outside of class was very important, which was in line with the finding in the surveys that they preferred to go to "real places to learn Chinese". It enabled them not only to practice the Chinese they had learnt in class, but also to extend their knowledge beyond the textbook. "Classes are not applications" and learning outside the class is natural and "is not in the laboratory environment", students remarked. Another student also stated that talking to Chinese friends she made whilst in China improved her spoken Chinese "faster than just participating in class." Her comment reflected the argument made by some researchers that "informal learning through out-of-class contact with the target language leads to higher levels of proficiency than educational settings where instruction is provided." (Tanaka and Ellis 2003, p. 66) Her comment also indicated that her relationship with native speakers had helped her proficiency in oral Chinese, which echoed the previous finding that study abroad learners often perceived the pivotal role that social networks play in improving their spoken proficiency (Castaneda and Zirger 2011; Isabelli-Garcia 2006) and that learners tend to change their strategies more towards social and interactive strategies when study abroad in order to maximize their gains in the target language (Wu 2008).

Three primary sources of social networks were identified in the study. One was building relationships with Chinese friends. By joining some recreational and social groups such as dance clubs, some students were able to build up a circle of native speaker friends. As reported in the interview, these relationships were often reciprocal as they and their native speaker friends helped each other with language learning and use. They learnt Chinese from their friends and the native speaker friends learnt English from them. This finding was in line with that of Badstubner and Ecke's (2009) study with the tandem program their study abroad students had in Germany. The second source of networks was the varied interaction with members of the broader local community. In carrying out their daily activities, they were able to interact with and use Chinese with these people in their local context. "Restaurants, shops and cabs are the places where I developed my communication skills", was expressed by one student. The finding was similar to that in a study with a Spanish context (Castaneda and Zirger 2011). A third source of networks for developing language skills was their fellow students in the hosting universities. Some students reported that they also spoke Chinese with fellow students from various parts of the world, in particular with students from their home university. The phenomenon is not unusual with study abroad learners as found in Magnan and Back (2007) and

Wu's (2008) studies, due to similar learners' levels of L2 proficiency and their shared experiences as study abroad language learners. However, as admitted by students in the current study, despite sometimes speaking Chinese with peers from the home university, they did question the effectiveness of using such a channel to improve their spoken language proficiency. There was some concern that incorrect forms of Chinese might be exchanged, and that there may not be sufficient corrective feedback if errors to occur.

In spite of these pitfalls, talking to peers in Chinese still has the potential to be highly beneficial. It maximizes their chances to practice the language, and as far as fluency is concerned, the more they practice, the more fluent they are likely become when using the language in more challenging contexts, as it builds their confidence and reduces their fear when going out to speak the language with those other than their peers. Wiklund (2002) noted that the larger the social networks students are connected to, the more gains they are likely to make in the target language, whether their interlocutors are native speakers or not.

The extent to which students made use of opportunities to socialize and use Chinese with their social networks was demonstrated in the interviews. They reported that they "often" or "very often" sought opportunities to speak to native speaker Chinese. Research has found there is a positive relationship between the amounts of time learners invest with native speakers outside the class and their speaking proficiency. The more time they spend tin social interaction with native speakers, the more gains they perceive themselves making in speaking (Dewey et al. 2012). Therefore, students' frequent contact with native speaking Chinese in the present study was clearly a factor that accounted for their self reported progress in spoken Chinese proficiency.

The students uniformly agreed that engaging in social interaction was very important. Their language acquisition could not be dissociated from social settings beyond the classroom. Classes were not applications, learners sought access to natural environment in order to gain exposure to, and practice, the language. Informal social settings as well as transactional contexts such as shops, restaurants and taxis provided them fertile ground for such socialisation, which they found authentic and organic and therefore effective for their language learning needs. Though talking to fellow students outside the class sometimes was useful, they insisted this might not permit them to gain as much as they would with native speakers, simply because they were all learners and therefore the quality of their speaking couldn't be guaranteed.

7 Implications

There are a number of implications that can be drawn from the findings of this study, which provide useful insights for curriculum designers and Chinese language teachers. First of all, this study reveals the vital role of language socialization and social interaction in the development of linguistic competence and confidence as a Chinese

language user for non-native speakers undertaking study abroad. Prior to undertaking study abroad, there may also be social opportunities that students could take advantage of, to use their Chinese, and experience a little of the study abroad advantage in their home country. Though the social networks of Chinese native speakers in the home country may not be as abundant, there are often large Chinese communities in major urban areas. The social capital that these communities represent could be more extensively utilized as a context for experiencing authentic language socialization. Efforts could be made at home universities or schools, prior to sending students to study abroad, to explicitly direct students to take such social opportunities, which maximize their preparedness and increase their gains in Chinese language learning.

Secondly, teachers can raise students' awareness of social interaction strategy use in their classroom instruction. Because native speakers outside the class play a key role in the development of speaking proficiency and socialisation, teachers could direct students to use specific social strategies by assigning tasks which necessitate social interaction with native speakers. Additionally, teachers could encourage students to participate in various extracurricular activities, for instance, becoming a member of associations which bring young Chinese into contact with the local community in order to build social networks with an aim to gain more access to communicative practices in Chinese.

8 Conclusion

Drawing on Ochs (1990) notion of language socialization and Oxfords (1990) framework of learning strategies, this study focused on the study abroad experiences of Australian adult students learning Chinese as a second language and documented their process of becoming culturally and linguistically competent members in Chinese society through study abroad in China.

The study explored the effectiveness of language socialization and identified learning strategies that influence students' sense of success in becoming competent members of local Chinese speaking communities while engaging in an in-country program. In particular the study identified the relationship between the use of particular strategies and self reported success in language learning and use and socialization into the broader contexts of communication with which they interacted. The findings highlight areas for improvement in the innovative planning of future study abroad Chinese language learning programs overseas.

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Intercultural Competence in Tertiary Learners of Chinese as a Foreign Language: Analysis of an Innovative Learning Task

Robyn Moloney and Hui Ling Xu

Abstract This chapter presents the findings of a project designed to support development of student intercultural competence and critical thinking, innovative in the context of undergraduate Chinese language study.

An 'intercultural' approach to language learning has been widely encouraged in contemporary foreign language learning in Australian, North American and European contexts, at primary, secondary and tertiary levels (Kramsch, 2006; Scarino, 2000). As an integral part of language acquisition, students need to acquire habits of critical thinking about cultures, or 'intercultural competence'. Within student language learning, learners may develop intercultural competence through having structured opportunities to critically observe a cultural practice or particular language usage, and negotiate meaning across cultural boundaries. The chapter presents a description of a teaching intervention which took place in a second year Chinese language unit. Data comprised student reflective journals and focus group interviews. Analysis of the data showed that students found the intervention workshop and the ensuing tasks, consisting of intercultural language teaching, and journal writing, to be useful in facilitating heightened intercultural awareness. Furthermore, it raises the profile of intercultural competence as a critical language learning outcome, aligned with current initiatives in the tertiary sector, in the commitment to exchange opportunities and internationalisation.

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1 Introduction

Most universities today attach value to a global cultural competence amongst their graduate capabilities, and either explicitly or notionally integrate it in curriculum. Language study offers a particular learning opportunity for the development of critical thinking about language and culture. While an 'intercultural approach' to language pedagogy is well-established in European and North American language pedagogy, it is breaking new ground in the teaching and learning of Chinese as a foreign language (CFL) (Orton 2008, 2011).

This chapter examines a collaborative teaching intervention in an undergraduate CFL class. It investigates student response to an intercultural workshop and subsequent reflective writing tasks. The chapter examines to what extent the intervention facilitated development of intercultural competence in students, as evidenced in student reflective writing, and in focus group interviews. This study builds on previous research where reflective writing narrative has been used effectively as a tool in education (see for example, Bagnall 2005; Liu and Milman 2010; Moloney and Oguro 2014).

Within the same university, Researcher 1 teaches Language Methodology to preservice language teachers in the School of Education, while Researcher 2 teaches Chinese Studies in undergraduate classes in the Department of International Studies. Although they have differences in educational background, both researchers have been involved with innovation in CFL pedagogy practice (Xu and Moloney 2011a, b).

2 Literature Review

In reviewing the research literature which informs this study, we first discuss the definition of intercultural competence; secondly we address the theoretical development of intercultural competence in the context of language learning, and in particular, in the tertiary CFL classroom; lastly the review briefly discusses the problematic nature of 'assessment' of intercultural competence, and how this shapes the choice of research methodologies.

2.1 Defining Intercultural Competence

The significance of a competence in sociocultural understanding of language use, developed in tandem with linguistic competence, has emerged from sociocultural theory. The work of Firth (1966, 1968) and his student Halliday (1975, 1978) pioneered the analysis of language in its social context and established the interdependence of language, culture and society, and language as a social phenomenon. In sociocultural theory of learning and development, language reflects, and is created by, cultural setting and everyday activities. The notion of an identifiable

intercultural competence has been applied in a number of diverse fields: it is used within research in tertiary student internationalization and study abroad (for example, see Paige et al. 2006); it has taken on economic capital within corporate training (Bennett et al. 2000) and it has shaped new directions in language pedagogy (Kramsch 1993; Byram 1997; Liddicoat and Scarino 2013). We acknowledge that the suitability of the term *competence* has been contested (Armour 2004), as it implies an individual's concrete set of skills in what must be, in fact, a complex, unstable and personal growth process constructed with others.

In considering what the term is meant to denote, Deardorff (2006) found that internationally it was understood to include component skills of analysis and interpretation, and cognitive skills that included comparative thinking skills and cognitive flexibility. In the language learning context, it includes knowledge skills and attitudes (Byram 1997), abilities to de-centre from and question one's own cultural practice, and investigate the reasons behind why the speaker of the other language acts as he/she does (Dervin and Dirba 2006).

A wider study of intercultural competence on the university campus in which this study took place was undertaken by Krajewski (2011). Her study identified a definition for intercultural competence in everyday practice between staff and students, derived from consensus. Krajewski's final definitional model involves the interaction of (a) attitude and motivation; (b) knowledge and skills; (c) behaviour and outcome. She concludes that "*Intercultural competence means to be open-minded and respectful and to accept ambiguity in all discourse with people, to consider other people's perspectives and to constantly work towards effective and appropriate communication in order to build and maintain meaningful relationships"* (Krajewski 2011, p. 85).

While Krajewski (2011) and Deardorff (2006) have both suggested that a precise contextual definition is still under construction, this CFL research context defines the principal characteristics of intercultural competence for language learners, as capability to:

- critically reflect about the relationships between learner's cultures (Liddicoat et al. 2003) to de-centre, notice, and reflect on different interactions with culture (Scarino 2000, p. 9)
- Investigate deeper knowledge about practices in the target culture, China (Liddicoat 2002; Byram 1997)
- develop a sense of an individual intercultural identity and perspective (Kramsch 1993; Armour 2004)

These three capabilities informed the development of the data analysis tools of this study. Intercultural competence is observed in student performance in activities conducted *alongside* their language learning, rather than embedded within language use, which will follow in a later study. The activities in this study were considered a first step, in the case of CFL, in introducing the notion to both students and teacher. Previous research (Moloney 2013; Moloney and Xu 2012) has demonstrated the need for progressive introduction of intercultural strategies.

2.2 Intercultural Competence Within Language Learning

Tertiary language learning in Australia has undergone pedagogic change in the last 10 years, due in part to concern about the dropping participation rates for languages education (Group of Eight 2007). Pedagogy which focuses on communicative skills alone has been critiqued as failing to stimulate critical cultural understanding (Doyé 1996; Schulz 2006) and meet deeper student needs and expectations of constructivist contemporary education. Kramsch (2006) has written that tertiary language students "*need a much more sophisticated competence in the manipulation of symbolic systems… (what) word choices reveal about the minds of speakers*" (p. 249).

'Culture' has frequently been understood, and taught, as discrete items or artefacts of exotic interest, from an ethnocentric standpoint. Cultural 'information' is easily teachable (Paige et al. 2006), but may lead to a focus on superficial behaviours and stereotypes, without examining underlying values. This has been conceptualised by Moran (2001), in his description of four types of knowing involved in culture learning, in ascending complexity: 'know about'/'know how'/'know why'/'know oneself'. Information-rich traditional models of culture teaching (know about) are seen as weak in development of critical thinking.

In common with other languages, CFL teachers need to find ways to facilitate student abilities in critical cultural awareness, involving challenge to personal beliefs and assumptions. Such activities assume a common educational orientation in both student and teacher, in which knowledge is contestable, and open to interpretation. This may be challenging in the CFL classroom, where traditionally teachers have assumed the authoritative role, delivery of content, the 'know about' process is prioritised, and the nature of knowledge is not contestable (Chiang 2010; Wu et al. 2011).

Many teachers of CFL have traditionally been trained, within China, to focus on grammar explanations and linguistic accuracy only (Wang et al. 2013). In the Australian context, Scrimgeour (2010) has noted Chinese school teachers' difficulties with Australian classroom values, and tension between Australian and Chinese pedagogic cultures. Scrimgeour and Wilson (2009) critiqued the pedagogy of the International Curriculum for Chinese, (Hanban, the Office of Chinese Language Council International), in which many teachers are trained, for its representation of culture as "separated from communication and conceptualised mainly as knowledge of cultural artefacts" (2009, p. 36). Dervin (2011) has drawn attention to the stereotypes, or 'solidification' of culture, which are prevalent in many studies of Chinese students and academics. Thus, although inclusion of cultural elements has been introduced in some CFL teacher training, cross-cultural, or 'intercultural' skills are a very recent focus. These studies collectively demonstrate that an 'intercultural CFL' represents a significant new challenge in CFL teaching, and thus especially highlight the innovative nature of this project in its context.

2.3 'Observing' Intercultural Competence

The shift in pedagogy detailed above has demanded that language research similarly needs to be enhanced by the discourses of sociocultural theory (Armour 2004; Liddicoat et al. 2003) and qualitative methodologies. The "measurement" of intercultural competence is highly contested. There is aversion to the use of quantitative standardized competency instruments (Deardorff 2009), due to the risk of cultural and political bias. There is concern that such instruments and models oversimplify a complex notion, and fail to account for multiple voices, competencies, and multiple identities within any group of learners. Fantini (2009, p. 464) discusses many strategies and instruments developed to assess intercultural competence, and notes the rise of qualitative strategies such as oral and written activities, dialogues and interviews.

The analysis of student reflective journals and narratives, written while on exchange or in unfamiliar settings (for example Bagnall 2005; Moloney and Genua-Petrovic 2012) has become a popular methodology in studies of intercultural competence. This study is informed by Cowan's (2014) critique for best practice and rigour in such methodology. Following also Fantini's criteria for appropriate research tools (p. 465), we believe that the chosen strategies used are compatible with the objectives, are based on theoretical foundation, and are appropriate for the age of participants. The results are intended to inform the teaching/learning process at the university, and to enrich the broader development of innovative pedagogy in CFL. A description of the methodology of this study follows.

3 Methodology

As noted above, this study represents the analysis of a teaching intervention. It involved the following procedures: an intercultural workshop delivered to the whole class; students' reflective journal writing practice; a feedback workshop, and final assessable reflective journal. The researchers acknowledge their own intercultural collaboration, personal roles, connections with the Chinese community, and assumptions, as possible factors impacting their interviewing, and interpretation or 'seeing' (Russell and Kelly 2002), in 'co-responsible inquiry' (Glesne and Peshkin 1992; Wardekker 2000).

3.1 Data Collection

The study examined qualitative data collected over 8 months in 2013, in an undergraduate Chinese program (see Table 1 for sequence of data collection). The teaching intervention was delivered to all students in the two parallel intermediate (Year 2) classes, but students were given the option to volunteer data to the research study.

Table 1 Sequence of activities and data collection in Semester 1 and Semester 2

	Procedure	Follow-up tasks	Research participants
March 2013 Sem. 1	60 min workshop at beginning of Sem. 1	Students commence practice journal entries (non-compulsory)	N = 34
May 2013	Mid Sem. 1 'practice' journal entries submitted (non-compulsory)	Mid sem. 1, practice journal entries assessed. Feedback given	N = 19
June 2013	End Sem. 1 assessment writing submitted (compulsory)	End Sem. 1 writing data assessed	N = 34
June 2013	Focus groups interviews conducted	Audio-recorded, transcribed, analysed	N = 9
August 2013 Sem. 2	Follow-up 40-min workshop	Students continue journal entries (non-compulsory)	
October 2013	End Sem. 2 assessment writing submitted (compulsory)	End of sem. 2 Journal writing assessed	N = 28
October 2013	Post-task enquiry questions (non-compulsory)	End of sem. 2. students submit answers to questions (non-compulsory)	N = 20

3.2 Participants

All students in the classes volunteered to participate in the study. However, as displayed in Table 1, participation in the activities varied. This was due to firstly whether the activity was compulsory/non-compulsory, and secondly, due to students departing from the class at end of semester 1, and others joining the class in semester 2. Over the two semesters, the male/female ratio in the class was approximately 40/60 % respectively, however gender is not considered a relevant variable. The classes contained both heritage learners and non-heritage learners, in approximately a 50/50 % ratio. The heritage learners in the Australian Chinese diaspora are defined as having exposure to Mandarin or a Chinese dialect through family connections. The nature of the mixed class has been examined elsewhere (Xu and Moloney 2014a) as has the linguistic profile of the heritage Chinese speakers (Xu and Moloney 2014b). In regard to cultural familiarity, heritage learners may commonly move between cultures, on either a daily familial basis, or by contacting and visiting extended family overseas. The difference in response to the intercultural task between these two groups was not a focus of the current study, but will be examined in a future publication. Another uncontrolled variable is in student diverse levels of prior knowledge from travel or exchange experience.

The key element of the teaching intervention, the 60-min workshop, included consideration of how climate, geography and history have shaped life in China and Australia, and exploring the visible (artefacts) and invisible (values, beliefs) culture of China and Australia. Students were encouraged to individualise their perceptions

(Dervin and Dirba 2006) rather than to generalise, and to be critically aware of stereotypes. In the reflective journal task, students were to consider a topic arising in the course textbook, involving either a particular Chinese practice (e.g. tea house, the use of traditional medicine, use of terms of address) or attitude (e.g. not borrowing money; asking personal questions, etc.) drawn from use of language in the chapter dialogues.

3.3 Data Analysis

The three sets of journal entry texts (mid-semester 1, end semester 1, end semester 2) were read independently by both researchers and an analysis of writing type conducted. The analysis was informed by reference to an amended three-type model for analysis of cultural reflection texts, as used by Bagnall (2005) in his study of preservice teachers' written narratives. Bagnall's work sits within multicultural education, and the desire to more radically train young teachers to have critical cultural skills. The notion of 'types' of narratives has been used also by leading writer in the narrative field, Goodson (2013). Bagnall (2005) characterised the three types of narrative writing as descriptive, dialogic, and critical. The characteristics of each type as determined in this project, are displayed in Table 2. It must be noted that the three types were not always discrete categories, but overlapping. However, each piece of writing was read, and re-read by both researchers, discussed, and a joint decision taken as to its substantial alignment with type 1, 2, or 3.

We would prefer to represent our three types of writing as arranged horizontally, as along a 'spectrum' (Goodson 2013, p. 96). We acknowledge that there has been critique of the linear nature of vertically arranged 'tiered' models which may suggest an over-simplified upward trajectory in a process which for every individual is complex, and unfixed (Dervin 2010). We believe however that an identification of

Table 2 Descriptions of three types of writing

	Characteristics of written narrative
Descriptive	Objective description of Chinese cultural practice. The description is informational only, without student reflection or input, or consideration of values. If comparisons are made with "Western" practice, they may involve stereotypes
Dialogic	Reflective consideration of Chinese cultural practice and values, and/or language use with reference to equivalent practice or context in Australian environment. May involve student in 'conversations' with their own life and home culture. They may draw comparisons, point out conflict, and explain cultural differences, similarities, or cultural assumptions
Critical	Critical Analysis of values behind Chinese cultural practice or language use, with consideration of equivalent practice or context in student's home or wider Australian environment. The student closely examines their own behaviour, beliefs, values, and their possible adaptation if in China. Their own particular cultural lens becomes visible to them ('know oneself', Moran 2001)

"types" remains useful in the analysis of written reflection, and includes recognition of the notion of students' effort to de-centre from their own culture, and move beyond stereotypes (Dervin and Dirba 2006).

In the Findings section, we provide quotations from the data which exemplify the three types. Quotes from participants are referred to by the time of data collection, plus a number: for example Mid S1P4: Middle of semester 1 Participant 4. End S2P5: End of semester 2, participant 5. In the focus groups, the nine students have been allocated a number FG1, FG2, etc.

4 Findings

There were three sets of data. The first set was the three collections of students' writing samples, from mid-semester 1, end semester 1, end semester 2. The second set of data was the transcriptions of the focus group interview recordings. The third set of data was the teacher's replies to a set of post-task evaluation questions.

4.1 Findings from Data Set 1: Analysis of Journal Writing Exercise

Student writing samples from mid-semester 1, end of semester 1, and end of semester 2 were read by both researchers, and evaluated according to the three type model detailed above.

In Type 1, students wrote descriptive passages, sometimes informed (or copied) from information sources, without any personal input or commentary, displaying the 'know about' model of cultural knowledge (Moran 2001). For example, S1P8 is writing about the practice of modesty in China, and S1P13 is writing about the role of climate:

> *Modesty is an integral component of society and is one of the paramount ways of showing respect…Chinese culture is internationally renowned for the importance of modesty. … Confucius, a dominant figure within Chinese thought and philosophy would repeatedly speak of the importance of modesty in life if one wished to become like a sage (S1P8)*
>
> *China is a large country stretching at 9,706,961 square kilometres. It holds the largest population in the world at 1.35 billion people. With a country so large, it is only natural that the temperatures and climates differs from each province.*

Goodsons' (2013) narrative research is engaged with 'types' in life history interview narratives. Goodson describes type 1 narrative tellers as 'scripted describers'. With little 'narrative intensity', reflection and internal conversation are seldom evidenced or mentioned in the narratives of such narrators. Goodson stresses that this should not be seen as any kind of inferiority, merely a difference from other types of narrators. We agree that, for these Type 1 participants, although there may be learning taking place, if they were in a "live" situation, or in China, there may be

'limited flexibility of response to changing external context' (p. 80). Of relevance to this study, Goodson notes that a closed pattern of narrativity works well in stable social locations, but is less well equipped for movement around a world of cultural flexibility and change (p. 81).

Type 2 writing involved the addition of some personal dialogic perspective, inclusion of comparison with family or local practice, and exploration of values ('know why', Moran 2001):

> *The Chinese elderly have lots of activities they do in order to keep their mind and body active in old age. I find this interesting as in Australia most of the retired and old people don't do much. In my family my grandparents only attend Mass, and garden.* (S2P7)
>
> *Whenever I give my grandma a call, the first thing she will ask is not "How are you?" but rather "Have you eaten yet"? Such a common greeting highlights the central role of food in Chinese culture, as illustrated in table manners, eating customs, and the significance of certain foods at New Year.* (S1P14)

Type 3 probes into the reasons or values/beliefs behind a practice, and includes some investigation of a personal values framework, and recognition of how this has shaped his/her perceptions and outlook. In only a small number of students, this may move towards Moran's 'know oneself' mode of cultural knowledge. Goodson (2013) describes such Type 3 narrators as 'elaborators' (p. 83). Goodson differentiates between 'armchair elaborators' and 'focussed elaborators' (p. 96). While armchair elaborator narratives can be reflexive and sophisticated, the narratives remain closed off from possible new courses of action or the development of new identity, inhibiting attempts to explore new modes of learning and self. (p. 88). Our students, particularly as their task is being conducted, not with the immediacy of being exchange in China, but at their desk in Australia, appear to largely remain armchair elaborators. There are however exceptions. This is exemplified in this mid-semester 1 passage:

> *When Chinese people exchange gifts they prefer not to open their gift in front of the gift giver…. In contrast, in Western culture it is considered normal to open a gift immediately after receiving it…. I know myself from personal experience the Western method of giving and receiving gifts is our way to express gratitude and respect to the gift giver. …On the other hand Chinese people have an old saying "礼轻情意重", meaning, "a small gift means a great deal". … Possibly in the past when resources in China were scarce and there was a higher level of poverty, many people may have not been able to find or afford such extravagant gifts. …This may have been about 'face'… I can see the benefits in both culture's methods of gift giving and receiving; …I think it would be nice to try it from a different perspective, and I like this Chinese way of going about it.* (Mid S1, S 9)

A portion of the above passage, with critical feedback, was given to all students as a sample, in mid S1, showing how it demonstrates the outcomes of the task. However, this student was the only student in the class, in mid-semester 1, to demonstrate Type 3 writing. As a qualitative study, we do not wish to move into a quantitative approach, but some descriptive representation of student progress is useful. Results of data analysis of mid-semester 1 (non-compulsory task) were as displayed in Table 3. The majority of the class are still at Type 1 descriptive writing.

Table 3 Analysis of student writing mid-semester 1

Mid semester 1	N = 19	
Type 1	13	68.4 %
Type 2	5	26.3 %
Type 3	1	5.3 %

By the end of Semester 1, however, we can see there has been some development towards intercultural skills in students at Types 2 and 3. Table 4 displays the results of data analysis at the end of semester 1 (compulsory task).

As noted, a "refresher" session was delivered at the beginning of semester 2, to give commentary on samples of writing. The teacher (Researcher 2) continued to direct student attention to cultural issues arising in the text, in conjunction with language acquisition. Although students were again encouraged to submit non-assessable journal entries during the semester, none took this opportunity. At the end of semester 2, students submitted their final compulsory writing for assessment. The analysis of these writing samples is displayed in Table 5.

Table 5 shows there has been movement out of Type 1 writing. After the growth exhibited in semester 1, however, the researchers hoped for a continued upward growth in students reaching Type 3. Table 5 however indicates that the growth is not that significant. Possible explanations for the clustering in Type 2 writing may lie in insufficient scaffolding of the task in semester 2, the re-iteration of the project having lost its "novelty value", intake of new students unfamiliar with the task, and variables of prior knowledge. In addition, in students' perception (expressed below in Focus group data) the textbook's "culture topics" in semester 2 did not lend themselves so well to intercultural work, and students reverted to descriptive and dialogic writing. Finally, we identified that 25 students continued from semester 1 to semester 2 study. Each of these students' result on analysis of their writing samples (type 1, 2 or 3), for both Semester 1 and Semester 2, was listed and compared. The number of students who improved one or more levels in their writing, stayed on the same level, or dropped back a level from semester 1, is as displayed in Table 6.

Thus we may observe that a total of 16/25 (64 %) students achieved positive growth in intercultural analytical skills, as evidenced in their writing. While there is no benchmark against which we can judge this outcome, it can be seen to demonstrate a positive learning response to the exercise. This is supported by students' comments in the Focus Groups, an analysis of which follows.

4.2 Findings Data Set 2: Analysis of Focus Group Data

Nine students volunteered to participate in the focus group interviews. The interviewer was Researcher 1 who had no connection with student grades in their Chinese study. The questions in the focus group interviews explored what students learned, if anything, at the semester 1 workshop, their perceptions of the writing

Table 4 Analysis of student writing end Semester 1

	N = 34	
Type 1	14	41 %
Type 2	14	41 %
Type 3	6	18 %

Table 5 Analysis of student writing at end of semester 2

	N = 28	
Type 1	7	25 %
Type 2	13	46.4 %
Type 3	8	28.6 %

Table 6 Number of students whose writing changed 'type' categorisation

Change in type categorisation	N = 25
Shift to writing type displaying greater intercultural ability	16
Stayed on same type	4
Moved back to writing type displaying lesser intercultural ability	5

task, and of the benefit of the activity overall. Of the 9 participants, 5 were heritage speakers, 4 non-heritage speakers. Students expressed a positive perception of the semester 1 workshop. Six of the nine students used the phrase *"never thought about it before*" and commented that, while they had been aware of making an interested response to Chinese culture, the workshop had highlighted the nature of that response:

> *I think that was a really great hour, even though I think about this stuff a lot, just to have it re-iterated felt like it was a really good thing… It gets you thinking about in a very specific way, say the difference between Western culture and Chinese culture, and perhaps even some of the similarities.* (FGS1)
>
> *With the workshop, I don't think I'd ever really thought as in-depth about my Australian perspective on it. And I actually found it quite a challenge to put in a reflection of the Australian side of it.* (FG 4)

Most students noted that, while it gave them extra work to do, they enjoyed the process involved in the writing task. Students were motivated to look for background knowledge about Chinese practices, and to dig into their own personal experience and knowledge. Students emphasised the new knowledge and cognitive effort generated by the writing:

> *It expanded on, to look deeper into the topics …so we have to research it up, understand it a bit more, so we can see why there are these underlying differences.* (FG7)
>
> *I thought it would be easy and I could just write it up but it wasn't. You had to think about it. Just thinking about the 'why' is the hard part. But it is good to think, it was good, and I had to research a bit on the internet.* (FG9)

A number of students identified that what was new about the task, was not the cultural comparison in itself, but *"the method and thinking about it this way"… I'd*

never really thought about understanding culture as a way of understanding language." This student has identified the core purpose of the task, that the intercultural writing process was intended as a way to access greater depth in understanding language.

Two students confirmed that the most difficult aspect of the task was recognising 'invisible' Australian culture and their own beliefs (the fourth Moran level, 'know oneself'). This first student, FG4, is a heritage learner: *I actually found it quite a challenge to put in a reflection of the Australian side of it. It was actually much easier to analyse China in itself, but not so much Australia, because this is where I've been raised, and everything was so natural I've never thought about it before".*

I thought it was definitely a lot easier to talk about the Chinese side of things. (FG3).

FG5, of Sri Lankan parentage, (moving between the third person "Australian" and then including himself as "we"), observed that *"Australians have a very tough time having an Australian national identity. We struggle to have a national identity, and it's such a strong contrast to China where it's really in your face."*

Student FG9 compared the demands of the task to her experience while on exchange in Taiwan for 1 year, of becoming critical of Australia:

I would think, why do we do it that way? And I had a lot of friends from other countries as well, so I was questioning Australia all the time. You start to see a lot of faults.

Student FG9 was reminded of trying to understand people's behaviour in Taiwan, where she had to de-centre from her Australian perspective, and imagine another's perspective*: "at times you just can't understand; … You have to put yourself in their shoes, and I think that's what this task does, you have to try to put yourself in someone else's shoes, try to block out what you already know".* This is an encouraging outcome, that the task for some may micro-simulate the critical learning process of being on exchange.

As part of their Chinese major, students have to complete a small number of units taught in English which introduce generic cultural concepts. Four of the nine students suggested that the workshop and writing task had acted as a catalyst for synthesis of understanding from these units, which contributed to their growth in an applied intercultural understanding of their Chinese language. FG9 noted that "*We did a unit on cross-cultural communication in first year… but I'd never really applied it to a language that I'm studying".* FGS2 did a unit of study on Chinese traditional thought, where he studied *"Confucianism, Daoism, and it has all come together for a better understanding.*"

Commenting on other benefits of the project, students suggested that it had boosted intrinsic motivation. One student suggested that inclusion of intercultural learning would support greater retention in Chinese learning: *"the unit would see a lot more retention of students who are taking it into further years. If you're just learning the language in isolation, then you're not really connecting with it at all, so it doesn't have any significance to you*" (FG4).

FG6 felt that *"it gives you a stronger anchor point. Because if you're just learning words, then when it comes to you being put in that culture, it'll be so much more difficult to know. You wouldn't have this innate sense of the grounding of what you're*

saying. Because, language isn't just purely words and grammar, it is so much more". (FG6)

Amongst the heritage learners in the focus group participants, opinion was divided as to the benefit of the task. Some perceived it as not necessary, as "*I live between cultures all the time, don't need to think about it"* (FG8). But for student FG4 the activity has played a role in her ongoing negotiation of her own identity:

> *These cultural reflections have made me think about it more…in a good way… because I'm Chinese as well, but I've been raised in Australia, …these cultural reflections are really good because it helps me to reconcile the two halves of what I think I should be, and what I actually am, how I actually behave.* (FG4).

While most students stressed intrinsic value, two students noted the extrinsic value of intercultural competence. FG2 said that *"also in the career world, if you don't know this stuff it could make the difference between a job or not. Like say if your behaviours appear rude to the interviewer, that might mean the difference between getting the job or not."*

Student FG1 perceived the project had value in travel and on exchange: "*When you get there you won't be as well prepared I think … so it is important that you know how to act and so on. … it is useful because I'm going on exchange next year.* (FG1)

The focus group interview finally asked students for critique of the project, in order to refine future iterations. Four students criticised the limitation of writing only about cultural topics featured in the textbook. Reflecting the frustrations expressed in current literature (Dervin 2011), they identified the limitations of the textbook exclusive focus on 'visible' culture: *I actually find that a bit annoying, how textbooks always really ram the visible Chinese culture. Yes I already know there is a Great Wall. … I think it is much more important to learn these invisible things, they're going to be more important in your daily life as well. OK, there might be a Great Wall, but how's that going to affect me every day?* (FG2)

Students suggested some strategies that could be added to the task, such as additional scaffolding, in the greater provision of reflective writing samples. Five students suggested that the activity needed more collaborative discussion, beyond the workshop discussion tasks. They would like also to see each other's writing, for example, on a shared online space, in order to access others' perspectives: *"we were just writing down what we thought and giving it to someone and we never really saw what anyone else thought… I tend to think up more ideas when I'm talking with other people and learning about other people's thoughts and not just my own*" (FG 9). We recognise that social interaction is recognised as an essential generative activity in the student intercultural process (Liddicoat et al. 2003).

4.3 Findings Data Set 3: Post-project Teacher Evaluation

The teacher was asked to comment on what she gained from the project, what application she sees for the teaching of CFL, and her perception of learning benefits. She first commented on her own enjoyment of the intercultural nature of the project, of

collaborative planning and presentation, including materials from both researchers' perspectives, and how this effectively modelled the process to students. The teacher has written that the project enabled her to *"approach my teaching in a different way: a more deliberate and conscious effort to include the intercultural discussion for every unit I teach. Before, I might include a bit of cultural knowledge only when it's very obvious. But now, I always plan my lessons with some sort of intercultural discussion topics and try to explain the link between linguistic and cultural values whenever possible"*.

In her perception of the students' writing, she believed, as a first experience, it was difficult for them *"to think of things to write"*. In her impression, however, in semester 2 tutorials, students "*pay more attention to the cultural aspect of the language and become more aware of differences and similarities between the Chinese culture and their own… I believe the exercise has helped students think about culture in a more diverse way and also develop a better understanding of their own culture through comparison"*. The teacher believes the project is motivating and *"stimulates students" curiosity and enhances their interest in the language"*. She also is pleased that it brings Chinese teaching into alignment with *"current educational trends and philosophy which lay greater emphasis on how to cultivate graduates' cross-cultural competence"*.

The teacher enjoys her role in communicating how cultural connotations are built into the construction of characters, in helping "*students to link the words with some cultural meanings there…this greatly enhanced students' interest in what seemed to be a very boring and daunting task of learning strokes with no meaning at all. I always bring it back to the English language and culture and ask students how these values can be expressed in their language. …for example I would ask them to discuss the differences between the words 'house' and 'home', 'friends' and 'mates'."* The language teacher's role is critical in student intercultural development (Moloney 2008). It is evidenced in the teacher's understanding of intercultural development in both themselves and their students, in their displayed knowledge of metalinguistic connections, and in their design of tasks that stimulate and allow reflection. The teacher here is clearly engaged in all of these endeavours.

5 Conclusion

This study examined a teaching intervention in undergraduate intermediate level Chinese classes. In the writing task students were to investigate values inherent in aspects of cultural practice, particularly as conveyed in language use. We highlight a number of conclusions, limitations, and implications from the study.

From identified change in intercultural competence displayed in participant writing entries, and from focus group data, the teaching intervention appears to have been successful in its affordance of a first innovative step in CFL intercultural learning. Analysis of data suggests that for some students it has involved active construction of knowledge, making connections, some limited social interaction, reflection,

and indication of shared responsibility, the five principles of intercultural language learning (Liddicoat et al. 2003). However it is not known to what extent students could actualise this learning in active use of their Chinese language. For some students, it remained largely a "know about" exercise, some students investigated "know why", while a few demonstrated "know oneself". This study identified three definitional component characteristics of intercultural competence (see Literature Review) as: ability to critically reflect on relationships between cultures, acquiring deeper knowledge about practices in the target culture, and the development of an individual intercultural identity and perspective. The writing and focus data suggest that while the task appears to be useful in facilitating the first two components, it may require the more immediate experiential challenge of being in China, to fully engage with the third.

In future iterations, the researchers would like to focus more closely on more nuanced aspects of Chinese behaviour as expressed in language use, and to involve students in oral presentation performance, demonstrating their active use and understanding of these cultural aspects. Nevertheless, benefits of the project as reported by students, indicated in the data included increased cognitive activity, heightened awareness of the role of culture within language, increased intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and opportunity for identity negotiation in heritage students.

The study was limited in that it was a relatively small sample. The study does not make generalised claims as to the benefits of the activity, but merely suggests it is an initial step in incorporating an intercultural component in language teaching and its positive outcomes in this particular cohort. The research assessment of writing passages was conducted in accordance with a previously established research model, and informed by theory. However, it is possible that the interpretation of the types in the students' writings, and the interpretation of interview data were effected by researcher bias. As noted, the researchers have acknowledged limitations aligned with their own intercultural collaboration, personal roles, connections with the Chinese community, and assumptions, as possible factors impacting the project. We limit our claims of generalizability, but encourage readers to consider connections with other similar classroom contexts.

The participants' critique of the intervention delivered several useful insights which will be implemented in future iterations of teaching activities. Firstly, in future, the workshop and the writing task will be more closely aligned, to focus on language use rather than 'visible' cultural practice. In the classroom role plays that students periodically write and perform, the application of specific intercultural understandings and behaviours can be demonstrated within language use, and can be valued and assessed.

Secondly while the writing activity is useful in drawing individual reflective effort from students, in-class incidental enquiry through classroom discourse is also an important skill area for CFL teachers to further develop, to grow a classroom verbal context of intercultural curiosity and enquiry. This is recognised as a language teacher skill area still to be developed (Díaz 2013; Harbon and Moloney 2013; Morgan 2008). These Chinese learners, on graduating, will be part of a complex transnational world where personal intercultural critical abilities 'will be an

urgent and continuous requirement' (Goodson 2013, p. 111). In both learners and teachers, their intercultural ability will be employed as part of their ongoing CFL learning and teaching capital. CFL teachers with enhanced critical cultural awareness can employ their narrative capital to envisage new ways to teach and stimulate critical enquiry about language and culture in their classrooms.

Given the limited attention to intercultural learning within Chinese studies to date, this innovative project breaks new ground in Chinese pedagogy. It goes beyond teaching 'culture', to the notions of 'intercultural', challenging beliefs in both teachers and learners. This report has offered suggestions for the refinement and wider application of this study in other tertiary Chinese teaching contexts. The project highlights that teachers of Chinese may play an active and important role in facilitating intercultural competence in their students, enabling students to bring prior knowledge and cognitive enquiry to the enrichment of their Chinese study.

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Developing Interculturally-Oriented Teaching Resources in CFL: Meeting the Challenge

Adriana Raquel Díaz

Abstract This chapter critically examines the challenges faced by teachers of Chinese as a Foreign Language (CFL) as they endeavour to develop and implement interculturally-oriented pedagogical practices. These challenges are examined in the under-researched context of higher education and concentrate on the selection, adaptation and use of authentic teaching resources – transcultural/translingual 'migratory' autobiographies, oral history accounts and language learning memoirs. The chapter explores the strategic integration of these resources in a CFL university program, specifically, within a first year cultural context course offered to both specialist and non-specialist university students. The integration of these resources is underpinned by (1) critical pedagogical strategies that go beyond the 'cultural' to explore the 'individual'; and (2) the introduction of a dynamic, (inter)subjective Chinese perspective that may be unpacked and problematised. Examples of three learning activities are used to illustrate the ways in which learners can be engaged in the critical exploration of this perspective to support suspension of judgement and critical deconstruction of stereotypes, all considered key aspects in the development of learners' critical intercultural awareness. The discussion of these examples suggests that while selecting, adapting and using interculturally-oriented teaching resources are likely to remain a trying challenge, it is a challenge that cannot be overcome without a paradigmatic shift in the way we conceptualise our task as language educators. The chapter concludes by outlining practical strategies to help CFL teachers make the most out of resources available and, most importantly, take the steps necessary to address their widened educational mission.

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1 (Inter)cultural Language Teaching & CFL

Pedagogical approaches to 'culture' in language teaching have a long tradition, deeply influenced by evolving "conceptualisations of the relationship between language and culture and thereby also of the relationship between language teaching and culture teaching" (Risager 2007, p. 160). The pedagogical integration of a 'cultural' dimension in the Chinese as a Foreign Language (CFL) classroom is not a new endeavour either. What is relatively new, however, is the emphasis on the exploration of culture-bound aspects of language in interaction. We can trace this focus back 25 years ago when Zhang (1988) insisted that "priority should be given to the cultural elements that affect communication rather than to the general cultural elements which deal with *facts* about the culture" (p. 107). This focus remained largely dormant until the late 1990s when Chinese educators, particularly in Mainland China (Lǚ 1999; Zhang 1988), started to promote an approach to exploring culture in ways comparable to those emerging in the West. According to Xing (2006), this "cultural communication information" approach centred on exploring psychological attitudes, value systems, living styles moral standards, customs, ethnicity, along with the socio-pragmatic aspects of the Chinese language. However, this approach did not provide teachers with guidance as to what this approach looked like in practice and, as argued by Xing (2006), nor was it "instrumental in helping teachers to identify those *cultural elements* necessary for language teaching and learning" (p. 24, emphasis added).

In this context, Xing (2006) provides a comprehensive review of the literature and critique on the extant paucity of research on culture in the CFL classroom. She provides specific recommendations for the systematic integration of cultural content so that "students' cultural competence can be developed along with their language competence" (p. 263). These suggestions include strategies to integrate Chinese cultural content, which "for the purpose of convenience" she groups into five categories: tradition, attitude, ritual, belief and social behaviour. Xing maps the integration of this content against learners' levels of linguistic proficiency with a progression going from the most concrete levels to the most abstract levels of culture-in-language representations. In elementary levels, she proposes the study of cultural *keywords* as a window into the "Chinese mindset" (Cortazzi and Shen 2001; Liu 1992; Myers 1997, 2000); in intermediate levels, the use of a *key sentence* approach; and in advanced levels, the exploration of *key genres*. Finally, she presents various learning activities, teaching strategies and even suggestions on how to tackle the assessment of this content.

Xing's work provides evidence that the so called 'intercultural' turn in language teaching (cf. Byram 1997; Kramsch 1998; Liddicoat and Crozet 2000; and more recently, Liddicoat and Scarino 2013) had started to permeate the CFL teaching landscape and with it, the goal of developing learners' intercultural capabilities. Her recommendations on culture teaching, however, remain largely underpinned by static, reductionist and essentialist views of Chinese culture. This is particularly evident in her arbitrary categories of Chinese culture and her discussion of learners'

development of cultural competence as moving between the 'native' culture (C1), the 'target' culture (C2) and the so called 'third place' culture (C3) (Kramsch 1993), notions that have come under increasing scrutiny (cf. Holliday 2011) due to the emergence of more nuanced ways of conceptualising identity in interaction embedded in a context of transnational, multilingual 'superdiversity' (Blommaert and Backus 2013; Blommaert and Rampton 2011; Kramsch 2009, 2011, 2014; Vertovec 2007).

Despite more recent publications advancing our understanding of CFL pedagogies in various educational contexts (cf. Chen et al. 2010; Curdt-Christiansen and Hancock 2014; Everson and Xiao 2009; Tsung and Cruickshank 2011; Vijver and Leung 2009), there still remains a clear lack of articulation and operationalisation of the teaching of culture in the CFL classrooms. Moreover, as evidenced in the discussion of Xing's work, the literature suggests that current practices continue to limit themselves to the incidental exploration of 'imagined cultural certainties' (Holliday 2011) embedded in reified, monolithic notions of China, (the) Chinese and Chineseness (cf. Hua and Wei 2014). This limitation ultimately prevents teachers and learners from engaging critically with the complex linguistic and cultural realities in which we all co-exist, a key aspect in the widely-advocated stance on intercultural language teaching (Liddicoat and Scarino 2013). In turn, this results in the alienation, othering and silencing of the many voices that make up the fragile but blossoming ecology of "emergent, shifting, multicultural characteristics of what lies under the broad umbrella of 'Chinese', something which itself is undergoing historical transformation as China modernises and expands its global reach" (Jin 2014, p. 31).

Aside from pre-service teacher education and training as well as ongoing professional learning for in-service teachers (cf. Moloney 2008, 2010, 2013; Scarino 2014), I argue that the development of teaching resources can act as the fulcrum to advance from passive recognition to active implementation of interculturally-oriented practices in the CFL classroom. It is thus imperative to consider the type of (inter)cultural input, or lack thereof, in our teaching resources: textbooks, audio-visual material, etc. In addition, there is also a need to consider its treatment, that is, the nature and sequence of activities used to exploit such input. Indeed, as highlighted by Ros i Solé (2003), "the treatment of culture [in FL teaching materials] should entail a process where the individual not only absorbs, but also interprets and becomes *critical* about the information presented" (p. 142, emphasis added).

Against this background and subscribing to Holliday's view that "cultural realities are individually constructed around individual circumstances, and can transcend national culture descriptions and boundaries" (Holliday 2011, p. 61), I propose turning to a key, but seldom explored aspect of the development of intercultural awareness (Byram 2009, 2012b; Houghton et al. 2013; Houghton and Yamada 2012) which entails "becoming *critically* aware of [our] own tacit assumptions and expectations and those of others and assessing their relevance for making an interpretation" (Mezirow 2000, p. 4, emphasis added). In doing so, we also need be aware of "our own (inter)subjective predispositions" which we use to "mediate our sense of belonging or, conversely, of alienation" (Coffey 2013, p. 266). As such, in

this chapter I propose to address these needs through curricular innovation in CFL underpinned by (1) critical pedagogical strategies that go beyond the 'cultural' to explore the 'individual'; and thus (2) the use of translingual, autobiographical narratives to introduce an (inter)subjective Chinese perspective that can be unpacked and problematised within the safety of the classroom environment.

I specifically concentrate on the selection, adaptation and use of authentic teaching resources – transcultural/translingual 'migratory' autobiographies, oral history accounts and language learning memoirs. I present the strategic integration of these resources in a CFL university program, specifically, within a first year cultural context course offered to both specialist and non-specialist university students. I use examples of three learning activities to illustrate the ways in which learners can be engaged in the critical exploration of emic and etic perspectives to support suspension of judgement and critical deconstruction of stereotypes, all considered key aspects in the development of learners' critical intercultural awareness component (cf. Byram 2009, 2012b; Houghton et al. 2013; Houghton and Yamada 2012).

The discussion of these examples suggests that while selecting, adapting and using interculturally-oriented teaching resources are likely to remain a trying challenge, it is a challenge that cannot be overcome without a paradigmatic shift in the way we conceptualise our task as language educators. I conclude by outlining practical strategies to help CFL teachers make the most out of resources available and, most importantly, take the steps necessary to address their widened educational mission.

2 Intercultural Language Teaching Resources in CFL: Facing Some Inconvenient Truths

Research on the cultural content of CFL resources is scarce (cf. Myers 2000; Tang 2006; Yu 2009). As CFL teachers, this presents several challenges. I have grouped these challenges under three main categories: availability, suitability and readiness. Each of these challenges, however, presents several opportunities to engage in questions of interculturality at the core of our new educational mission. I will explore how to turn these challenges into opportunities to develop innovative pedagogical responses aimed to foster the development of intercultural competence.

2.1 Availability

This set of challenges centres on the lack of readily available material to introduce intercultural input in class. Traditionally, the main source of teaching materials is the language textbook. Indeed, in the higher education context, language textbooks still play a key role, particularly at beginners' level, where they tend to become the

de facto curriculum/syllabus upon which the teacher decides what cultural aspects are relevant as s/he introduces each unit's topic. As highlighted by Risager and Chapelle, "to this day, much language teaching is structured by published textbooks, even if it is supplemented with other materials from the Internet or elsewhere" (2012, p. 1).

Relying on the textbook as the main source of teaching materials, however, is highly problematic as most of the cultural input included is not designed to emphasise *difference* but rather, to homogenize behaviours through static notions of cultures which, in turn, reinforce stereotypes and strengthen boundaries between cultures (Rico Troncoso 2012). Indeed, broadly speaking, instead of being used to challenge stereotypes and (pre)conceptions of 'self' and 'other' and of native and target cultures, cultural aspects presented in textbooks are used narrowly to describe and compare tangible 'facts', behaviours and customs. This is also the case for CFL textbooks (Tang 2006; Yu 2009), which results in Chinese culture teaching being reduced to:

> … Chinese products and their origins, such as moon cakes, red envelopes, and festivals, that do not delve into a deeper layer of Chinese ways of thinking or their mentality, values, and ideology. For culturally-specific language behaviour, considerable emphasis is placed on teaching formulaic expressions, such as those used for greeting, parting, and expressing gratitude, but this approach leaves other spoken and written discourse unexplored. (Zhang 2011, p. 204)

Here we can observe a clear disconnect between theory and practice, between language educational theorists and material developers. As mentioned earlier, from a theoretical perspective, there is strong emphasis on the re-envisioned goal of language learning: the development of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) (Byram 1997) and, in particular, its 'critical cultural awareness' component (Byram 2009, 2012b; Houghton et al. 2013; Houghton and Yamada 2012). At the core of this intercultural orientation, we also find an enlarged theory of language as a dynamic entity in human communication. Here, "language is not so much a thing to be studied, as a way of seeing, understanding and communicating about the world, and each language user uses his or her language(s) differently to do this" (Liddicoat and Kohler 2012, p. 75).

From a practical perspective, however, a structuralist view on language learning seems to prevail (Kramsch 2013). Indeed, although the (inter)cultural dimension of language pedagogy is today widely acknowledged, it remains implicit and its integration in the curriculum is not taken for granted as is, for instance, the place of grammar. This reflects pedagogical approaches that as highlighted by Kramsch almost 15 years ago are "*still* operating on a relatively narrow conception of both language and culture" (Kramsch 1995, p. 89, emphasis added). Indeed, in most cases, 'language' continues to be taught as a fixed system of grammatical and phonological structures with general speech functions, and considered to be "a neutral conduit for the transmission of cultural knowledge" (Kramsch 1995), instead of one of its components. 'Culture', on the other hand, is conventionally incorporated in the classroom as a 'fifth skill', to be developed following the 'four core skills' of reading, writing, listening and speaking.

Therefore, in addition to the one-dimensional presentation of cultural input, the actual incorporation of 'cultural aspects' tends to be *incidental* and to include aspects that are not entirely language related, such as popular culture and traditional arts, sports and food (Kramsch 1991). Indeed, as Rico Troncoso points out: "cultural information in coursebooks is still treated incidentally or even worse it is treated as *additional* information" (Rico Troncoso 2012, p. 141). This *ad hoc* incorporation of cultural aspects permeates all of the curricular elements: aims, syllabus selection, learning activities and their sequence, as well as assessment tasks. This gives rise to a clear disconnect between 'intercultural goals' teachers are expected to integrate into language programs and actual enactment of these goals in everyday practice. Textbooks are but a reflection of this disconnect and the long-standing, deep-seated assumptions about what it means to learn a language and what we conceive as 'language classroom'. This leads me to the second set of challenges.

2.2 Suitability

This set of challenges is deeply intertwined with the first one and has to do with establishing the suitability of (inter)cultural input in terms of: language choices (mother tongue vs. target language), sequential organisation according to levels of language proficiency and their potential to promote critical reflection.

If we are to address the development of ICC from beginners' levels, as advocated in the literature (cf. Liddicoat and Scarino 2013), pedagogical choices need to be made regarding the use of the material in the students' mother tongue or *lingua franca.*[1] This is usually one of the biggest challenges faced by teachers and the reason why they rely on the content integrated in their textbook, presumably already sequenced according to the students' level of language proficiency. But even in such cases, the use of material that relies on the use of the students' mother tongue continues to be disapproved of by teachers and learners alike as they represent 'time away' from the target language.

Additionally, as established in the preceding paragraphs, the cultural aspects presented in textbooks warrants problematisation. Broadly speaking, material developers have usually chosen either of two paths for integrating 'culture' in language textbooks. One path avoids the 'intangibles' – the abstract, nuanced complexities of culture in communication – and focuses on the 'tangibles' – concrete examples of culture in communication (how Chinese people use chopsticks, how Japanese people bow when they greet each other, and so forth). The alternative path accepts, to some extent, the dynamic and pervasive nature of culture in communication and hand-picks specific aspects of the target language that reflect this well. Examples of this are specific speech acts and other pragmatic features of language in interaction.

[1] I use the term *lingua franca* to mean any language widely used as a medium of communication among speakers of other languages, particularly in the classroom; in the case of the Australian higher education context, English.

Because this selection is arbitrary, almost always it has meant ignoring other aspects of culture that are more complex and difficult to explain, leaving them to advanced language courses or to non-language courses in the students' *lingua franca*. In both cases, 'culture' tends to refer to the 'target culture' without considering the learners' own cultural perspectives.

Thus, in attempting to sequentially integrate 'culture', textbooks almost inevitably fail to convey its complexity and dynamic essence in communication. As such, 'culture' remains a static, one-dimensional, piecemeal representation of the complex whole. I argue that to develop and incrementally integrate a sustainable intercultural dimension in the curricula of university language programs, theorists and practitioners need to stop looking at these one-size-fits-all solutions. They need to incorporate ambiguity constructively into the development of materials from beginning levels. They can achieve this only by becoming aware of the shortcomings of presenting culture in an essentialist manner. Critical awareness of these shortcomings needs to inform educators' rationale for not only teaching language and culture but also for developing and implementing their own teaching materials.

2.3 Readiness

This set of challenges refers to the teachers' readiness to develop and implement (inter)cultural materials and activities. Aside from the challenges of 'availability and suitability', in order to develop ICC, teachers need to create opportunities for 'intercultural dialogues' and discussions (Houghton 2012) that promote critical examination of (pre)assumptions and frames of cultural reference. Yet, not all language teachers consider this to be part of their educational mission (Byram 2012c; Scarino 2014).

Language teachers' reticence to guide this type of intercultural classroom discussions is, again, symptomatic of the deep-seated beliefs that must be challenged as we transition toward an intercultural orientation of language teaching practices, one that moves away from the structuralist, language-as-code conceptualisation of this task (Liddicoat and Kohler 2012). Most importantly, it is also a reflection of the little preparation and training we have on how to guide these discussions, making choices regarding the use of target language and mother tongue while monitoring our own reactions and ways of responding to learners' questions and heterogeneous points of view. Leading intercultural discussions through trigger questions is a pedagogical skill that requires explicit attention and experimentation (Morgan 2008). Indeed, no two student cohorts are alike in terms of engagement with such intercultural discussions. In addition, language teachers need to also be aware of and monitor their own reactions to students' comments and additional questions. Developing this type of skills, which may be referred to as teachers' *pedagogical competence* in intercultural language learning, has been increasingly discussed in recent literature (cf. Byram 2012a; Houghton 2012; Houghton and Yamada 2012).

On the other hand, many language teachers are also genuinely concerned with the nature of these discussions and the type of personal information they may elicit from themselves and the students. These discussions generally centre on instances of intercultural miscommunication based on what the American anthropologist Michael Agar calls 'rich points' in interaction (1994), that is, instances of interaction that challenge one's assumptions and expectations. Discussion of 'rich points' also described as 'critical incidents' or 'cultural bumps' (Rico Troncoso 2012) often lead to sharing our own anecdotal experiences as foreign/second language learners. If not unpacked adequately this type of 'autobiographical' references has the caveat of reinforcing rather than demystifying stereotypes and creating additional barriers for intercultural communication in the classroom. This is also the case when learners share their own personal experiences in class. The tension lies between engaging the personal, idiosyncratic experiences as a way to illustrate the dynamic nature of intercultural communication and, on the other hand, ensuring that the views expressed in these accounts do not offend others and do not perpetuate stereotypical views (Holliday 2011). Balancing the tension between these two forces is not an easy task and requires conscious training and experimentation in class.

3 Turning Challenges into Opportunities

In the first part of this paper I brought to light the many challenges faced as language teachers in general, and CFL teachers in particular, when selecting, designing and implementing teaching materials for the development of intercultural competence. These challenges seem to be underpinned by a ubiquitous lack of coherence between espoused concepts and goals and their enactment – or lack thereof – in practice. Here, it is important to remind ourselves that the need to be able to deal with diversity is only set to deepen in the future. These circumstances, therefore, compel the need to generate change and innovation from within; to undertake a centrifugal type of innovation driven by clear understanding of these challenges and how they can be overcome.

The crux of the issue thus becomes how to turn these challenges into opportunities that may support coherent alignment of theory and practice in pedagogical innovation. In this section I aim to articulate how to turn these challenges into opportunities to provide innovative, interculturally-driven pedagogical responses. The following paragraphs outline these pedagogical responses along a continuum from the use of strategies to exploit already available teaching resources to the development and of new resources based on authentic material embedded in a 'narrative' turn.

The first challenge described, that of availability, may be overcome by considering critically the cultural content presented in the textbooks together with the students. Here one strategy consists in guiding students' analysis of the text from a critical discourse point of view (Kramsch 1988). Additionally, teachers may also choose to explore the wide range of readily available authentic material in the form

of travel literature, autobiographical narratives, immigrant literature as well as films, blogs and other online sources. Of course, the challenge of suitability remains. Here, teachers need to consider their own educational contexts, student cohort and, of course, the underlying conceptualisation of language, culture and their relationship.

Overcoming issues of readiness requires an even deeper level of critical, reflexive engagement (Moloney 2008, 2010; Scarino 2014). While it is important to commit to the widened educational mission that we have, we also need to conceive of this goal realistically within our own educational contexts. The literature on language and culture pedagogy underscores the long-term, life-long journey that means becoming interculturally competent, reaching beyond the static 'native' and 'target' frames of linguistic and cultural reference to link, mediate and reconcile the two, to acquire a unique, dynamic, in-between mode of interaction (cf. Deardorff 2009; Kramsch 2014). This means that in setting feasible objectives for our courses and learning activities we need to consider the minimal steps that will help us 'plant the seeds' for learners' engagement with this process and with the exploration of 'culture-through-language' from early on in their language learning journey.

In order to plant these seeds we need to consider what lies at the core of intercultural competence and its development: *critical (inter)cultural awareness* (Byram 2012a, b; Houghton and Yamada 2012). Critical awareness can be triggered by instances of 'cognitive dissonance', that is, the cognitive, mental conflict that people experience when they are presented with evidence that their beliefs or assumptions are limited (Montier 2002). The theory of 'cognitive dissonance' (Festinger 1957) essentially argues that contradicting cognitions serve as a driving force that compels the mind to acquire or create new thoughts or beliefs, or to modify existing beliefs, so as to reduce the amount of dissonance (conflict) between cognitions. Challenging the taken-for-granted, uncritically acquired frames of reference, calling them into critical consciousness may thus promote 'perspective transformation', which Mezirow defines as:

> The emancipatory process of becoming critically aware of how and why the structure of psycho-cultural assumptions has come to constrain the way we see ourselves and our relationships, reconstituting this structure to permit a more inclusive and discriminating integration of experience and acting upon these new understandings. (1981, p. 6)

Critical reflection is, in turn, triggered by questioning tacit knowledge, fixed perspectives or points of view, generally through problem-solving tasks. These tasks aim to elicit and challenge the psycho-cultural assumptions behind the frames of reference, ways of perceiving, thinking, feeling and behaving represented in the dilemma. In this context, Mezirow emphasizes that "an ethos of support, encouragement, non-judgmental acceptance, mutual help and individual responsibility" (Ibid) should be created. It is thus important to emphasize that participants "may not reach definitive outcomes in the form of agreed answers" (Saran and Neisser 2004, p. 3). Here teachers should aim at scaffolding learners' collaborative work "to achieve not unanimity, but more consciousness. And more consciousness always implies more diversity" (p. 97). These processes are at the core of 'perspective transformation'

and thus, of developing critical (inter)cultural awareness and a more dynamic, evolving sense of self.

While bilingualism, the sense of 'self' and the construction of 'hybrid identities' through one's mother tongue(s) and second language(s) have long been the focus of scholarly attention (cf. Koven 2007; Pavlenko 2006), the implications of this scholarly research have only been linked to the field of languages education in recent years (Barkhuizen et al. 2013; Dagenais 2012; Freadman 2014; Mendieta 2013; Rivers and Houghton 2013; Zhou 2012), see also Duff et al. (2013) in the CFL context. The use of personal, anecdotal storytelling responds to what Thurlow (2004) describes as the 'autobiographical imperative' in teaching about difference and diversity. He highlights: "as teachers, telling stories about our own weaknesses, failures and frustrations in encountering difference also allows others, our students for example, to fail without feeling like failures" (p. 216). These ideas have been echoed in the area of teacher education in the last few years (Barkhuizen and Wette 2008; Harbon and Moloney 2013; Moloney 2010) and, even more recently, in the emerging narratives of language teachers abroad (cf. Stanley 2013, discussing the experiences of English teachers in Shanghai).

Nevertheless, many teachers remain unconvinced about this approach because of the inherent caveats discussed earlier. An alternative is thus to use complementary authentic material such as transcultural and translingual migratory literature, oral history accounts and language learning autobiographies, which provide us with the opportunity to introduce a third person's emic perspective that can be unpacked and problematised within the safety of the classroom environment (by third person I mean, other than teacher and the student). In addition the personal, individual nature of such first-person accounts has the potential to increase the level of students' affective engagement that may lead to instances of cognitive dissonance.

Within the CFL context, we can turn to Hay and Wang's (2010) definition of the 'migratory' literature genre as a heavily populated site capturing elusive instances of culture and language as sites of struggle and what has been described as the so-called 'third place' (Kramsch 1993, 1999; Lo Bianco et al. 1999), conceptualised here as a place of restlessness, shifting identities and hybridity. Hay and Wang emphasise the morpheme '*ory*' in 'migrat*ory*' to highlight a state of transition. Wang has recently delimited this genre further by indicating that it "embraces a wide range of literary texts, including those written by Chinese writers who have experience of living outside of China and by non-Chinese writers with experience of living inside China" (2014, p. 340; see Wong 2014, as a recent example of this genre). As such, this corpus of works centres on the vivid depiction and exploration of identity, ethnicity, instances of linguistic/culture shock, misunderstandings, stereotyping, confusion, anxiety and conflict of a person who lives in a 'foreign' country. Hay and Wang (2010) and more recently Wang (2014) stand on the shoulders of Hodge and Louie so to speak as they argue for the application of "social semiotics, and critical linguistic and discourse theory to the teaching and learning of the Chinese language and culture to build up a repertoire of ways of reading China through many kinds of cultural texts" (Hodge and Louie 1998, p. xi).

The following sections introduce three examples of activities developed within a first year Chinese cultural context course taught in English at an Australian University. This course was open both specialist and non-specialist (language) students and its aims were twofold. First, as a complement to students' language learning courses, the aim was to give Chinese language students an introduction to some key pragmatic features of Chinese language in social interaction. The second aim was to provide all students enrolled with a critical understanding of important political, social and cultural trends and issues in contemporary China as well as the various areas of contention and debate within both the academic literature and in the media. The three examples presented here illustrate innovative use of authentic material as a window into first-person accounts with an emic perspective into intercultural interactions.

3.1 Transitory Readings Through Migratory Literature

This first example of exploitation of authentic material is set against the background of 'migratory' literature described earlier. For this activity we[2] used an excerpt from the bilingual and bicultural reflections of a Chinese migrant in Australia titled *Returning to my mother tongue: Veronica's journey continues* (Z. V. Ye 2007) taken from the book *Translating Lives – Living with Two Languages and Cultures* (Besmeres and Wierzbicka 2007). This excerpt aimed to complement the exploration of concepts hitherto presented in the lectures and workshops and covered in various set readings (Brick 2005; Li 2003; Pratt 1991; Ye 2004). As such, it was used to explore notions of self/other, insider/outsider, how to interact within those categories and how to potentially traverse those categories (Fig. 1).

After reading the excerpt, students worked in small groups with an overhead transparency and different colour markers to design a concept map explaining the relationships between the theories and concepts on Chinese interaction discussed in earlier sessions. A nominated speaker for each group then presented their concept map to the rest of the class using the overhead projector. The class members were thus able to ask for clarification on the concept maps and provide feedback to each other. The concept map in Fig. 2, below, is one of those produced in class with the feedback from students and teachers.

With the various arrows, students explained the relationships between the key concepts of zijiren 自己人 ('one of us') and shuren 熟人 (acquaintance); vis-à-vis: shengren 生人 (stranger) and wairen 外人 (outsider). The differentiated ways of acting with shengren and shuren means that a great deal of investment goes into moving from shengren and shuren and ultimately to 'one of us'. This is done using linguistic strategies and pragmatic acts through: (1) specific 打招呼 da zhaohu

[2] Here, 'we' refers to the author, in the capacity of lead teacher-researcher of the participatory action research underpinning this curriculum innovation (cf. Díaz 2013), and two other experienced CFL teachers, one native and one non-native.

When a relative gave me some farewell gifts, I heard myself saying *zijiren, wenshenme name keqi* ('We are insiders, why you are being so polite?'). I was immediately taken aback.

Am I not familiar with this 'insider-outsider' distinction? Of course I am. I think in these terms in Australia with my Australian husband all the time. Whenever he replies to my email with something like 'thanks for your email' or when he says 'a appreciate it', or 'you might want to do it this way', I get upset and reply in English 'why are you treating me like an outsider', for Chinese couples do not use such formal language. But for a long time, I myself have not spoken these words in Shanghainese. I have not heard the sound of them for such a long time. When I hear them now, they seem unbelievably forceful, pure and shocking. By speaking them out I feel the true force of the words *zijiren*, which simply cannot be replaced by the word 'insider'. I know how deeply I have been drawn into a way of interacting with people that depends on the distinction between *zijiren* ('insider') and *wairen* ('outsider').

Fig. 1 Example 1 – Excerpt of autobiographical reflection (Ye 2007, p. 65)

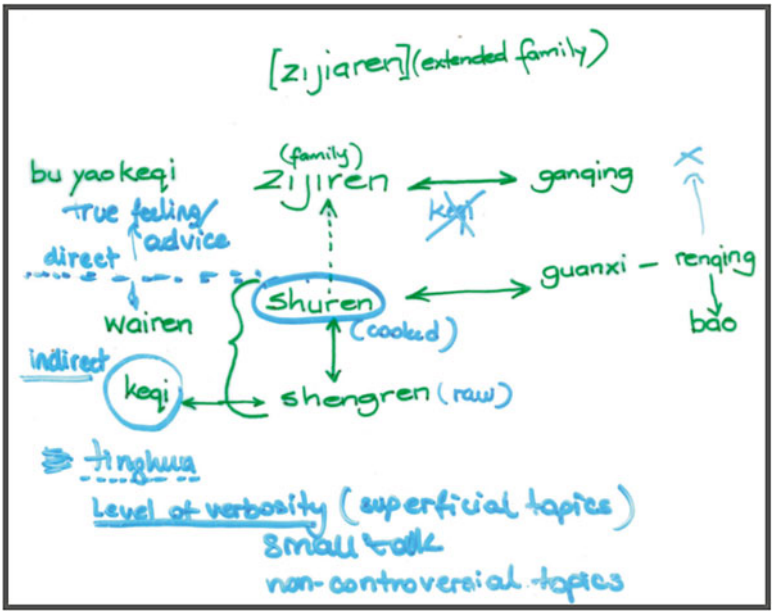

Fig. 2 Student-generated Chinese insider/outsider concept map (Source: Díaz 2013, p. 108)

(greetings); (2) ways of addressing people using the prefixes 同 tong and 老 lao; and (3) rules of 客气 keqi (politeness).

One of the most interesting issues raised by the students was that while the concepts of 'insider' and 'outsider' are not limited to Chinese language, the rules of politeness and strategies to traverse those categories are vastly different from those used in the Australian context. The final activity consisted of discussion of an intercultural 'case study' or 'intercultural sensitiser' (Brick 2005, p. 47). This activity invited students to reflect on two stereotypical views of friendship from the Chinese and the Australian points of view, that is applying both 'emic' and 'etic' points of reference. Here, we utilised various trigger questions to encourage students to reflect on past experiences and anticipate potential instances of miscommunication. Students were thus asked to reflect on whether they had experienced similar instances of intercultural dissonance due to their interactant's expectations differing from their own. Students were also asked to consider whether they could see themselves adopting some of the behaviours discussed (e.g., not saying the equivalents to 'please' and 'thank you' in Chinese when interacting with friends or host families).

Many of the students in the class had indicated that they had Chinese-speaking classmates in other classes, as well as language exchange partners with whom they practiced their 'foreign languages' outside the class (most partners were Chinese-speaking international students). As a result, students' contributions to the discussion raised the issues of individual idiosyncrasies, age and gender differences. Students also questioned the behaviours of the Chinese international students with whom they interacted and reflected on how and how far these students were being influenced by Australian language and cultural frames of reference when interacting with them. The content of this discussion was particularly interesting as it pointed to a developing level of critical awareness of cultural frames of reference among the students through a text that specifically emerged in an Australian context (see also Ngan and Kwok-bun 2012 for autobiographical reflections of Australian-born Chinese).

3.2 Oral Histories for Oral Presentations

In this course we also used oral histories compiled by Chinese journalist Sang Ye in his 2006 book *China Candid: The People on the People's Republic* (translated by Geremie Barmé). This collection comprises the unique and powerful voices of "uncelebrated individuals" whose conversation-narratives provide a deep reflection on the nation's tumultuous history from a personal level. Sang Ye interviewed 36 citizens of the PRC: from artists to businesspeople, and from former Red Guards, rural migrants and prostitutes to Olympic athletes. Each chapter of the book is composed of a transcript of each interview turned into a single narrative flow, as if the interviewee were engaged in a monologue rather than an interview.

Students were asked to pick a chapter from this book to conduct a 15-min reflective oral presentation. The presentation had to combine the analysis of the interviewee's journey through the use of academic and media sources. In order to model

the type of reflective presentation that we expected, I made my own presentation centred on the story titled 'Moonwalking – A differently abled young woman'; this was the story of Zhao Li, a disabled girl whose determination in pursuit of tertiary education had made the Chinese newspapers. This was a story that I could relate to on a very personal level – and one that has stayed with me since teaching the course – as I have sister who is also 'differently abled'; I shared this with students and this opened the floor to discuss an aspect that is rarely discussed in the language or cultural context classroom, let alone in certain educational and cultural settings.

Through my 'mock' presentation I invited students to reflect on the underlying cultural values placed on physical disabilities in different cultures and corresponding expressions of prejudice. Zhao Li's voice also helped us to think about the language used to describe disabilities, the use 'politically correct' terms in English and possible translations in Chinese. The excerpt below can be found at the end of Zhao Li's interview/monologic narration as she eloquently expresses her 'hopes' for the future.

Students' oral presentations were part of the main assessment for this course. Overall, students were very positive about this assessment task in their student evaluations, citing that they enjoyed being able to select their own chapter/story to explore and that they also enjoyed listening to each other's exploration of these stories and the underlying issues raised by their protagonists (Fig. 3).

China has 1.2 billion people. With such big population, it's not realistic to expect that just because you're disabled, they're going to look after you. My greatest wish is simply to be treated as equal. I hope that this society can improve a bit and give people like me a chance. I hope that other disabled people will have an easier time getting into university and not run the sort of obstacles that I did. I hope – I hope that people don't have to wait till the end of their lives to realise how regrettable the things they have bequeathed to the future might be.

Do you think my hopes are too unrealistic?

I love dancing. I do an excellent moon walk. Sometimes when I'm dancing I get so excited that I feel a little crazy.

Can you do the moon walk? Even normal people don't need to use their arms for that.

Fig. 3 Example 2 – Excerpt of oral history account (Ye 2006, p. 134)

3.3 Language Learners' Memoirs

In the last few decades in particular, research on language learners' reflective accounts of intercultural encounters while studying abroad has become increasingly important to the exploration of culture-through-language (cf. Benson et al. 2013). In addition, the global rise in population mobility; the ubiquitous availability of instant international communication and the ever-increasing frequency of intercultural encounters in everyday life have, in turn, have led to increasing numbers of autobiographical memoirs reflecting on trans-cultural experiences and the (de)construction of identity (cf. Freadman 2014; Kramsch 2004, 2009). As with the two previous examples, the use of such autobiographical language learning memoirs as a way of exploring culture-through-language in the CFL classroom remains largely unexplored.

Against this background, I present the third and final example of potential curricular innovation activity. This example, designed for future iterations of the course, illustrates the exploration of linguistic varieties within China, but also of accent as an identity marker. This excerpt comes from the edited volume *Chinese Learning Journeys: Chasing the Dream* (Su 2011). This volume comprises the testimonial journeys of eight learners from mainland China whose stories may "contribute to our understanding of the Chinese learner's overseas experience and how that experience is shaping the aspirations of a future generation of Chinese citizens" (p. xi) (Fig. 4).

Along with a discussion on China's complex ecology of dialects, this excerpt could also be used to discuss the geographical and historical contexts relevant to the protagonist's story as well as to reflect on the critical incident(s) that led students to engage in their own Chinese language learning journeys.

4 'Turning Bricks into Jade'

As Risager and Chapelle (2012, p. 4) point out "cultural content in textbooks remains a relatively underexplored field of study in spite of the potentially important role of textbooks for the development of cultural knowledge and intercultural competence". Nevertheless, the few studies that have emerged in recent years in relation to the development of intercultural language teaching materials in general (cf. Morgan et al. 2011; Rico Troncoso 2010, 2012), and in CFL in particular (cf. Myers 2000; Tang 2006; Yu 2009) clearly point to the need for language teachers themselves to engage in adapting available resources to their own educational contexts with a view to critically exploring the *emic* perspective of Chinese culture.

This means using resources "differently" (Liddicoat and Scarino 2013, p. 84), problematising underlying ideologies in the available activities in textbooks or set of readings, but also integrating suitable authentic material in order to broaden students' perspectives on their own cultural pre-assumptions from a first-person per-

Hunan Nga Zi (Hunan kid)

Because of a widespread famine caused primarily by the Great Leap Forward movement, I moved at the age of 5 with my parents from a small village in Hunan Province to Wuhan, the capital city of Hubei. Living in a rather poor neighbourhood where here were quite a number of Hunan migrant families like ours, I got to know some children of these families and was able to speak the Hunan dialect for quite some time. Needless to say, I was sometimes bullied by the local street kids there. In a fight with a local boy of a similar age, in which I got the upper hand, the boy ran away shouting 'Hunan Nga Zi, Bie Nga Zi…' (Hunan kid, son of a…) in Hunan dialect with a Wuhan accent. Instead of feeling happy with the win, I burst into tears. […] What hurt me the most was not the language but the skilful way he used to infuriate me. […] Within six months or so after that incident, I managed to speak perfect Wuhanese, the local dialect, by completely eradicating my Hunan accent. […] What makes this story special to me is the fact that from an early age I became keenly aware of one's linguistic relation to self-esteem and developed a deep interest in languages/dialects and language learning to negotiate my place in society.

Fig. 4 Example 3 – Excerpt of learner journey (Feng 2011, p. 32)

spective. Here, I argue that the use first-person accounts can be particularly engaging. Using the autobiographical/testimonial genre – autobiographical accounts in migratory literature and oral history accounts as well as language learner memoirs – may provide a suitable 'first-person' perspective as a starting point to promote intercultural dialogue and the development of critical intercultural awareness. The examples presented here illustrate three activities carried out in the context of a first year cultural context course offered in English to both specialist and non-specialist language learners. However, as argued by Freadman (2014), the use of this type of genre may lend itself to mapping out the curriculum progression of culture- in-language exploration "from interpersonal and familial genres at the beginning, to public genres at advanced stages correlating to a progression from narrative to debate and polemic, where the public, polemical genres imply but do not always tell a story" (p. 383). Here, for instance, teachers may also want to guide students into producing their own autobiographical accounts (orally and/or in written form) in the target language according to their level of proficiency.

Finally, in creating, adapting and developing their intercultural teaching resources, CFL teachers need to address the underlying tension, or even disjuncture

between theory and practice. This disjuncture can only be addressed by reconciling our teaching philosophies and beliefs about what is now widely acknowledged to be the ultimate goal of language education – the development of interculturally competent speakers – and the enactment of this goal in practice. In turn, this entails a reconceptualisation of the 'language classroom' as a grammar-driven learning environment to a space for intercultural dialogue driven by the exploration – and celebration – of diversity through language. In order to achieve this reconceptualisation of the CFL classroom, the CFL community as a whole – native and non-native practising teachers, teacher trainers and trainees – ultimately need to embrace this task wholeheartedly.

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取长补短: Complementary Peer Learning in the Multilingual L2 Chinese Classroom Through Tandem Translation

Isabel Tasker

Abstract The focus of this chapter is on the use of translation in advanced level university Chinese classes where the students are increasingly diverse in their Chinese language learning backgrounds and Chinese proficiency skills. Specifically, the concept of Tandem Translation as a peer learning activity will be introduced. In Tandem Translation, L1 speakers and L2 learners of Chinese and English work collaboratively and reflectively in pairs to create joint translations between both languages, in a process of complementary learning. In the distance learning context of the university where the study took place, Tandem Translation is conducted online, linking classmates who are located off-campus with those located on-campus in meaningful shared learning activity. A case study of the genesis, theoretical justification, implementation and evaluation of Tandem Translation learning tasks is presented. Analysis of participants' on-task interactions and post-task reflections demonstrates the ways in which participants adopt expert and novice identity positions at different stages of the task; it also identifies types of constructivist learning affordances offered by Tandem Translation.

1 Introduction: The Changing Nature of Advanced Chinese 'Classrooms'

As universities internationalise and campus communities become increasingly plurilingual environments, student cohorts in tertiary Chinese language courses in Australia are changing. Statistics reflect the changing demographics of students taking Chinese: some universities have reported a drop in enrolments in beginners' Chinese, accompanied by growth in enrolments of Chinese-speaking international students in advanced level classes (McLaren 2011). The latter are students who, having normally completed their secondary education in the Chinese system, go on to undertake English-medium tertiary education courses at overseas universities, the

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majority of them in professional, business or science programs. Where their degree program allows it, some of these students choose to enrol in advanced Chinese classes as elective subjects. Varied combinations of motivations lie behind their choice: it can be seen as a means to enhance levels of academic expression in Chinese; or to improve skills in translating between Chinese and English; it can also be perceived as a lighter option to include in what is otherwise a cognitively dense study load of fully English-medium instruction; and a further motivation is an interest in understanding how one's own native language is presented and taught as a foreign language.

The new diversity of students in advanced level Chinese classes requires a reconsideration of curriculum and learning tasks, and creative rethinking of established pedagogical practices. This chapter will describe an approach to teaching translation in advanced Chinese classes which draws upon the affordances of the plurilingual context to design learning activities of relevance and value to all participants. The design of such learning activities also takes into account the change in the very nature of the tertiary 'classroom', which is now no longer tied to time and place. The expansion of flexible, online and distance delivery modes, enabled by developments in web and communications technology, allows the classroom to become a virtual space in which participants can interact asynchronously and from diverse and widely separated locations.

In Tandem Translation, L1 speakers and L2 learners of Chinese and English work collaboratively and reflectively in pairs to create joint translations between both languages. In the distance learning context of the university where this study took place, Tandem Translation is conducted online, linking classmates who are located off-campus (and in some cases studying in isolation), with those located on-campus in meaningful shared learning tasks. The activity can also be modified for the face-to-face classroom.

In this chapter, some crucial demands and affordances which the increasingly multilingual class context of advanced Chinese translation-based classes places on the design of effective learning activities will be identified. The role of Tandem Translation in realising the potential for cross-linguistic work between different student cohorts will also be explored.

First, the role of translation in foreign language pedagogy will be considered, and then the discussion will turn to the consequences of the changes in student cohorts in Australian universities for the framing of translation pedagogy in advanced Chinese classes. The different requirements that mode of attendance and mode of study (on-campus or distance learning) place upon the design of effective translation tasks will also be assessed. After discussing relevant approaches to peer learning and collaborative group work, the design and delivery of a particular Tandem Translation activity will be explained. Analysis and discussion of data consisting of on-task and post-task commentary from student participants is followed by a discussion of findings in terms of complementary learning, and of movement between novice and expert identities. Of key significance are the concepts of

bidirectionality, interchange, complementarity, positioning, and co-construction of shared linguistic repertoires.

2 Translation and Language Learning

The place and role of translation in language teaching and learning has been reassessed in recent years (Cook 2010; Laviosa 2014). Having been shunned in the era of communicative language teaching, translation is now recognised as a pedagogical practice integral to the development of language proficiency, which can effectively be incorporated in language learning and teaching in a variety of ways. It is also crucial for the development of language awareness in relation to not only a student translator's non-primary language (L2), but also their primary language (L1). A further important intrinsic aspect of translation is that it develops intercultural competence and symbolic competence of the multilingual subject (Kramsch 2010). In increasingly multilingual learning environments, translation is now advocated as 'an ideal context for developing translingual and transcultural abilities' (MLA 2007, p. 9) which 'places value on the ability to operate between languages and entails the capacity to reflect upon the world and on ourselves through the lens of another language and culture' (MLA 2007, cited in Laviosa 2014, p. 2). Translation is of course also a professional skill in its own right which both requires and develops advanced levels of language proficiency as well as entailing a wide variety of professional strategies, resources and competencies.

In advanced Chinese curricula at tertiary level, which must cater for the linguistically heterogenous cohorts of students described above, translation can serve a dual purpose. For the students whose primary language is English (L1E) and who have undertaken between 3 and 5 years of formal study of Chinese, translation is used to assist proficiency development. For the more advanced long term learners of Chinese as an additional language (L2C), and for international students with high-level English skills whose primary language is Chinese (L1C), there can be a stronger focus on the development of the skills, strategies and techniques of translation per se.

2.1 Bidirectionality Defines Translation Tasks in Linguistically Heterogeneous Classes

Prior to the changes described above in the composition of the student cohorts taking advanced Chinese, it was reasonable to assume that most students enrolled in advanced Chinese units in Anglophone universities came from fairly homogeneous linguistic backgrounds. Typically they identified English as their primary language,

and were learning Chinese as an L2 or additional language. Where translation tasks were concerned, when the source text was Chinese, all or most students would be working into their L1, and when the source text was English, all or most of them would be working into their L2. Translating into the L1 and translating into the L2 raise different issues for the teaching context. For any given source text, an assumption of *unidirectionality* of translation could be made, and could guide the design of the learning activities and the framing of task discussion.

With the changes in the composition of advanced Chinese classes to much more linguistically heterogeneous groups, the translation context is no longer unidirectional; instead it becomes *bidirectional*. When the source text is Chinese and the target language is English, there will be some students who are translating into their L1 and some students who are translating into their L2; these roles will be reversed when the source text is English and the target language is Chinese, but the *bidirectionality* will remain. This requires a change in pedagogical approach, as tasks can no longer be framed as translation into L1 for all participants, or translation into the L2; and each group of students will encounter different issues even while working on the same source text.

The design of translation tasks suitable for bidirectional class contexts is the focus of this study.

2.2 Group Work

Teaching translation involves high attention to detail, demanding considerable input of teacher time in close reading, and detailed commentary on student translation texts. In the face-to-face classroom, the group context offers opportunities to scaffold the preparation of individual drafts through workshopping and group discussion (Chen 2010). Such activities offer the dual advantage of providing a more interactive learning context in which students can compare alternative perspectives, and also reducing the eventual load for the teacher of providing written feedback on individual student written submissions by teasing out some of the shared problems verbally in an informal group setting in advance. In the distance learning context, however, the higher dependence on asynchronous written communication between teacher and students creates problems in providing timely individualised feedback on student work in sufficient depth to be useful. (Although synchronous online classes can replicate the face-to-face classroom context to some extent, they prove difficult to organise when participants are located across time zones and have varying levels of technological resources and time availability.) The introduction of online group work allows for peer feedback to be incorporated as an additional channel to support student learning. Peer feedback has been identified as an effective strategy for learning and assessment (Boud et al. 1999; Swain et al. 2002).

2.3 *Typological Distance: Meeting the Challenges Through Language Exchange*

Translating between Chinese and English is associated with specific complexities relating to the typological distance between the two languages. Particular challenges arise both from the lack of cognate elements in the lexicon, as well as the nature of Chinese as an isolating language which causes word functions to vary greatly according to context, and also from the major structural differences between the two languages. For example, the relation between clauses and sentence parts is only loosely marked in Chinese and tends to be signalled by relative position and context, without necessarily using connective markers (parataxis), whereas English has a tendency to use connecting words to show such dependencies (hypotaxis) (Wang 1954). In translating between the two languages, these are issues which can lead to the production of target texts which sound unnatural even though the translator has made what they believe to be appropriate choices in terms of lexis, structure and register. The bidirectionality inherent in a linguistically heterogeneous translation class offers affordances for translators to receive feedback on the level of 'natural-ness' of their draft target texts from fellow members of the class group who are L1 users of the target language. There is rich potential for discussion which can deepen understandings of the relations between the two languages.

Collaborative small group or pair tasks involving discussion, reflection and peer feedback are an effective option for raising learner awareness of the differences in the ways in which two languages encode and express meaning, even when the participants share the same L1. It has been shown to enhance attention to vocabulary and expressions in translation tasks (Källkvist 2013), and to promote greater awareness, critical reflection, and autonomy (Chen 2010). When participants have different levels of language competence then novice-peer interaction can be a powerful mechanism for individual language development. In Vygotskyan sociocultural frameworks (Vygotsky 1987), such interaction is conceptualised as taking place in the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD): "in the presence of a more capable participant, the novice is drawn into, and operates within, the space of the expert's strategic processes for problem solving" (Donato 1994, p. 37). The ZPD, which is context-dependent, is "created in the interaction between the student and the co-participants in an activity, including the available tools and the selected practices", and depends upon the extent to which the interaction is meaningful and relevant to students at the time (Wells 1999, p. 318). From a different conceptual perspective, language socialization theory also emphasises the central role of expert-novice engagement. The reciprocal nature of the process is important; it is "a two-way street, in that more and less experienced members learn from each other by creatively deploying linguistic resources" (Ochs 2000, p. 232).

In contexts where L1 and L2 learners are cross-matched for language learning activities, learners pool resources to complete learning tasks that none of them could do alone. Martin-Beltran (2009) reports that collaborative writing exercises for cross-matched L1–L2 dyads in a dual-language school enhance both the interplay

of two languages as academic tools; as well as the recognition of learners' expertise and their distinct linguistic funds of knowledge; and also the opportunities for co-construction of text. In another relevant study, class groups of learners and speakers of English and Japanese met together weekly in a structured format in which each language group alternated the roles of immersion learners and tutors. Results showed a stronger motivation to use the L2, to engage in L2-based friendships, and to develop positive intercultural attitudes (Culhane and Umeda 2004).

Mutual language exchange in the online environment, where each member of the pair is a native speaker of the language which the other one is learning, is known as 'e-tandem' or 'telecollaboration'. Partners alternate between the roles of L2 learner and 'expert informant' on their own language and culture in a relationship of inter-dependence and reciprocity (Stickler and Lewis 2008). Tandem learning originated in Europe, where it is widely used in self-access language centres; it is also adapted for online classroom exchanges which link one group of students in Country A studying Language B with an equivalent counterpart group in Country B studying Language A.

Popular tandem and e-tandem activities include conversational exchange, email exchange, writing and peer response, and cultural discussion. Cultural and intercultural competence develops also through participation in informal unidirectional online chat, which has similarities to e-tandem but is less structured (Liddicoat and Tudini 2013; Woodin 2013). Linguistic and intercultural comparison, of equivalent forms of expression, frequently result from these activities, and such comparison is clearly highly relevant to the development of translation capabilities. However, "Tandem Translation", or tandem learning which has bidirectional translation as its central focus, has not been reported in any research studies apart from this one (see also Tasker 2014).

In the following sections I will describe the concept, design and implementation of Tandem Translation as a learning activity in advanced Chinese classes.

3 Tandem Translation in the Advanced Chinese Class

Tandem Translation was developed for use in a unit[1] at 3rd/4th year level in the Chinese major, offered at a regional Australian university with a tradition of dual-mode on-campus and distance education (DE) delivery. The unit curriculum has three concurrent strands. First, core issues and techniques for translating between Chinese and English are *introduced* through weekly textbook readings, discussion, and practice exercises at sentence level (Ye and Shi 2009). Second, the techniques are *applied* in the translation of authentic texts of paragraph length or above, both in individually submitted written assignments and also in the online Tandem

[1] A subject, or unit of study, is normally equivalent to ¼ of an undergraduate's full-time study load in one semester or trimester. Terminology varies between universities; the term 'unit' will be used here.

Translation task. Reflective commentaries are required with each completed translation. The third strand is the investigation and evaluation of translation *resources*.

Tandem Translation draws on the features of tandem learning and collaborative learning, and applies them to two-way translation tasks for this diverse student cohort. The focus is on the complementary skills and linguistic proficiency of learners from different L1 groups, and the task involves working together to create joint translations from Chinese to English and from English to Chinese.

The task design was guided by Schwienhorst's three recommendations (2003, p. 441) that tandem projects should be embedded in and linked to offline coursework; that task-based tandem learning requires a clearly defined goal, such as an artefact to be submitted to the class or the teacher; and that guidance in critical reflection is required.

The Tandem Translation task is scheduled in the second half of the semester, against the background of the continuing ongoing weekly readings and online discussion. It is presented to students via the online Learning Management System (LMS) as a series of steps.

- Step 1: Students complete an online choice activity to self-identify as either speaker of Chinese as primary language (L1C), or learner of Chinese as non-primary language (L2C). Using this information, they then form into pairs of L1C and L2C.
- Step 2: Each pair selects one themed set of texts (from a choice of ten such sets). Each set consists of two texts, one in each language, up to 275 characters or 150 words in length. Loosely comparable in terms of topic area and genre, the texts are sourced mainly from journalism websites. The ten themes are: Traditions and customs; Environment; Cities and transport; Health and diet; Education; Report and survey; Cultural exchanges; Travel and book promotion; Book and film reviews; and Lifestyle and health.
- Step 3: Over several weeks, each pair works collaboratively to produce one joint translation of each text in their chosen set. In planning and collaborating on their translations, pairs must use the dedicated private online spaces (synchronous text chat mode and asynchronous discussion forum mode) provided in the LMS. Both these modes have the advantage of leaving a textual record of the collaborative discussion which can be referred to during task assessment (Kelly et al. 2010). Each pair of students posts their two completed translations on the unit webpage.
- Step 4: Each student submits an individual reflective commentary on the tandem translation task. This is not visible to their pair partner or other students. The reflection is scaffolded by a set of framing questions.

Assessment of Tandem Translation is guided by two principles: to be performative, by implementing constructive alignment of task, learning outcomes and goals in such a way that by completing the task, students fulfil the learning goals; and also to be process-oriented rather than product-oriented. Completion of three items is required: joint translations submitted; discussion and collaboration within each pair recorded in the chat rooms or discussion forum spaces; and reflective commentary

submitted. Each individual reflective commentary is then graded against four criteria: compliance with requirements; evidence of engaged participation in the discussion and collaboration; evidence of reflection on collaborative and intercultural aspects of the translation process; and reference, where appropriate, to concepts and issues studied in the unit. (The joint translations are not graded; but at other phases of the semester students must submit individual written translations for grading.)

4 Presentation and Analysis of Data

Two sources of data from a heterogeneous group of participants (N = 29) are drawn upon. The *on-task* discussions provide insights into the ways that students engage with the tandem translation activity and the strategies and processes that the task engenders. A complementary viewpoint is offered by the *post-task* individual reflective retrospective commentaries, which record perceptions and evaluations of the tandem translation exercise from the participant perspective. The analysis demonstrates aspects of the learning processes that are taking place as students work collaboratively in cross-matched language pairs to produce successive joint drafts for the Tandem Translation task. The findings presented here fall into three categories: task orientation and strategy; evidence of the joint and reciprocal learning processes at work; and processes of identity and personal positioning.

The task instructions are given in both English and Chinese, but there is free choice of language for the on-task discussions, in order not to inhibit the communication. English is used more than Chinese, but there is quite a degree of code-switching and code mixing.

The extracts from online text chats are presented verbatim as they appeared on screen (except that sometimes consecutive turns by the same speaker are joined on one line). The exchanges sometimes display the overlap and delay between turns which is characteristic of the genre.

Notation: L1E – user of English as primary language; L1C – user of Chinese as primary language; L2E – learner of English as non-primary language; L2C – learner of Chinese as non-primary language; L1C/E – background speaker with high-level proficiency in both languages. E → C – source text is English and target is Chinese; C → E – source text is Chinese and target is English. […] – words omitted.

4.1 Task Orientation and Strategy

While some pairs worked jointly on both texts from the start, as advised in the task instructions, others initially adopted what they assumed was an easier strategy, of dividing the task so that each partner worked on the text for which the source was their L2 and the target their L1. But in the course of the activity students re-evaluated that strategy, as reflected in post-task comments:

(1) "surprised that it was equally difficult for my partner" [L1E]
(2) "in my ignorance, I thought [my L1C partner], as a native Chinese speaker, would automatically create an 'accurate' Chinese target text." [L1E]
(3) "some differences take place in English speaker and Chinese speaker in the way of understanding and paraphrasing and it's still need time to work on it" [L1C]

Extracts from on-task interaction furnish examples of student attitudes to translating into their L1. The comment in (4) comes as a L1E partner reads a draft target text produced by the L1C.

(4) L1E: it's really hard for me to give you any advice. I think you should have done mine and me yours, then we could check in our language.
(5) Pair 2, E → C, source item: *driving is not too harrowing an experience*

L1C: I like your translation "开车并不太可怕" which means you use free translation. It is much better than my translation.

In (5) the L1C speaker prefers the L2C partner's suggested target Chinese text over his own attempt, demonstrating understanding that translating into one's L1 does not necessarily offer the best results. He explains his opinion by drawing on the metalanguage of the textbook to make explicit reference to free translation, one of the translation strategies studied, thereby positioning the two partners on a footing of equality and reciprocity in their shared experience of being students in this unit.

(6) Pair 4: L1C: I even donno how to translate the English into Chinese clearly

L1E: haha, im the same with translating into english, so what I do is make a literal sentence that doesnt make much sense and then try and smooth it out

The L1C partner's use of the word "even" in (6) shows that his expectation had been that translating into the L1 would be easy, and reflects a note of embarrassment that this is not the case. L1E picks up on this and responds in an empathetic and supportive tone. He attempts to neutralise L1C's discomfort with humour ("haha") and by positioning himself as a novice with corresponding experience, and then offers a strategy which he uses to deal with the difficulty.

In examples (5) and (6) the realisation that there may be limitations to the use of translation into the L1 as sole strategy is accompanied by expression of mutual understanding and support. The bidirectional nature of the Tandem Translation task encourages a stance of reciprocity which will be further investigated in the next section.

4.2 The Complementary Learning Process: Interaction in the Zone of Interchange

The on-task interactions of the participants reveal an interactive and reciprocal process whereby participants each had input into dialogue in which they co-constructed agreed translation outcomes. The dialogue represents the 'zone of interchange'

(Tasker 2014): the space where shared expertise in the two languages is developed in a process of collaborative and complementary learning. Through task-related dialogue, each individual contributes knowledge and expertise from their individual L1 repertoire that is new to the other partner, and the repertoire of shared resources is thereby expanded.

Three aspects of complementary learning are presented below through analysis of on-task discussion data.

4.2.1 Cultural and Societal Differences Discovered Through Discussion About the Translation of Concepts

In the course of working on the translation of a source text in Chinese entitled "间隔年" describing the way a 'gap year' is taken in western countries and in China, pair 4 engaged in lengthy discussions which revealed complexities of which they had been unaware. The correspondence they had assumed between words and their equivalents was in fact only partial. (These particular discussions are too long to present verbatim, so are presented here in the form of a summary with embedded quotations.)

The source text in question began as follows: 许多西方国家的年轻学生会在升学、毕业与工作的间隔期间做一次长期的旅行, ….

升学 was originally understood by the L1E student as "when you finish 1 year of school and then move up to the next level". L1C explained that "it means from primary school to middle school, or middle school to high school, or high school to uni". L1E then proposed a target sentence "During the interval between graduating from one educational institution to the next, or between graduating from university and starting work, many students from western countries…". L1C suggested using the term "school entrance", but L1E commented that "well, we don't say that in English, it isn't very clear". After further discussion they settled on a revised version: "During the interval between advancing to higher levels of education, or between graduating from university and starting work, many students…".

The translation of the source text phrase 毕业之初 prompted the pair to engage in a further lengthy discussion, which led them to unpack the distinction between 'completing one's course of study' and 'being formally awarded the degree'. They uncovered the fact that the two processes are barely separated in time in the Chinese context and are therefore almost synonymous, whereas in the context of the Australian university they are separated by several months, and the term 'graduation' tends to be associated with the formal award ceremony. In the course of the conversation they also went into social and educational differences between China and Australia which they felt explained the different approaches. The pair eventually agreed on a target version "after graduating".

These discussions demonstrate the constructivist nature of learning that the tandem translation task encourages. In working together the two partners identify points of incomplete understanding, and also of misunderstanding that they had been unaware of, and then draw upon their respective L1 resources and their multi-

lingual skills to extend their understanding and create joint solutions. The linguistic repertoires of each individual are extended through this shared exercise.

Post-task comments demonstrate student awareness of this aspect:

(7) "Communication in discussion [brought] interesting views and further understanding of another culture." [L1C]

4.2.2 Regional Variation Between Different Chinese-Speaking Communities Uncovered

Across the group, there was experience of a range of Chinese-speaking communities. The on-task data revealed several instances where pairs made discoveries about variations in linguistic expression between different Chinese-speaking communities.

Example (8) is taken from a discussion arising over a source text on the regulations for carrying pets on public transport in Taiwan. The L1C partner came from the Chinese mainland and L1E resided in Taiwan.

(8) L1E, C → E: In Taiwan, people don't carry pets in 'bags', but in baskets. Does 宠物包 mean a bag or basket? Do they carry pets in bags in China?

(9) Pair 10 (L1C from China and L1C/E from Australia) had a lengthy exchange about words for dairy products as found in China and Australia: 酸奶,酸乳酪, 'yoghurt', 'butter',牛油 and 奶油. The discussion uncovered a range of regional variations.

The linguistic and cultural understandings reached through these interactions would not have been easily attained using dictionaries and reference materials. In the post-task reflective commentaries, students cited such exchanges as valuable:

(10) "I learned that there are different views of the same thing said by the Chinese according to different region." [L1C/E]

4.2.3 Collaborative Dialogue: The Cumulative, Interactive Process of Extending the Shared Repertoire

The on-task data demonstrates the process by which participants attend to each other's contributions, reflect on them, and build on them to jointly reach agreed target translations through collaborative dialogue in the zone of interchange.

(11) Pair 5, E → C. Source item: *There is not a word out of place in what is possibly the greatest novel written by an Australian, ….*

L1E: I looked up a word to describe the book and wonder what you think, its 巨著 I'm not sure 最好 is strong enough and when I checked my big dictionary they tell me 伟大 is really for people which I know you know!:-)

L1C: 巨著is an excellent word I have never thought about it. Thank you to mention it to me. 谢谢!!!But I am not sure what you mean "伟大 is really for people which I know you know!". U mean I should say 是一个澳大利亚作家写的伟大的巨著 or 是一个伟大的澳大利亚作家写的巨著?I prefer the latter. On the other hand do you think I need to put 伟大there?

L1E: Hi sorry I meant as they are saying the book is (possibly) the greatest novel written by an australian, so weida can refer only to people and we cant use it for the book, would that be right?

L1C: 伟大 can refer to people and also book. But here 巨著 has meaning of 伟大(巨means 伟大) so it doesnt need 伟大again. "greatest novel" means. It doesnt say "by a great Australian" so I think I dont need to say 伟大的澳大利亚作家. 澳大利亚作家 is OK. What you think?

In (11), it is the L1E partner who proposes a Chinese word (巨著) for the source text's 'greatest novel'. L1C had not thought of using that word and is happy to accept it. Not understanding L1E's comment about why she believes the word 伟大 is inappropriate, she asks her to rephrase it. The recast reveals a misunderstanding on the part of L1E about the collocational limitations on 伟大which L1C corrects, and then goes on to offer further information about the relationship between 巨著 and 伟大. This exchange demonstrates how participants' understanding is gradually built up through the dialogic process.

(12) Pair 4, C → E

L1C: do you know what is 间隔年
L1C: sorry I ask Chinese word
L1E: i think it is a "gap year"
L1C: yeah
L1C: I translated it like that
L1E: like, normally we take a gap year after we finish highschool and before we start university
L1C: the conception of 间隔年 is coming from western. I never heard this word in Chinese.

In (12) it is the L1 repertoire which is extended through the tandem translation interchange. L1C apologises for not knowing the English equivalent of a word in the Chinese source text. L1E suggests a word and explains what it refers to. L1C understands the concept, although the Chinese word had not previously been in his repertoire.

In student post-task reflections the interactive reciprocal process of jointly constructing target texts was valued:

(13) "The fact that we could both help each other with concepts from our first language was really interesting." [L1E]

(14) "we might have different opinions about translating the same paragraph, discussion would lead us to an acceptable result for both of us" [L1C]

(15) "I prefer to translate word by word, but he likes to translate a whole sentence, and I learned a lot from that way because that way can express meaning better sometimes." [L1C]

4.3 Identity and Personal Positioning

One of the principles underlying the Tandem Translation model is to allow each member of the dyads the chance to be both novice and expert, and to bring their native speaker knowledge to the shared space of learning, to complement each other's skills. The on-task data provides instances of various ways in which this happens. They are presented below in terms of identity, which is multiple, situated and fluid; and positioning, which relates to the ways that these shifting identities are constructed, negotiated and performed in interactions within particular contexts (Davies and Harre 1990; Duff et al. 2013; Norton 2000).

4.3.1 Positioning as 'Expert', Representative of L1 Speech Community

Participants frequently position themselves as expert by referring to their own identity as a member of a community of L1 speakers of their language. Taking the use of the 1st person plural pronoun as indexical of such positioning, many examples like the following are present in the data:

(16) L1E: Well, we don't say that in English, it isn't very clear.
(17) L1C: in China […] we don't say "租Taxi", we say "打车"
(18) L1E (long-term resident of Taiwan): In Taiwan we always say…

Additionally there are many instances of participants contributing their native speaker intuitions as to whether something 'sounds right', for example:

(19) L1E: cos it mentions volunteer work in the same sentence, it will sound weird saying volunteer twice in two different places
(20) L1C: add 服务 makes this expression more complete
(21) Pair 5, C→E, source item: 情节跌宕起伏

L1C: I dont quite sure跌宕起伏 either. I checked the internet translation, it has ups and downs and dramatic. I prefer dramatic.
L1E: I found some definitions today: 跌宕起伏 rise and fall, I like twists and turns because thats how we often talk about movie plots

Four-character phrases and idioms are challenging to translate from Chinese. In (21) both partners offer translation equivalents they have found in dictionary resources. The L1E partner suggests a solution and explains it by drawing on L1 knowledge of register, context and collocation.

The Didactic Voice

Sometimes, the L1 speaker in the dyad adopts a 'teacherly' role in the interaction, by correcting, explaining, or evaluating the L2 learner's use of language. This 'didactic voice' has been noted in the context of social and unstructured online chat by Liddicoat and Tudini (2013), but in that case the participants were not in the reciprocal relationship of each being a learner of the other's language, and the adoption of the didactic voice introduced asymmetries into the social interaction. Tandem translation differs in that it is structured around balance and reciprocity: two examples from L1E participants, and two from L1C participants are presented here.

(22) L1E, C→E: 想必 can't really be translated into 'bound to', as it means 'must', 'have to', 'definitely should', etc. 'Bound to' is more like '一定會' or '必定'.

In (22), L1E rejects a suggested translation of a word from the Chinese source text and explains a set of related synonyms. Both languages are confidently called into play in L1E's explanation.

(23) Pair 11, E→C, source item: *Alternatively, holding a clove between the teeth, or between the side of the mouth and the painful tooth, will release enough essential oil to dull the pain.*

L1C: I do not know how to translate 'holding' here. This makes me confusing.
L1E: For 'holding' try this: Alternatively (另一方法)(???), if you hold a clove between the teeth, or between the side of the mouth and the painful tooth, (then) it will release enough oil to dull the pain. This sentence structure is the same as the previous one eg. If you have some clove oil.....

In (23), L1E responds to L1C's confusion by adopting two very teacherly strategies: a recast, and then a comparison to a previously encountered instance.

(24) L1C, E→C: I use "近" and "约" to express "almost". In a sentence, use of similar meaning Chinese words mean the same thing would [have been] be better.

In (24), L1C offers a correction to L1E's choice of words and then explains the stylistic principle behind the correction.

4.3.2 Positioning as 'Learner' or 'Novice'

The reciprocal, dual language design of the Tandem Translation task ensures that participants switch between the roles of expert and also of novice. It is not uncommon for individuals to overtly invoke their novice status during the on-task interaction, for example:

(25) L1E: I love the first sentence – I never would have been able to come up with that – it looks like perfect Chinese.

(26) L1E: 边远地区. Cool. That's a new word for me.
(27) L1C: I even donno how to translate the English into Chinese clearly
(28) L1C: I have never learned "除了…更多" in English so I used not only……but also.

4.3.3 Positioning as Legitimate Commentator on the Partner's L1 Output

The zone of interchange has the potential to function as a safe space in which students feel able to offer constructive comments about their partner's L1 output. The data reveals relevant episodes which suggest that individuals in the role of L2 learner are empowered in the Tandem Translation learning task to adopt an identity of legitimate commentator on the first language output of their partner. When viewed through this lens, even seemingly trivial contributions such as identification of inaccuracies which may simply be typing errors (29 & 30), represent valuable activity which requires of the L2 students an extremely close reading of their partner's L1 output.

(29) Pair 5, E→C

L1E: In the sentence about the interest wouldnt we need 感兴趣 or can it be 兴趣 on its own?
L1C: I made the mistake. It should have 感in front of 兴趣. Sorry, hehe.

(30) Pair 12, C→E

L1C: "wind power provides and an average of 100 million kilowatts of electricity" … It seemed don't need the and.
L1E: ah yes… you are right. No "and" it's a typo

In more developed instances of commentator positioning, some of the L1E group, in particular, draw on declarative knowledge of Chinese acquired through formal L2 study, to query the contributions of the L1C partners who are translating into Chinese. Although embedded in culturally appropriate face-preserving assertions of novice status, these comments in fact index confidence in adopting an identity as advanced learner/user, and acceptance of the reciprocal and shared nature of the tandem translation task.

Exchange (31) shows L1E demonstrating the closeness of their reading of the target translation suggested by L1C, by querying whether the use of a Chinese word might be too literal ("Englishy") a translation. L1C gives consideration to the suggestion, and then explains its use in terms of register and formality, making indirect reference to topics covered elsewhere in their study.

(31) Pair 2, E→C, source item: *An excellent train, bus and ferry service covers all points of the greater metropolitan area.*

L1E: In 汽车以及渡轮服务遍及了大都市区域内所有的地点，is '服务' unnecessary? For some reason, it feels a bit Englishy.

L1C: At first I agree with you, but add '服务' make this expression more complete. If this is informal translation, we can delete '服务' that is OK.

In (32), it is suggested that there is an inaccuracy in the L1C partner's draft. As in the previous examples, L1E displays her intercultural competence by paying considerable attention to saving face, and gives this move extra force by switching to Chinese, and emphasising her own novice status.

(32) L1E, E→C: The article is saying The Tree of Man is the greatest novel ever written by an Australian. […] Forgive my Chinese but have you said it couldnt have been written by an australian? I'm not sure what the bit I underlined meant, so we could have a chat and go through it because you could explain it better. 我还有很长的路要走!

In making such comments the participants claim identity and status as admissible contributors to discussion about accuracy in the language which is their L2. With noticeable politeness and deference to the L1 partners, they nonetheless position themselves as legitimate participants in the zone of interchange between the two languages, demonstrating that this shared space of overlapping language skills for translation has a conceptual reality for them.

They show an understanding of the fact that translation into the L1, which many students assumed at the beginning of the task would be relatively easy compared to translation into the L2 (as previously noted), is full of complexities for the L1 speaker: it involves high level linguistic skills, background knowledge, and attention to detail to fully understand the meaning of the source text. Participation in Tandem Translation enables students to experience the value of collaboration between L1 users of source and target languages as a translation strategy.

Features of pedagogical design which contribute to developing the confidence to take the stance of legitimate commentator include the careful scaffolding of the task, as well as the 4–6 week duration which allows sufficient time for the development of a degree of interpersonal trust and confidence between the members of each pair.

5 Discussion

Several strong themes emerge from an overview of the data analyses of the previous section. Key among them are the concepts of bidirectionality, complementarity, positioning, shifting identity, and co-construction of shared linguistic repertoires.

Tandem Translation is a constructivist learning activity which draws on aspects of collaborative learning, peer learning, and e-tandem. Designed specifically to be undertaken by cross-matched learner dyads in which each participant is a learner of the L1 of the other, it requires pairs to work together to create joint translations from English to Chinese and from Chinese to English. The learning process can be characterised as one of *complementary learning*. Complementary learning is both

interactive and cumulative. The data demonstrate that each participant begins the task with a certain amount of expertise about the other's L1, and there is an overlapping area of shared knowledge about both languages. In the course of working together on the tasks, as gaps and misconceptions are revealed, participants discuss and help each other with contributions from their own L1 at the appropriate level, which results in the shared repertoire (which I have also referred to as the zone of interchange) being expanded. As the participants complement each other's knowledge by sharing insights from their respective L1s, they bring attention and awareness to differences in the ways that the two languages encode meaning, and build strategies for handling those differences in translation. This process recalls the Vygotskian ZPD framework, but with the added dimension of bidirectionality because the translation activities are dual and reciprocal. Since there are two experts and two complementary areas of expertise, the zone of shared knowledge expands bilaterally, as participants co-construct an expanded shared linguistic repertoire (Tasker 2014).

In the bidirectional collaborative language activities of the Tandem Translation context, participants are not only required, but more importantly enabled to switch back and forth between expert and novice roles in relation to each other. In this sense Tandem Translation is an equitable and empowering process. The data suggest that the issue of native-speaker power in online chat noted by Liddicoat and Tudini (2013) is neutralised by the reciprocity inherent in the structuring of the Tandem Translation task. Indeed, participation in the task appears to foster enhanced mutual understanding between students of the different language groups, and also across Chinese-speaking regions. There are many instances in the on-task discussion of the emergence of intercultural understandings. Tandem Translation can thus also be considered an example of the type of small-scale curricular adjustments recommended to foster culturally diverse encounters, inclusion and engagement in the multilingual internationalising university campus (Leask and Carroll 2011; Tasker 2014).

The assumption of roles is signalled in the language of the on-task discussions, which reflects the discursive process of positioning whereby identities are constructed through interactions within particular contexts (Abdi 2009, cited in Duff et al. 2013, p. 126; Davies and Harre 1990).

The discussions also reveal that the roles of expert and novice are not simply polar binary opposites tied solely to identities of L1 native speaker and L2 learner. Tandem Translation participants also move in and out of intermediate identity positions, such as the one where they feel empowered to comment on their partner's use of the L1 in target texts. The context of the Tandem Translation activity, where the L1 of each participant is represented in every task in either source text or target text, and where participants also feel a sense of equality in the shared identity of student and L2 learner/user, offers a supportive environment for the adoption of such intermediate stances. This in turn can strengthen learner agency and confidence in relation to development as a multilingual individual with translingual competence.

6 Conclusion

Tandem Translation is a peer learning activity suitable for use in university Chinese classes where the students are increasingly diverse in their Chinese language learning backgrounds and Chinese proficiency skills. Student commentary in post-task reflections reflects participant awareness of the linguistic and intercultural potential of this type of activity: "Swinging between English and Chinese is a very 'strange' (as in interesting) place to be…."; and "I think it helps to bridge the gap between the Chinese speaking students and the second language learners as well as teach a lot about translation."

Two idioms, one from each language, jointly characterise the essential aspects of Tandem Translation in the development of translingual and transcultural skills and understandings. The Chinese idiom in the title of this chapter, 取长补短 ("draw on strengths to make up for shortcomings"), nicely captures the complementarity of the cross-lingual Tandem Translation process. It is complemented, itself, by the English saying "The whole is more than the sum of the parts", which is an appropriate description of the creativity and generativity that is integral to this constructivist process of bidirectional translation.

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Teacher Personal Practical Knowledge as a Foundation for Innovative Practice: Narratives of Returnee Teachers of CFL in Overseas Contexts

Hui Ling Xu and Robyn Moloney

Abstract The search for CFL pedagogies which are effective in diverse countries, and with diverse age groups, is in the process of development. Scholars are divided as to whether a generic model for CFL is possible, or a diversified adaptation to each context is more effective. Key input to this debate however is the knowledge evident in the experiences of teachers who have taught CFL in many different overseas contexts. The reflective narratives of such teachers provides valuable sources of in situ information as to effective practice.

This study, based on the theoretical framework of teacher practical knowledge, collected teacher narratives from eight returnees who have taught CFL in diverse contexts: New Zealand, Italy, France, Spain, Germany and the US. The narratives were constructed from reflective interviews conducted in China. The questions were consistent across the interviews, to afford comparative analysis. The narrative portraits reveal the teachers' experience in their overseas placement, their critical reflection on that experience, the conclusions they have drawn as to most effective CFL practice, and their perception of the sustainable future of CFL, as more teachers "go out" to take short term posts as CFL teachers abroad. The narratives reveal both unique and shared experiences and raise important professional questions for the future of CFL training, practice and pathways.

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1 Introduction

The first teaching of Chinese as a foreign language (CFL) was designed largely as basic Chinese language training for young adult foreign students, offered by only a few universities in China in the 1950s. More than half a century later, it has developed into a fully-fledged discipline, as the economic growth and the political and cultural influence of China has given rise to a demand for Chinese language education in the global context. There is urgent demand for both teachers and resources at primary, secondary and tertiary levels in many national settings with very diverse educational cultures.

The Chinese government, through its representative, *Hanban* (The Office of Chinese Language Council International), in addition to supporting Chinese language teaching within China, has promoted Chinese language teaching and learning outside of China. The international context for Chinese learning is reflected in the support (Cf. Sha 沙平 2012; Hong 洪历建 2012) for the term 对外汉语, that is, "teaching Chinese as a foreign language", to be replaced by 汉语国际教育, which *Hanban* translates as "International education of Chinese" (http://english.hanban.org/node_9781.htm). According to Sha (ibid), the former term implies a 'one-way' practice of CFL while the latter term conveys that the teaching of Chinese is taking place in the international context, and that it calls for the internationalization of Chinese language education. Even though in CFL studies published in China, the latter term has sometime been used instead of CFL, we use CFL as it is still a much more commonly accepted and known term.

Among new measures to achieve this purpose, in 2002, *Hanban* developed two programs known as "请进来", that is, "inviting in" and "走出去", that is, "going out". Designed to solve the critical problem of teacher shortage, the former involves setting up training programs for teachers of Chinese from overseas to come to China to receive training, while the latter involves training large numbers of Chinese teachers as volunteers to go abroad to teach Chinese in local schools or Confucius institutes for a period of time such as half to 1 year. The Overseas Volunteer Chinese Teachers Program recruits undergraduate and postgraduate students with a Liberal Arts background, majoring in linguistics, history, culture, literature, and Chinese language. By the end of 2014, *Hanban* had sent over 30,000 volunteers to about 120 countries in Asia, Europe, America, Africa and Oceania. Although *Hanban* has published a few volumes, entitled 光荣岁月(*Glories Days*) and 志愿者之家 (*Family of Volunteers*) capturing some of the returnees' accounts of their experiences in different countries, there have been very few publications (for example, Ye and Edwards 2014) that record the knowledge of these returnees.

Amidst the rapid growth of Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language, there has been strong interest in the search for research-based effective pedagogy, instantiated by a growing body of research literature in journals and books, and conferences held across different continents devoted to CFL research. Alongside the research efforts are debates on whether a generic model for CFL is possible and appropriate or a diversified adaptation to each context is more effective in the twenty-first century (Cf.

Hong 洪历建 2012; Zhao 赵金铭 2011). What can help shed light on this debate is the valuable resource of teacher personal practical knowledge, evident in the experiences of those who have been sent to teach CFL in various countries outside of China. This chapter is devoted to an examination of the knowledge and reflections of returnee teachers who have completed *Hanban* postings in a number of different countries. Their stories and reflections and accumulated experiences provide valuable sources of *in situ* information as to effective practice in countries outside of China. The chapter observes the shifts which have occurred in their beliefs and their CFL practice as a result of their posting, and their innovative ideas to suit the local context. Our aim is to disseminate their knowledge and perceptions more widely to create a wider "ripple" influence in the development of innovative CFL learning and teaching. Specifically, this chapter examines the narratives of a number of participants who were sent abroad as *Hanban* volunteer teachers in primary, secondary and tertiary teaching contexts, and then have had the opportunity since returning, to reflect on their learning and teaching in that environment. Our research question are thus straightforward: to ascertain what training and/or experience the teachers had before leaving China for their destination, what experiences they had in their posting, and what they learnt from the posting as well as how their practical knowledge can be used as foundation for effective teaching practice for would-be CFL volunteers. Our mode of enquiry is the analysis of teacher narratives constructed from interviews, aligning our work with the recognition of narrative as a powerful tool for investigating teacher professional development and for creating potential for learning and change (see Wardekker 2000; Byram et al. 2002; Xu and Connelly 2009).

2 Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Framework: Teacher Personal Practical Knowledge

Teacher training programs have often operated under the assumption that teachers need an identifiable body of knowledge, usually in the form of theories of education and learning, and generic pedagogical methods that were assumed to be applicable to any context. Such a tradition focused on pedagogical content knowledge and skills needed for certification or to implement particular programs, and which is termed "knowledge-for-teachers" by Xu and Connelly (2009: 221). However, in the 1980s, in what was considered part of an education revolution in how educators think about classroom practice, there emerged some research studies which emphasized the need to tap into another type of knowledge, that is, "teacher knowledge". Introduced by Elbaz in his study (1981), the notion of "teacher knowledge" conceptualizes knowledge needed for teaching from the practical aspect, as stemming from teachers' experience in the classrooms and schools and how this is directed in handling

problems arising in their work. Connelly and Clandinin's collaborative research (1987, 1988, 1990, 1996, 1998) has continued to expand and nourish this field.

Connelly et al. (1997) extended Elbaz's framework to include the "personal" dimension which draws attention to the individual teacher's sum total of personal experiences. According to Xu and Connelly (2009): "The concept refers to everything that a teacher brings to bear on any particular situation. When a teacher responds to a student or designs a particular lesson, their actions and plans are based on the totality of their experience. They respond holistically as persons" (p. 221). The identification of teacher personal practical knowledge recognizes the fact that individual experiences and perspectives of teachers impact their practice; that teachers are not empty vessels waiting to be filled with theoretical and pedagogical skills, translating others' intentions and ideologies into practice (Connelly et al. 1997). Rather, they individually create their own dynamic knowledge of teaching (Ben-Peretz 2011).

Thus, the theoretical framework of teacher personal practical knowledge allows researchers to look at various factors of the individual that influence and shape teacher knowledge, such as personal values, identity, cultural background, educational schema, life experience. Teacher's knowledge of teaching is also formed on the basis of teachers' own schooling, and are situated within a broader system of beliefs about education, society and even human nature (Richards et al. 2001). They feature implicit assumptions about how learning occurs, and about the role of the teacher in enabling this learning (Wu et al. 2012, p. 48). This is echoed in a number of studies (Hu 2002; Xu and Connelly 2009) which found that whether teachers are willing to accept and implement educational innovation, such as those of foreign origin, is largely dependent on their cultural beliefs and values associated with learning and teaching. However, It has also been shown that teacher beliefs can be changed, and may involve both external and internal factors, although their adoption of, and adaptation to, new environments and pedagogies can be slow. For language teachers, these factors can include their own experiences as L2 learners, teacher training, teaching experiences, policies, and the views and beliefs of colleagues and superiors (Wong 2010, p. 5). As we will see below in our discussion of data, Chinese education schema and personal beliefs of what is the 'right' way to teach and learn Chinese heavily influence the returnees' initial teaching strategies. However, on a positive note, the returnee teachers were also able to critique these beliefs, adapt to the new environment and adopt more suitable strategies to suit the local context, which demonstrates that their overseas post has acted as a useful life experience which has afforded them a learning path for the accumulation of teacher practical knowledge. This demonstrates that the development of personal practical knowledge is a learning and knowledge growing process. Sercu (2006) asserts that language teachers must develop a professional identity which can encompass critical cultural reflection. This, as noted by Byram et al. (2002, p. 30) must include teachers "taking part themselves in learning experiences which involve risk and reflection". Freeman and Johnson (1998) also argue for the need for teachers to be learners: "The knowledge base of language teacher education must account for how

individuals learn to teach and for the complex factors, influences, and processes that contribute to that learning" (p. 407).

Sun (孙德金 2010) points out that although teacher personal practical knowledge highlights the "个体性"(personal) and "自主性"(volitional) dimensions, it does not rule out the crucial role social context and working environment play in establishing teacher knowledge. Therefore, the study of teacher knowledge needs to be set in the context of the teacher's working environment, such as national and cultural contexts (Sun ibid), and working community, such as education institutions. As such, there has also been encouragement to recognise teacher knowledge outside of Western contexts, to provide a "different view of teacher knowledge" (Ben-Peretz 2011, p. 9). Amongst only a small number of such studies offering a non-Western point of view, Sun (孙德金 2014) conducted a study of the personal practical knowledge of a Chinese immigrant teacher of CFL, in the New Zealand context. With the purpose to broaden the understanding of the characteristics and factors that shape the personal practical knowledge of the teacher concerned, Sun's study is an "example of teacher knowledge within an Eastern cultural tradition", and explores the influence of identity and educational tradition. His study observes that teachers' cultural heritage has a strong influence on shaping their personal practical knowledge and their teaching practice.

In China, interest in exploring teacher personal practical knowledge is becoming stronger as researchers have recognized its relevance and usefulness in documenting exemplary case studies as part of the search for effective and appropriate CFL pedagogy for the internationalization of Chinese language education (see Sun 孙德金 2010; Chen 陈向明 2011). We briefly outline below some recent developments in this research direction in CFL.

2.2 Teacher Practical Knowledge in the CFL Context

In the context of CFL teacher training within China, the core content of its curriculum can be said to focus heavily on theoretical (content) knowledge building (Cf. Lü 吕比松 2004). This is confirmed in Wang et al. (2013) overview of CFL teacher training in three contexts: China, Hong Kong and Australia. A review of other relevant literature (see for example, Huang and Liu 黄锦章, 刘炎 2004; Zhao et al. 2010; Zhao 赵金铭 2011) reveals that there are two main components in the make-up of knowledge-for-teachers: general theory and applied theory. According to Lü (2004: 3), general theories should include those pertaining to language, linguistics, cross-cultural communication and education theories, while applied theories should include applied linguistics, foreign language teaching and learning, teaching methodology and pedagogies, and psychology. Wu and Ling (吴勇毅, 凌雯怡 2013) comment that what has dominated research in CFL in the past has been on the theoretical knowledge, professional skills/abilities, professional standards (e.g. Hanban's Standards for Teachers of Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages, TCSOL 2007),

dispositions and ideology that a CFL teacher 'should have'. To a great extent, research of this type has been driven by assumptions and "views of scholars and experts" (Wu and Ling 吴勇毅,凌雯怡 2013) which have served as "standards" for training CFL teachers at home and abroad.

In the past few years, CFL research in China has a new agenda, which focuses on the so-called 三教, or three Ts: Teachers, Teaching methodology and Teaching materials (see Sun 孙德金 2010). It is not difficult to see that such a movement reflects the importance attached to the teachers themselves as they are placed first in this order of research foci. It is against this backdrop that research in teacher practical knowledge in CFL is gaining increasing interest and momentum (see for example, Sun 孙德金 2010, 2014; Jiang and Hao 江新, 郝丽霞 2010; Chen 陈向明 2011; Lan 兰晓明 2012; Wu and Ling 吴勇毅, 凌雯怡 2013). Chinese CFL researchers have drawn on the theoretical framework of teacher practical knowledge and hold similar views as to what constitutes teacher practical knowledge. Lan (兰晓明 2012), for example, believes that teacher practical knowledge is based on the individual teacher's understanding of and a conscientious effort to construct effective teaching practice. It is the knowledge that the teacher truly believes in and which is put into practice in the classroom. In other words, it is their own knowledge that plays a real role in teaching. Chen (陈向明 2011) holds the same view and points out that teacher practical knowledge plays the role of a filter in selecting useful knowledge from theoretical knowledge and only when the theoretical knowledge aligns with the teacher's practical knowledge can it be understood, accepted and become an internalised and integral part of the teacher's practical knowledge.

In view of the apparent shortcomings of the current CFL practice and teacher training (Orton 2008; Wang et al. 2013), qualitative narrative research can provide a critical investigation to better understand how teachers develop their own personal teaching pedagogy and knowledge. This can provide strong models to inform and improve the current teacher training model (Wu and Ling 吴勇毅,凌雯怡 2013). Describing the current pre-service teacher training as a "bottle neck" where content and theoretical knowledge have been emphasised over practical classroom knowledge, Lan (兰晓明 2012) notes that pre-service teachers lack the practical skills and flexibility to deal with real issues arising from the classroom. He advocates studying returnee teachers' practical experience from their overseas teaching posts. In doing so, pre-service teachers can better understand and master specific teaching strategies and skills to suit specific classroom contexts and cultural contexts. This view that teacher personal practical knowledge needs recognition as a core component of teacher education programs has also been recognized elsewhere in Freeman and Johnson (1998: 401).

The significance of conducting teacher practical knowledge research for CFL development is also reflected in a large scale project which has gathered exemplary teachers' narratives, whose purpose is to learn from good teaching experiences for the future development of CFL as a profession and discipline (see Sun 孙德金 2010: 383). This chapter contributes to the same purpose and endeavour.

2.3 Use of Narrative in Identifying Teacher Personal Knowledge

In order to understand and to construct teacher personal practical knowledge, the common approach of enquiry is a qualitative and interpretative one which allows researchers to obtain concrete experience and views of teachers in the form of narratives and story-telling (Connelly et al. 1997). The affordance of teacher narratives has been acknowledged in various studies (for example, Harbon and Moloney 2013; Liang and Moloney 2013; Barkhuizen et al. 2013). Gipps (1999) believes that, if our narratives are "central to what we see and how we interpret it" (p. 370), then the use of narrative to unlock this learning in language teachers is a powerful tool in their development in critical perspective on pedagogy and practice. While narratives are always case studies, Wardekker (2000) suggests they have a "generative power" in delivering knowledge to a wider audience. Enquiry can always lead to an understanding of the change processes in a specific situation, which creates a "potential for learning and change" (Wardekker ibid. p. 269). Narrative has the power to inform teachers' understanding of themselves, and identify aspects of their practice: teacher understandings are shaped by their histories, language and culture, and inform how they perceive, judge and make meaning. In narrative, teachers explain to others and reveal to themselves (often for the first time) their assumptions, motivations, expectations, judgments and justifications for what they do. It is this growth of self-awareness and becoming a critically reflective teacher that provides fertile ground for new learning (Scarino 2013; Brookfield 1995). This chapter is informed also by the background of studies of CFL teachers in other overseas contexts (see for example, Chi 1989; Scrimgeour 2010; Wu et al. 2012).

3 Methodology

As noted above, the analysis of teacher narrative data requires a qualitative research approach. To collect our data, we conducted 40 min audio-recoded interviews with each of eight participants, in China. The number of participants was determined by the availability of volunteer returnees within a 2 week period when the researchers were in China. While limited in scope, the number of participants however enabled a variety of experiences in diverse contexts to be examined. The questions were designed to elicit a sequential narrative portrait of the teachers themselves, their pathways to become CFL teachers, their experience in their overseas placement, their critical reflection on that experience, the conclusions they have drawn as to most effective CFL practice, as more teachers "go out". The interviews were conducted, according to participant linguistic comfort, in English, or part English/part Chinese, and audio-recorded. The recordings were transcribed, and the Chinese sections translated into English. The transcripts were read and re-read, and thematic analysis conducted. Major common themes emerging from the data were placed

into categories as they unfolded. To support credibility of findings from the data, the researchers read the data separately, then shared their analysis, to achieve consensus interpretation. The negotiation of different perceptions of the two researchers was considered: Researcher 1 is a teacher of CFL at tertiary level while Researcher 2 is a language teacher educator at tertiary level. The study acknowledges the role and assumptions of the researchers, as a possible factor impacting on how the data is interpreted (Russell and Kelly 2002). The nature of the engagement in dialogue, necessary for interview data, involves the researchers participating in 'co-responsible inquiry' (Glesne and Peshkin 1992; Wardekker 2000).

4 Analysis of Data: Eight Teacher Interviews

The analysis of data firstly features a short section offering details of our eight participants who volunteered to take the interviews. It will become evident in the data analysis how differences in background and experience shaped their experience in their posting, and the type of personal practical knowledge they achieved, both during and after their posting. The analysis then offers a breakdown of their personal practical knowledge, in five themes which emerged from the repeated readings and categorisation of elements in the data. These five themes are: identifying contextual differences; moving to student-centred pedagogy; motivating through culture; professional growth and change; identifying qualities of effective CFL teacher.

4.1 The Eight Returnees: Backgrounds, Pathways

Table 1 below presents information about each of the 8 teachers, their training, their prior experience of teaching, their destination, and the level at which they taught. The age range for all participants was 25–35 years. The gender imbalance is representative of the over-representation of females in language teaching.

In Table 1 we note that the eight teachers had some common educational goals and backgrounds, but diversity in the amount of prior teaching experience that they brought to their overseas posting. Prior experience had taken place within China, most commonly in teaching CFL to adult foreign students within universities. It thus sets particular frameworks of expectations with which there was frequently acute disparity in the placement environment, in regard to overseas students' behaviour and learning preferences. Most teachers had little prior overseas travel experience, and had never been before to the country of their posting. They were all of academic high standard, having been selected by competitive process for the opportunity of the overseas posting. For most it was an opportunity to travel and teach in another country, indeed, for T1, it was "a dream".

Table 1 Demographic information about the returnee teachers

Teachers	Academic background	Teaching experience (China)	Overseas placement
Teacher 1 Male	BA in Chinese, MA in CFL	none	New Zealand secondary school
Teacher 2 Female	BA in History, MA in CFL	5 years secondary teaching experience	Italy secondary school
Teacher 3 Female	BA in CFL, MA in CFL	1 year tertiary experience	Germany secondary school
Teacher 4 Female	BA in French, Current MA in CFL	1 semester tertiary experience	Paris secondary school
Teacher 5 Female	BA in CFL, MA in CFL, 6 months Italian study	7 years tertiary experience	Turin Italy Secondary school
Teacher 6 Female	BA in English, MA in CFL	1 year experience	USA rural secondary school, 2 years
Teacher 7 Female	BA in Chinese, MA in CFL	2 years experience	USA tertiary institution
Teacher 8 Female	BA in Economics, prior career in IT; MA in CFL; Spanish study	No experience	Spain secondary school

4.2 Personal Practical Knowledge Achieved

As noted above, this section presents an analysis of the personal practical knowledge achieved by teachers. The reporting of the data here corresponds largely with the constructed narrative of the interviews. The returnees reported on their initial identification of contextual differences they met in their posting institutions. They then proceeded to describe their development towards more student-centred concern, student needs, and pedagogy to suit. As part of this transition, which was a struggle for some, they moved to an understanding that their students needed and were interested in more cultural knowledge about life in China. This became for many an important field of activity.

While these discoveries added to their practical knowledge, meanwhile they were all also involved in personal growth and change of perspective, in their perceptions of themselves, their students, their intercultural development, and their teacher role. Finally they synthesise their learning, to offer suggestions as to the qualities they believe are most needed by the CFL teacher overseas. This construction of synthesised learning is innovative in three ways: it represents an engagement with experience-based CFL practice, the development of new and sharp critical thinking about CFL in the overseas context, and new thinking about their responsibility to personally affect future development in CFL.

4.2.1 Identifying Contextual Difference

From analysis of the teacher narratives, it emerged that the first thing that teachers encountered on arriving at their destinations was the discovery of conditions in their local environments which were different to their experience and knowledge gained in China. They found differences in three main areas: differences in students' attitude and behaviour, differences in school structure and culture, and differences in pedagogy used. These will be addressed in turn.

Differences in students' attitudes and behaviour were the first and most apparent aspect of their initiation to their posting. The teachers came from China school and university environments where, in an educational culture which is still very much influenced by Confucian principles such as the authority of the teachers is regarded as important, and students should study diligently and quietly (cf. Walkins and Biggs 1996). For 6 of the 8 teachers, there was a rude cultural shock in encountering unwanted classroom talk, movement in the room, and what they perceived as disrespect.

T5 found her students *"very rowdy, naughty, to the extent that the local teachers can't even control"*. However, T3 in Germany had a positive impression: "*students are more spontaneous in the class, they don't want you to tell them 'do this, do that'; they like to work in teams and do games. German students do not like to challenge the authority of the teacher; in this they are more like the Chinese students, but if they have problems, with the teacher, they would like the teacher to know- they could express their needs"*.

Teachers tended to access stereotypes of East vs. West to explain individual differences in their school: T1 interpreted that "*students' behaviour in the classroom is different because it is not important that all students take Chinese and so the Western students love to talk and move to different places and teachers cannot tell them off because they are children"*.

T7 applied similar stereotyping to understand expectations of the teacher*: "in the Western countries, if you are not interesting, charismatic, it is hard to get them to listen and to learn with you or to pay attention to you or to get involved in the classroom. It is very likely that they would just talk to others in class"*.

Tertiary environments also differ from those in China. T7 found that "t*he university itself was a different culture to Chinese university. US students are much freer than China students. Very individual and independent on campus"*.

The second area of contextual difference was the discovery of how Chinese language study was regarded. While teachers had been led to believe in their training that there was 'global fever' for Chinese learning, they were disappointed to find this was certainly not the case with school students. T1 was shocked and disappointed at this discovery:

> Before I went to NZ, I think everyone loves to learn Chinese; every student will love you very much but when I went to NZ, I found that it is totally different. Chinese lesson is just like any other normal class for the students. It is one of their choices, one normal language class. They still had French, Spanish, and all of them are more important and more popular than Chinese.

T6, posted to a rural school in the USA, found she had the role of a pioneer as the first ever Chinese volunteer teacher: "*I felt that Chinese teaching in my place there was at its beginning phase. I was a pioneer; I was the first volunteer, the first Chinese person, in the school. People really not familiar with China at all, ask very strange questions (for example, is everyone still in poverty?)*".

Thirdly, six of the 8 teachers commented that they had been inadequately prepared for dealing with pedagogic difference in the teaching culture of the host country.

T7 found the US was very advanced in technology use in classrooms: "*US teachers were very good, technologically advanced, with Smartboards etc. Technology is useful, especially because you can't bring real objects to US, so I can use visual display through pictures to show them. A lot of activities were based on technology affordances; Lots of websites provide readymade activities on Smartboard. The department had computer labs, kids could go and do follow-up activities to review or to learn new things such as new words or to learn Chinese culture*".

T2 however, in the sometimes austere European classroom context "*had to take a backwards step, in adjusting to the pedagogy used in the school, which was largely grammar translation method*".

Finally, teachers commented on differences in school structure and organisation, in daily timetable, and use of school buildings. T5 noted that "*they don't have a break in between classes, they have 50 (minutes) per class and then another teacher takes over*".

T6 liked the USA lesson structure, and the formal structure of lessons: *"I learned the US lesson structure procedures, the bell ringer: the sequence of review, new vocab, text, practice, activity, review, homework. The US School requires that all lessons must have a bell ringer (5 minutes), such as review past lesson, dictation, asking some questions, to link to what you want to teach next"*.

T2 in the European context missed the collegiate and personal environment of 'belonging' in her school staffroom in China: "*In European schools it is common that teachers are allocated no fixed desk space, and they are free to only be at school when their lessons are timetabled"*. Thus T2 felt she was unable to get interaction with other teachers, and had no sense of belonging. This is contrast to China where *"school is like home, spend lots of time there"*.

4.2.2 Moving to Student-Centred Pedagogy

For all eight teachers, whether they were experienced or minimally trained, the differences observed above meant that they had to quickly learn how to adapt their teaching to make a success of their students' Chinese learning. This was their preeminent practical concern, and area of greatest growth in practical knowledge. As a radical reversal of their training, (and materials they had been given which dictated what was to be learnt) teachers discovered that they needed to find out what the students wanted to learn, and create lessons that were relevant and engaging for students, using less grammar explanation and more games and activities.

All teachers re-iterated that "*You need to teach according to students' needs… you need to know the students well"* (T3). *"The teacher must first of all know all the students, their personalities, their differences from others"* (T5).

T6 stressed adaptation and differentiation: "*You must learn how to adapt; need to look at students' different characteristics and what they need/want to learn. They are high school kids so they are very active so I need to organise games and activities so as to enliven the class. I did activities-based teaching"*. T8 highlighted that she had learned to "*Simplify the grammar, don't teach too much; make the class lively and interesting; find out what they want to learn"*. T7 used her deeper knowledge of suitable meaningful pedagogies*: "If you give real tasks, it gives usefulness, relevance. I use different theories for different tasks. I have also learnt and used the immersion and Gesture method, used it for High school students"*.

For Teacher 1, who went only with the beliefs and expectations of the Hanban training (*'I believed it'*), the practical learning required a *'deep change'* and complete re-orientation:

> In my first year of practice, I was using traditional way of teaching. As a teacher, I tried to make the students listen to me but I found that students won't like you or didn't enjoy learning that much. During my training, even though I took the course which taught us about this, I still couldn't understand the reason behind this. The deep change came about when I taught in NZ. …I have changed my teaching methodology. I now treat my students as my friends. I will think "what do they want to learn?

To support their practical learning, the teachers used the knowledge of their local peers to help them. T2 noted that she learnt a lot from a local assistant teacher, including a trick of disguising grammar learning: "*We never tell students we are teaching grammar. For example, we taught relative clauses, two days before Christmas. The teacher assigned them a task to prepare 10 presents and describe them. So the students unavoidably had to use relative clauses. That class was a success as the students were very interested in it because it is the things they want to have"*.

T8 learnt from local teachers "*how to use materials on the internet; how to look for information on the internet; how to use PPT; how to design a webpage where you can upload your teaching materials and let the students do them online"*.

In their need for help, but also in their pro-active learning from local practitioners, these teachers became part of a new overseas CFL 'community of practice' (Wenger 1998). The expertise they needed to teach successfully in that context lay in the local teachers, that is, within the local professional community itself. Joining the local professional community, the teachers absorb also aspects of the local learning and teaching culture that has produced the relevant teacher skills and educational values. We see this particularly in their newfound prioritisation of motivation, which we outline below.

4.2.3 Motivating Through Culture

All eight teachers discussed their quest to find the key to motivating students to become engaged in their Chinese lessons: *"Motivate them is the most important; how to make your teaching interesting"* (T8).

Where teachers encountered difficulty, or were even defeated, in achieving linguistic success in students, they often enjoyed turning to presentation of cultural materials about China, which they found students more receptive to and the activity thus more motivating.

The returnees also emphasized the importance to identify students' interests: for example, "*they want to know their Chinese names, so you can take the advantage to prepare beforehand to get the words that they might be interested and translate for them and then tell them how good the words are so they feel good about their names… They also like to know contemporary culture such as pop music, songs, tv programs etc….They have stereotypes about Chinese but we need to slowly unpack these ideas"*. (T8)

T6's environment had very little access to any authentic Chinese materials, local input, or native speakers. Thus she saw that there was a need for some basic cultural knowledge, as a motivational and informative setting for the language.

> Because where I worked is very isolated, it was hard to conduct 'field trip' or excursion for students. Even though they practiced speaking in class, they didn't have the opportunities to practice so they still speak English after class. There is no language environment. No real language practice environment possible. Solution – to teach Chinese culture, about basic contemporary life (T6).

Interestingly, T1 discovered that discussion about Chinese culture enabled him to present more about his personal self to his students, which changed both his intercultural empathy for students and the dynamic in his classroom, and was a catalyst for student engagement:

> If you open your mind to talk to the students and tell them what you want and what is true about yourself, the students will accept you, love you, … tell them about the true China and the true Chinese life and they will begin more interested in that. …even if they can't learn too much Chinese, they can get some good experience of China and in the future they will like to come to China. And then it is coming from their own mind, it is themselves who want to learn, the motivation comes from their own (T1).

4.2.4 Personal Intercultural Growth and Change of Perspectives

The overseas placement was a major life event for all eight teachers, full of personal and professional challenge. In the data we see changes in their perceptions of themselves, their intercultural development, the teacher role, peer learning, and desire for further education. This section expresses the heart of their personal learning and their reflective abilities.

We see the struggle and personal effort expended in personal intercultural learning, where teachers become aware of themselves and their behaviours:

> The deep change came about when I taught in NZ. I changed gradually from beginning to the end. I found I had to open my mind, talk to strangers, don't be shy. You also need to prepare to accept different ideas and culture and you can't do everything the Chinese way (T1).

In many of the eight teachers, we see ability, in recall, to identify their changing relationship with the host environment. Their abilities may reflect those identified by Bagnall (2005), in his analysis of written narratives conducted by pre-service teachers in remote postings. Bagnall noted his teacher participants' progression from simple descriptive observation of their new environment, to a 'dialogic' conversation between themselves and the new environment, making comparisons, drawing inferences. Bagnall also identified a third type of analytical ability, referred to as 'critical cultural' in which the writer closely examines his/her own behaviour, beliefs, and values, with awareness of their own personal adaptations to a second culture, such as T1 displays above.

With little preparation for his intercultural challenge, T1 noted the strategy he used, to learn and grow quickly: "*You have to keep learning from the people around you. You need to watch carefully (the people and the culture around you) and learn from that. You can learn about cross-cultural communication skills but you never know what will happen in real life. So different from books. You need to learn from people who are there with you, so that they can help you grow quickly"*.

The self-awareness of a cultural behaviour of "shyness" in Chinese teachers was mentioned by half of the teachers. They believed they had a learned reluctance (from their student role in their own schooling) to ask questions, or ask for help. This was a characteristic which had to be overcome in the overseas context, in order to learn teacher behaviour in the new environment. T8 felt she was "*undernourished*" professionally before her posting, but expressed the personal maturity she gained, and how her foreign language ability improved, and way of thinking changed, from deeply engaging with her students: "*I felt that the biggest thing I got out of this was that I have understood the students. Only when you understand them do you know how to teach. Before, we were too subjective but when you saw the real situations, and interact with the students and live in the country, and your language ability improves, you became more mature and your way of thinking also changed"*.

T6 stressed the personal qualities of independence and adaptability that she learned on her posting*: "I learnt independence, need for adaptability: need to learn as you go and develop your own methodology in different context"*. T 5 stressed the courage, resilience and capabilities needed, to organise the details of accommodation and one's life in a foreign country. We see intercultural development in the teachers as expressed cognitively, affectively and behaviourally.

A number of our teachers could be described as moving from Chinese ethnocentric to ethno-relative understanding: that is, they start to recognise their own values both in personal and practical knowledge: their Chinese *"way of thinking"*, their pedagogy, their classroom expectations, their behaviour, and can look at all these objectively as relative to others. Over time, they become not just respectful towards cultural difference, but keen adaptors.

T4's perception of the relationship between teaching and learning had changed. She suggests a new level of comfort with reversing the roles of teacher and learner: "*the thing that I learned was that before, I didn't know teaching and learning can help each other to grow and develop, but after teaching the high school kids, I learned a lot from them. They didn't just ask boring or unimportant questions but*

some of their questions got me thinking. For example, they would ask, why can't I say it this way?"

All the teachers stressed their commitment to ongoing professional learning initiated by the posting. T3 said that "*I learned a lot. If I am going to keep teaching Chinese, I still need to learn new things.* T5 has become interested in CFL research: "*We need to have serious research on teaching pedagogy because in China, there are many successful English methodologies but there are not many in Chinese so I am interested in this field. I am doing research on how to teach characters".*

T7's reflective practice has caused her to recognise her application of theory into her practice. She recognised that the theoretical learning she had done at university had in fact been internalized, and enabled her later to apply it to real practice which became part of her new practical knowledge: *sometimes when I am carrying out an activity, I reflected that in fact, I am applying a certain type of theory, but it came out naturally.* We see here reflected the notion of Chen (陈向明 2011) that it is the teacher's practical knowledge which provides a framework for understanding and internalising theoretical knowledge in practice.

While all the teachers recognise the value of their returnee personal professional knowledge, and continue to teach, T7 is the only teacher who is actively involved currently in passing on her knowledge to new trainees. With her 3 years of experience and knowledge, she has coached new volunteers, and helped them understand the Hanban case studies which are used in the training. She notes that while the volunteers may be foreign language majors, she finds *many of the new volunteers don't have any idea of good pedagogy: they think they can just read books and translate books!* She puts her practical knowledge to use, giving workshops in how to design classroom activities.

4.2.5 Synthesis: Identifying Effective Qualities of CFL Teacher

This section represents the synthesis of the personal and practical knowledge achieved by the returnee teachers. All teachers reported that they had been educated to believe, both in their Masters Degree content research and coursework and in the *Hanban* training course, that the most important knowledge needed by the CFL teacher was an in-depth knowledge of Chinese language linguistics such as syntax (although cross-cultural training has been added in more recent years as a small component of training). Their posting experience challenged and changed this understanding of what is needed in CFL teaching and of their own role as CFL teachers. The teachers' answers to the question "what are the qualities of a good CFL teacher?" reveal the core of their innovative personal and practical knowledge for critically expanded CFL practice. They also demonstrate the inseparability of personal and practical knowledge in the CFL teacher.

The first nominated requirement is "*the need to teach according to students' needs: We need to know the students well"* (T3). All eight teachers prioritised that a CFL teacher must know their students, in their cultural context, to be in a good relationship with students, and to consider what they wanted to learn, in order to

produce effective learning in students. This implies the need for knowledge of the educational culture of the posting, that is, for example, knowledge of a constructivist approach to learning, that the student must be engaged, the learning must engage their subjectivity, they must be involved personally in constructing learning. Following this knowledge of students, the second requirement is the need for "*classroom management and good teaching"*. Four of the eight teachers nominated effective classroom teaching ability as an important priority, elaborating that this included knowledge of how to select engaging activities, and of classroom behaviour management. This realization serves as a good example of how the teachers develop practical knowledge from dealing with problems arising from the actual classroom: their training back in China was preparing them for teaching adults but they were mostly posted to primary and secondary schools.

These two abilities frame the classroom, enabling the third requirement: "*deep knowledge of Chinese language, how to express and explain it in the way the students can accept it"* (T6). The teachers retained an emphasis on, as their professional 'content' responsibility, the knowledge of Chinese language, and in particular, the ability to give clear, simple and effective explanations of the syntax and characters, to students.

Fourthly, all the teachers acknowledge the importance of "*cross-cultural communication awareness: The most important thing is communicative skills with foreign people. You have to survive in their society, and then you can teach there* (T1). While research in this area has come to use the word 'intercultural', the term 'cross-cultural communication 'remains current in the Chinese literature. While the two terms are not equivalent, we take them as similar in intent in this context. Many of the teachers used the term 'cross-cultural communication', as this is given some recognition in some of their CFL Masters curriculum. All teachers expressed the belief that although their training had included some elements of cross-cultural communication training, as noted above, it was not until they arrived in their posting, that they realised its significance. It was this skill (or lack of) which was critical in personal ability to adapt and innovate quickly in their school, and in the surrounding culture and society. T3 nominated in her list of must-have qualities, *"the ability to adapt, because you will meet different people and different personalities and demands so you need to change and adapt to the different students"*.

Fifthly, the returnees acknowledge the critical need for the CFL teacher abroad to be well-skilled in the local language, whether English, Italian or Spanish, for effective cross cultural communication. This is integral to the ability to communicate with ease with students, local teachers and the community. As learners are perceived as not advanced enough to learn in a Chinese-only 'immersion' approach, T6 says, "*CFL needs to be conducted in local language, and yet they (*the volunteers*) don't have high English proficiency or whatever the language is. So we need people with multiple skills e.g other languages"*.

Finally, CFL is moving from its previous profile as an isolated adult teaching activity in the commercial training context, to educational contexts where all teachers are responsible for the overall intellectual and personal development of the students. In this context of school education, a number of returnees believed that

"*Another important thing is that CFL teachers need to model passion, intrinsic motivation, joy of CFL—not just the extrinsic motivation of commercial enterprise."*(T7). If, as we believe, innovation does not necessarily need to involve a device or a cloud, but is relative to past practice, this may be, at a personal level, the most innovative perception of all.

5 Discussion and Conclusion

The analysis of data above speaks strongly of the energetic personal practical knowledge that these eight returnee CFL teachers have achieved. What does it offer then, to wider innovative CFL practice, and to teacher training? While CFL teacher studies in other contexts have stressed mostly unsuccessful struggles to change pedagogy (Chi 1989; Wu et al. 2012), we believe that this study suggests positive initiatives in innovation. These initiatives can be summarised as innovation in two main areas: attitude and application. We discuss briefly in conclusion some recommendations emerging from 'attitude and application'.

In innovation in attitude, we commend the personal courage and transformation in attitudes in these particular returnees, and in all CFL teachers who undergo similar challenge in a new environment. They are true innovators, having to critique what they have been taught, analyse a new context, identify new needs, and devise new ways of solving their problems. They display a newly learnt independence of thought and action. They are outstanding role models for the emerging international CFL community.

In innovation in application, in the extension of "going out" programs, we believe it is firstly critical to make innovative professional use of these returnees' personal practical knowledge. The returnees themselves suggested, in the case of in-China training, that "*instead of inviting those so -called experts to talk about how good Chinese culture is and how wonderful the Chinese language is, it is better to invite returnees to share their experience as these are very practical and useful"* (T8). T3 expanded this to attach value to the personal learning of the returnee, and its connection to practical aspects of materials creation*: "it is better to have returnees from different countries to talk about their specific, practical and personal experiences and we can gather these to turn them into teaching/training materials. They are more effective and relevant than those experts' talks"*.

Where training is being done outside China, there needs to be creation and dissemination of written or video online resources, presenting the innovative potential of these returnees' acquired knowledge. Their understanding of the overseas classroom context, and their own original resources could be available to CFL teachers worldwide. This would be a valuable addition to CFL teacher education, both pre-service and in-service teachers, at primary secondary and tertiary levels.

Secondly, these returnees' accounts need to be considered part of the evolving input into new theoretical modelling of CFL. The returnees all noted that CFL, borrowing heavily from TESOL theoretical background, has as yet no established

theoretical framework. Despite or because of the diverse contexts of CFL teaching, a unique theoretical framework is needed so that it can serve as a benchmark standard, to guide all CFL teachers towards quality teaching and learning. CFL has particular linguistic characteristics, the most salient of which is its tonal and logographic nature, which must be effectively addressed. TESOL and generic frameworks for other foreign languages are inadequate for this purpose.

In the broader picture of resource development, writers of new teaching materials need to pay attention to returnee data, for its valuable access to China-educated teacher perceptions and discoveries. Orton's (2008) statistics suggest, in the Australian case, that currently 90 % of CFL teachers are China-educated. This may change slightly as the next generations of CFL teachers will include non-native speakers and the later generation offspring of immigrants. Nevertheless, the body of CFL teachers will continue for some time to be heavily dominated by native speakers. In common with teacher educators, text designers need to work with knowledge of teacher beliefs and attitudes, in developing readiness for new practice.

Amongst the definitions discussed in the Introduction, to innovate can mean to 'make changes in anything established'. This study demonstrates that the personal practical knowledge of returnee teachers is challenging the nature of established practice, as has been portrayed above, and is creating ripples of innovative change in CFL. How to turn those ripples into a great wave is the next challenge.

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CFL Teacher Identity Construction: A Core Element of Future Innovative Practice

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Abstract Teacher identity construction is seen as crucial for professional development and in readiness for adoption of pedagogical innovation. Based on life-history narrative study of three experienced CFL teachers, this chapter explores how the three teacher participants account for their experiences of constructing successful professional identities. The three teacher participants shared their stories of over 20 years of teaching Mandarin Chinese to non-native speakers in both the national school context in Australia and the international school context in Hong Kong. Their collective reflection on the process of constructing successful professional identities in Western-based school contexts revealed the complex and shifting nature of identity construction. The study finds that the processes of constructing a successful professional identity in Western-based school contexts are reflected in narratives of an effective blend of Eastern and Western cultural values and pedagogical practices. This "middle ground" notion of constructing professional identity has important implications for CFL pedagogical innovation in Western-based school context.

1 Introduction

Current literature has so far provided little information for a contextualized understanding of CFL teachers and their teaching practices in Western-based school contexts. One of the major concerns of CFL teaching today is the contrast between the growing demand for CFL learning and the lack of development in pedagogical innovation. This is hindering the successful continuity and internationalization of Chinese language learning.

The implementation of innovations in language education can shape, and be shaped by teacher identity construction (Trent 2012). Understanding how teachers construct their professional identities in workplaces offers useful information

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concerning the pedagogical practices and teaching strategies under innovation-driven educational change. To work in Western-based school contexts, CFL teachers not only have to learn how to teach Chinese effectively to Western learners but also need to gain a whole new understanding of the school system, the domestic culture, the characteristics of the Western students, and their Western colleagues. Thus CFL teachers are faced with multiple challenges as to how to perceive themselves and how to act in a new Western-based educational context in ways that produce effective exchanges with members at all levels in the school community. In particular, the challenges mainly involve how to teach across languages and across cultures, such as how to include meaningful cultural content in CFL teaching (Christensen 2009), how to teach Chinese characters to students with varied linguistic backgrounds (Xiao 2009) and how to manage the CFL classroom successfully within different school systems and cultural contexts (Schrier 2009). For instance, Scarino (2014) studied the struggling teaching experience of a CFL teacher in a Western-based international school context in Australia. The CFL teacher had taught CFL in Australia for over 10 years but was still struggling with abandoning what she believed should be her authoritative role in classroom. Scarino (2014) contended that to teach effectively in Western-based school contexts, CFL teachers needed to unlearn their own native-speaker Chinese ways and to take account of the linguistic and cultural ways of their Western learners. Therefore in order to understand how CFL teachers learn to teach effectively in Western-based school contexts, there is a need to explore more about how to help the CFL teachers construct a positive professional identity, which is associated with successful, satisfying teaching experience.

In this chapter, I focus on how three experienced CFL teachers who successfully constructed their professional identities through their long-term experience of working in Western-based school contexts. The three participants had taught Mandarin Chinese as a second or a foreign language in Western-based school contexts in Australia and Hong Kong for over 20 years. At the time of data collection, each participant was a leader in the teaching and directing of Chinese language programmes in their schools.

The first aim of this chapter is to discuss how these teachers developed their identities from overwhelmed and confused novice teachers to successful and self-actualized teachers. The second aim is to examine how the teachers produced innovative pedagogies through the process of their identity construction. The purpose of focusing on experienced teachers in this study is to provide first-hand information of how CFL teachers successfully move from the peripheral to the core of the CFL "communities of practice" (Wenger 1998). Since many studies have reported that teaching CFL in the Western educational context seems to be filled with struggle, confusion and difficulties, the successful experience of the experienced CFL teachers in this study can project a different image to readers, with rich educational implication for younger teachers and researchers who are involved in the emerging field of CFL education.

2 Teacher Professional Identity

Based on the poststructuralist perspective of identity, professional identity in this chapter is perceived as a social-psychological construct that is historically, situationally and culturally constituted in the narrative discourses of the teacher participants. As Watson (2006) puts it, identity can never be something just interior, in that identity is relational, related to recognition of similarities and differences between ourselves and others. In other words, in the teaching profession, identity is not only about a teacher's own psychological construct but also about how this teacher relates to other people within that profession. Beijaard defines teacher professional identity as "who or what someone is, the various meanings someone can attach to oneself or the meanings attributed to oneself by others" (1995, p. 282). Sachs (2001) also explains teacher professional identity as "a set of attributes that are imposed upon the teaching profession either by outsiders or members of the teaching fraternity itself" (p. 153). Lasky further defines teacher professional identity as "how teachers define themselves to themselves and to others" (2005, p. 901). These definitions bring both the psychological and social dimensions into teacher professional identity. Although examining identity from different perspectives, these definitions of teacher professional identity all agree that identity is not a fixed and stable entity, but rather shifts over time and context.

Research on FL (Foreign Language) teacher identity usually intends to provide a broader understanding and deeper insight into the social, cultural, political and educational context (e.g., Clarke 2008; He and Lin 2013; Liu and Xu 2011; Sachs 2001; Scotland 2014; Tsui 2007; Varghese 2006). In addition, research that is more socially oriented recognizes the role of social context that can mediate identity construction of language teachers. Specifically speaking, two theoretical constructs are commonly adopted for gaining a deeper understanding of the social aspects of language teacher identity: community of practice (Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998) and power relations (Bourdieu 1992; Foucault 1979).

Current literature that focuses on the social aspect of the professional identity construction of FL teachers adopts community of practice as an important analytical tool. Community of practice was defined by Lave and Wenger (1991) as "a set of relations among persons, activity and world, over time and in relation with other tangential and overlapping communities of practice" (p. 115). They explained that the patterns of a workplace community could mediate professional identity formation and the learning of professional skills. Specifically, Wenger pointed out five dimensions for understanding members' professional identity in a community of practice (1998, p. 149): *negotiated experience, community membership, learning trajectory, nexus of multimembership, and a relation between the local and the global*. These five dimensions highlight the social, cultural and political aspects of identity formation. That is to say, identity is not just a matter of individual positioning or practice, but also a matter of social positioning within broader social structures of communities. Importantly, in the theory of community of practice, the concept of "participation" (Wenger 1998, p. 5) has been used to capture the process

of learning by members in the workplace. Different modes of participation can lead to different identity trajectories. Some identity trajectories lead to full participation while some trajectories can lead to peripheral or isolated positions in the community. A number of studies of FL teachers have adopted community of practice (Clarke 2008; Fraga-Canadas 2011; Tsui 2007) to explore professional identity and professional experiences in different social cultural studies.

Power relations have been perceived as another important social construct in research on teacher identity construction. Poststructuralist theorists Foucault (1979) and Bourdieu (1992) noted that human identity and actions were subject to the operations of power in society. Identity of FL teachers is always constructed through complex power relations within the school communities. In her study on identity of a Chinese EFL (English as a foreign language) teacher named Minfang, Tsui (2007) reported that Minfang was not able to teach consistently according to his personal practical knowledge in his EFL classroom. Tsui explained that this was caused by an hierarchy of institutional power that prevented Minfang from teaching EFL according to his personal practical knowledge. Thus Minfang's professional identity was inherently marginalized within the institutional structure.

3 Background and Methodology

3.1 The Research Background

The study presented in this chapter was extracted from a larger project that examined the professional identity representation of six CFL teachers in five different international schools in Hong Kong (Li 2014). The three teacher participants examined in this chapter shared similar transnational teaching experiences. They all started their CFL teaching career in private and public schools in Australia in 1980s and then moved to teach in international schools in Hong Kong at different moments between 1990s and 2000s. The entry experiences of teaching CFL to Western students in Australian schools paved the way for their later career mobility and career success in Hong Kong.

CFL as a subject that is taught in international schools in Hong Kong has figured prominently in recent years. It is estimated that in the year 2012, 46 out of 50 international schools in Hong Kong offered CFL as a compulsory course, which was taught from three times a week to every day (Education Bureau 2012). CFL courses in these schools target teaching Mandarin Chinese, which is "more internationally-marketable" (Yamato and Bray 2002, p. 33) than the local dialect of Cantonese that is used by the majority of Hong Kong citizens. In the early 1990s, only a few schools offered CFL as a selective course. The expansion of CFL education in the international school sector is not simply numerical, but also coincides with actions of promoting ideologies that emphasize global citizenship and international mindedness within the classroom (Bates 2010). This meaningful activity itself is part of the innovative process that is ongoing in all subjects within the international schools.

In Hong Kong, the international schools enjoy their operational autonomy in terms of both medium of instruction and curriculum design. They operate curricula of the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, Canada and a number of other countries. Among these curricula, IB (International Baccalaureate) has been the most popular curriculum (IBO 2015). Most of the international schools in Hong Kong adopt the IB curriculum, which has been the best established international curriculum among international schools worldwide (Hayden and Thompson 1995). The international school curricula were tailored especially for children who are raised in expatriate families in Hong Kong. Some expatriates may be ethnically Chinese but have lived abroad for many years and are now holding foreign passports. These expatriates are usually faced with severe problems when choosing schools for their children in Hong Kong. Thus more and more international schools are founded in Hong Kong to give these children access to the world's top universities in English speaking countries (McGowan 2011).

Teaching CFL in the international school sector in Hong Kong has become a new and promising profession (Lai et al. 2014). This is not surprising in that that learning Chinese is considered to be one of the most sound educational investments due to the rapid development of China's domestic economy and its place in the global marketplace (Wang et al. 2009). Like most of the international schools in other parts of the world, international schools in Hong Kong are seen as adopting a Western liberal, student-centred, constructivist approach to teaching and learning, thus posing challenges for teachers who were trained in a context characterized by different teaching norms (Hayden and Thompson 2011). A number of studies have found that the traditional Chinese teaching approach is characterized as didactic, teacher-centred and authoritative (Dai et al. 2011; Jin and Cortazzi 2006; Pratt et al. 1999). These features were repeatedly mentioned in literature on teaching approaches in Asian societies, especially in Confucian heritage societies such as China, Japan and Singapore (Zhang 2012). Therefore, teachers from China may be called upon to make adjustments to their previous educational practice and beliefs about teaching when they start to teach in a Western liberal international school context. This may pose a challenge to teachers' prior beliefs and practices and thus may result in some form of teacher identity transformation.

3.2 The Research Method

Life-history narrative interviews were adopted as the research method. As Bathmaker (2010) noted, narrative and life history research could offer examples from diverse educational and social contexts, and in which a major concern was the construction and enacting of human identity. Life-history interviews were conducted with the teachers through face-to-face interviews and informal talks. The teachers tied together important moments and events across their professional lives and revealed how they built up their professional knowledge of teaching CFL and negotiated their identity in the Western-based school context.

Table 1 Teacher background

Teacher	Gender	Age	Place of origin	Education	Years of teaching CFL in Australia	Years of teaching CFL in Hong Kong	School section
A	Male	45+	Middle China	BA, MA (China); MEd, PGCE (Australia)	12	8	Secondary
B	Female	55+	North China	BA (China); PGCE, MEd (Australia)	8	18	Primary, secondary
C	Female	50+	North China	BA, MA (China); MEd, PGCE (Australia)	9	14	Primary

As noted, data of this study were obtained from a larger study of professional identity of six CFL teachers in Hong Kong international schools.[1] This chapter chose three participants who had common background of teaching CFL in both Australian and Hong Kong context for analysis. The choice of using narrative data to explore CFL teacher identity is supported by the understanding that narrative provides a type of informative linguistic form that can exhibit human activity as purposeful engagement, and draws together diverse events, happenings and actions from teachers' professional lives into thematically-unified, goal-directed processes (Polkinghorne 1995).

3.3 The Participants

Biographical details of the teachers' gender, age, place of origin, education and years of teaching CFL can be found in Table 1. The participants in this study were three native Chinese-speaking teachers, teaching full-time in different international schools in Hong Kong. All the teachers were aged between 45 and 55, and all had over 20 years of experience teaching CFL in formal school settings. During the time of data collection, each teacher was working in a different international school in Hong Kong and was the leader of the CFL teaching team. All the teachers were native Mandarin speakers, and finished their university education in mainland China. They emigrated to Australia in their late twenties and early thirties, and obtained teacher certificates in Australia. Their biographical summaries are given below.

[1] The study was my M. Phil study on CFL teacher professional identity in international schools, completed on 14 July 2014, at University of Cambridge.

Teacher A, CFL teacher at a secondary international school in Hong Kong, is also the CFL course coordinator who manages a team of seven CFL teachers. He emigrated to Australia from China in late 1980s. He started his CFL teaching career soon after he obtained PGCE[2] in Australia. He taught Mandarin Chinese in several private and public Australian secondary schools before he moved to teach in Hong Kong in the early 2000s.

Teacher B, CFL teacher and CFL course coordinator at a secondary international school in Hong Kong. She received her PGCE training in Australia, and then started her first teaching job in a primary school. She had taught CFL in several different primary and secondary schools in Australia for nearly ten years. In the early 1990s she moved to Hong Kong, and successively taught in three different international schools. She was the CFL course coordinator of all the schools she worked in.

Teacher C, CFL teacher and CFL course coordinator at a primary international school in Hong Kong. She emigrated to Australia in her late twenties in late 1980s. She was initially trained as a secondary school teacher in Australia and then switched to teach Mandarin Chinese to Australian pupils. She taught in primary schools in Australia for about nine years before she moved to teach in Hong Kong in the late 1990s.

3.4 Data Analysis

Data analysis in this study involved a comprehensive analytical approach based on life-history narrative interviews. While analyzing the data, I found that the ways the teachers talked about who they were could not provide a clear notion of professional identity. This was further validated by the poststructuralist theory of identity: that identity is negotiated, dynamic and responsive to its social context, and thus should be understood in a process as opposed to a fixed substance of being (Block 2007; Norton 1995; Søreide 2006). Thus I adopted the "Three-Dimensional Space" (Ollerenshaw and Creswell 2002, p. 340) framework to examine professional identity construction that were historically embedded in teachers narratives.

This analytical framework was originated from Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) approach for analyzing narratives of how teachers construct their personal practical knowledge. The framework is composed of three aspects: interaction, continuity, and situation. Interaction involves both the teachers and the community members such as students, colleagues, and administrators (see Table 2).

Via the code 'interaction', transcribed texts describing both participants' personal experience and their interaction with other people will be teased out and subcoded. Continuity can also be understood as temporality. I analyzed information about the teachers' past and present professional experience. Situation refers to the specific places where the events occurred in the teachers' professional lives. These

[2] PGCE (Postgraduate Certificate in Education) or PGDE (Postgraduate Diploma in Education) is a teacher-training programme offered in the UK, Australia, New Zealand or Hong Kong, where all teachers need to take a PGCE or PGDE, or an equivalent programme to become fully registered teachers.

Table 2 An analytical framework adapted from Clandinin and Connelly (2000)

Interaction		Continuity		Situation
Personal	Social	Past (Australia)	Present (Hong Kong)	Look at context, time and place situated in a physical setting or the sequence of the settings
Look inward to internal positionings, feelings and reactions	Look outward to interactions with members of the community, and their intentions and reactions	Look backward to remembered experiences, important moments and stories from earlier times	Look at current experiences, feelings and stories relating to actions of an event	

involve physical places where events occur or the sequence of those places. This three-dimensional space approach offered a broad and holistic sketch for analyzing the complex narrative data (Ollerenshaw and Creswell 2002). It provides an analytical synthesis of the spatial and historical practices at different locations, focusing in particular on how the CFL teachers construct their professional identities in their international school experience. To complete more details in the cells, I returned to my participants and asked more about their feelings, reactions, thoughts, experience, and the future possible experience that they anticipate.

4 The Professional Stories

4.1 The Early Culture Shock

A "culture shock" was repeatedly mentioned as occurring in the participants' earlier stage of teaching CFL to English-speaking young learners. Unprompted, all participants reflected on their memories of "culture shock" experiences that occurred within the Western classroom context. The participants articulated that their initial teaching CFL experience contrasted dramatically with their previous educational experiences in mainland China. Teacher A talked about his strong feelings of the culture shock when he first started teaching Western students in a public secondary school in Australia in the late 1980s:

> I was faced with a group of kids that are very different from us in terms of their lifestyles, habits, language and behaviours etc. So it was a great challenge for me. I felt excited, but also stressful, even frustrated. (Teacher A, excerpt 1)

The culture shock, according to the participants, was caused by strong differences between Chinese and Western educational contexts. The differences are reflected in many aspects such as the student-teacher relationship, the role of a teacher, classroom management styles and communication styles. For example, Teacher B talked about her observation of the Chinese-Western differences in the

student-teacher relationship when she started to teach in a private primary school in Australia in the late 1980s:

> Our understanding about teachers, I mean the role of teachers, and teacher-student relationship was extremely different from that in Australia. In mainland China, we treated teachers with great respect, even with awe. However, in Australia, the relationship between teachers and students was much more intimate. I mean there was not a gap between teachers and students in Australia as that in China. This was a challenge to me at that time. (Teacher B, excerpt 1)

In the above quote, Teacher B talked about different styles of teacher-student relationship in China and the Western societies, that teachers are much more authoritative and distanced from students in the Chinese context than that in the Australian context.

4.2 Learn to Teach the Western Children

The participants all started as pioneers in the CFL teaching profession. This means very little teacher learning could be gained from peers simply because there were no CFL mentors or co-workers working in the Australian schools. Most of them reported that they learned how to teach through their own observation, reflection and action.

Teacher C was a teacher of English in a renowned foreign language university in China before she emigrated to Australia in the late 1980s. She was a very popular instructor when she was in China. Her passionate and engaging teaching style always made her a favourite with her Chinese students. However, things were totally changed when she started to teach CFL in a mainstream primary school in Australia. She had to learn everything from scratch including how to talk to the pupils and how to give up her authoritative role. Teacher C told an interesting incident occurred in her classroom (K1-2) when she was a novice teacher in a Western-based context:

> When I was teaching year one […], the K1 kids were so little that they could not sit still […]. I was wondering why, so initially I said, "Sh! Sh!". […] They did not listen. […] And then I started with "Shush! Shush! Shush!" That didn't work either! Then my brain was racked, I shouted "shut up"! […] The (class) teacher abruptly looked back toward me. She was shocked (by me)! (She thought) how could I say things like that? […] The moment I looked at her face I realized that I (had) put my foot in my mouth! (Teacher C, excerpt 1)

The most interesting feature of discourse in this story is her escalation from using onomatopoeic words like "sh" to "shush" and finally her burst of "shut up". For Xiao, the usual classroom management strategies she employed in China failed to create a respectful orderly class environment. The issue of her former identity as a university instructor did not function in a Western classroom. She needed to construct a new professional identity in an Western educational context. The reconstruction of identity here is not only associated with content teaching, but more importantly, with learning how to speak English appropriately to young pupils and

how to manage the classroom in an efficient, proper manner in a Western-based context. As she explained:

> Back then I didn't understand children's attention span was very short, as I always taught adults (in China), I didn't know their attention span was short, so my brain was racked, then anything I said could not attract their attention. Back then […] I didn't know "shut up" was a very hurtful, very rude phrase (to native English speaking children). (Teacher C, excerpt 2)

Teacher C further pointed out:

> When I entered in (the classroom) I found there was a huge difference. The teachers (Western colleagues) told me that they (the children) don't understand what you are talking about. I said, "How come? They are native speakers!" I didn't understand at that time. And then the teachers said, "they are also learning there!" (Teacher C, excerpt 3)

The above quotes sketch a poignant picture of how CFL teachers like Teacher C experienced identity shift through the cognitive process of developing her pedagogical knowledge about the native English-speaking students and what she could bring to the classroom in the Australian context. The gaze from the class teacher when Xiao said "shut up" to the students and the gentle reminder about her "inappropriate" instructional language from the Western mainstream colleagues urged her to reflect about her inappropriate pedagogical practices that were brought about by her prior knowledge of teaching and induced her to change.

Cultural identity and intercultural understanding in Western-based workplaces

Cultural identity is perceived as an essential part in the participants' professional lives. For the participants, critical reflection on their cultural perceptions and cultural experiences throughout their professional lives is a way for them to gain intercultural understanding and improve their intercultural understanding in Western-based workplaces.

The participants' many personal stories about how they successfully dealt with conflicts, misunderstandings and gaps occurring in daily interactions with Western colleagues. In general, the participants thought that keeping a balanced relationship with their Western colleagues was as important as being a good CFL teacher in the classrooms. This balanced relationship refers to mutual understanding and mutual respect. The most interesting aspect of the narratives is that how to position oneself as a Chinese person in a Western-dominated school context was viewed as very important and was placed no less important than their identity as a teacher in the classroom context. Teacher B even went beyond the question of cultural identity and saw this as an issue of mutual respect.

> I think for the Chinese teachers, or for the Chinese teachers who are working in such kind of school context, I could often sense a so-called dilemma from them. That is: where is my identity? Do I need to be more like a Chinese, or, do I need to mingle with the Westerners? I realize that there is no need to think in that way. You are yourself. But you have to get to understand the differences and similarities between the Chinese and the Western culture. Culture differences exist because they are two different cultures after all. Many (cultural) values are slightly different, like eating, dressing…I think these should always be kept in mind. Then others (Westerners) would find it easier to accept you, and they would feel you

> have noticed them and showed your respect to them and their culture. It's about mutual respect. (Teacher B, excerpt 2)

Innovative perceptions about how to balance the "traditional teaching methods" with the "Western teaching methods" in CFL teaching were repeatedly articulated in the narratives. By constantly reflecting, analyzing and comparing, the teachers gradually developed their "middle ground" of how to effectively adopt both Chinese and Western methods of teaching and learning. For example, Teacher C criticized Western beliefs about traditional Chinese learning and teaching methods:

> Some Chinese things (learning methods) are not necessarily good, but those are what you have to adopt. For example, using muscles to write characters (handwriting), this is what you have to do. Another example is you have to do homework, but our Westerners thought doing homework is not helpful to children at all. But I don't think so. I think doing homework is very helpful for students. They (the Westerners) said this was research, I said research can be lopsided, not all research are correct. Doing homework can help students develop their sense of responsibility and self-management. (Teacher C, excerpt 4)

In addition, the teachers contrasted themselves with "other CFL teachers" in order to distance themselves from more conventional pedagogical approaches and social acts. A comparison between the participants themselves and their fellow Chinese colleagues reflected their self-positioning and their perceptions about the best ways that teachers should position themselves in their workplace. What is remarkable about these narratives is the affirmative faith in their idea of professional inclusion, even though most of them agreed that cultural marginality still exists in most of these schools. Comments about the other CFL teachers such as "Chinese are generally introverted" (Teacher C) and "many (Chinese) teachers in this school are not internationalized enough" (Teacher A) reflect a leadership positioning within the Chinese team and a critical perspective of traditional image of Chinese teacher identity.

5 Discussion

From the narratives of the three CFL teachers, it can be seen that the process of identity construction is associated with reconstruction of the teachers' professional knowledge. This process of reconstructing professional knowledge can be seen as a path of building up contextualized knowledge and critically reflecting on their preconceptions about teaching in a new teaching context. In their earlier time of teaching CFL in Australia, the tensions that the participants faced in the classroom context such as the failure to attract the attention of young pupils triggered lengthy descriptions of the old methods of classroom management that they used in China. This nudged the teachers to reflect on their preconceptions about teaching and ameliorate their teaching methods and classroom management skills. As Golombek (1998) has stated, reflection in response to teachers' own classrooms can contextualize their personal practical knowledge. For the participants, contextualizing their

personal practical knowledge of effective teaching and engagement with the Western students is the key to build up a successful, self-actualized professional identity.

The critical stance towards both Western and Chinese educational context was a major part of the narratives. The participants consciously made comparisons between their cross-cultural encounters in the Western school context and the earlier educational experiences they had in the Chinese school context. The critical stance toward both Chinese and Western educational context, pedagogies and beliefs enabled the participants to critically examine their preconceptions about teaching CFL in Australia. It seems that the participants did not merely embrace one particular pedagogical approach and regard it as the most effective way to teach the students. They did not romanticize or idealize Western pedagogies that were characterized by student-centred and inquiry-based learning, neither completely refuted traditional Chinese pedagogies that were portrayed in repetition and memorization. Instead, they critically examined both Chinese and Western pedagogies, and were able to interpret and theorize them as their own "personal practical knowledge" (Beijaard et al. 2000, p. 749). Critical reflection is crucial for the participants to build up contextualized professional knowledge and enhance their professional identity. Scarino (2014) noted that understanding language learning as an interlinguistic and intercultural experience could change the teacher-student relationship. She pointed out two important aspects of FL teacher professional learning based on her research on primary and secondary FL teachers:

(1) To develop teachers' capacity to critically examine their own preconceptions, their teaching, learning, and assessment practices, and their students' learning, with a focus on meaning-making in the context of diversity in and out of the language classroom;
(2) Through such developmental processes, to gain a deeper understanding of the interpretive and reflective nature of language learning that leads to an awareness of themselves as participants, with their learners, in reciprocal interpretation of meaning-making (Scarino 2014: p. 387)

The narratives have shown that for these teachers the process of professional identity construction is also associated with a process of reconstructing one's cultural values and cultural identity. As sociologists have argued that classrooms can be seen as a cultural product of society (Bourdieu 1992), teaching in a Western classroom, for the participants, was not only related to learning about teaching skills but also to understanding a new system of cultural meanings such as Western styles of teacher-student relationship, characteristics of Western learners and Western styles of communication.

Though it cannot be assumed that these cultural values can be generalized to all members in Chinese or Western societies, it can be argued that there are some shared Chinese values across Chinese cultural settings (Zhang 2012). Watkins and Biggs (1996) regarded that Chinese education was rooted in a Confucian-heritage learning culture in which the teachers were perceived as masters of knowledge, and were expected to share what they know to the students. Another characteristic of Chinese educational practices, according to Watkins and Biggs, includes standard-based practice for learning, as opposed to the differentiated instruction in Western education (Gregory and Corwin 2011). The teachers' early encounters in Western

classrooms were repeatedly articulated, indicating that this experience represented a reconstruction of their knowledge and beliefs about the Western educational culture.

Former teaching experience is also important for understanding the professional identity of the CFL teachers. The experiences of teaching CFL in local schools in Australia prior to teaching in international schools in Hong Kong, as reported by the participants, were very important for them to develop solid personal practical knowledge of teaching CFL in cross-cultural settings. The participants were all well prepared with necessary knowledge and experience of teaching CFL before starting to teach in the international schools in Hong Kong. It is essential to recognize the role of their prior teaching experiences in various socio-educational contexts, to fully understand their development from confused novice teachers in the past to more successful and self-actualized teachers at present.

6 Conclusion

In the era of globalization, the mobility of Chinese teachers has been increasing and this is likely to prompt the teachers to improve their teaching approach in order to accommodate students with multilingual and multicultural backgrounds (Kramsch 2014). Chinese teachers are no longer merely teaching CFL to foreign students within China. More and more teachers have left China and work as full time CFL teachers in primary or secondary schools overseas. CFL teachers are more likely to teach in multiple educational and cultural contexts rather than a single, unitary context. This contextual change has increased the complexity of professional identity formation. Therefore, in examining professional identity of CFL teachers, it is important to take account of their prior working experience and prior working context.

The shared repertoire was built on the participants' long-term reflections of how to become active and successful CFL teachers in the complex Western-based school context. It shows the pressing need to critically understand the socially constructed Chinese and Western pedagogies. It seems that the conventionally constructed Chinese teaching approaches that emphasized memorization and repetition were not perceived as backward or useless by the participants. The three participants had developed their own effective teaching methods by critically examining the problems and advantages of both Chinese and Western teaching approaches. Additionally, cross-cultural perceptions about how to "be a Chinese" in a Western-based school context seemed to be a crucial part of professional identity.

Overall, the narratives from the three participants exhibited a collective professional identity that is distinct from the conventionally constructed image of Chinese teachers in the previous literature (Dai et al. 2011; Jin and Cortazzi 2006; Pratt et al. 1999). Their stories showed that they were a group of fully active participants in the global CFL communities of practice. The critical discourses reflected a collective professional identity that is characterized by successful and active participants in

their communities of practice. Novice CFL teachers who have struggles and difficulties in working in a Western-based school context may learn from the stories of the three participants about how to construct an active and successful professional identity.

Further, this study proposes that the process of identity construction represents in itself a CFL pedagogical innovation. First, the teachers' narratives of their "middle-ground" pedagogical beliefs suggest that it is important to work out a balance between Eastern and Western pedagogical beliefs rather than adopting one to the exclusion of the other. When initiating innovation in teaching, teachers should carefully examine the ongoing place of "traditional" teaching methods when adopting new or Western-based teaching methods. Second, it is important to conduct both individual and shared reflective practice within community, which can be a very beneficial activity and can support successful teaching experience. An inclusive community of practice could allow teachers to share how they position their cultural identity in a Western-based school context. Novice teachers could benefit from experienced teachers' sharing of their successful experiences of handling conflicts and misunderstandings in intercultural interactions.

It must be noted that professional trajectories of CFL teachers may not be the same due to different sociocultural or sociopolitical contexts. The "middle-ground" notion of identity and pedagogical beliefs exhibited by the three teachers in this study cannot capture the whole complex and diverse picture of pedagogical innovation. There may be other types of identity trajectories that are linked with pedagogical innovation. As more CFL teachers succeed in diverse sociocultural contexts, there is ongoing research need to capture the diversity of CFL professional identity construction, to achieve deeper understanding of how to better support successful CFL learning globally.

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The Innovation and Challenge of a Content and Language Integrated Learning Approach to CFL in One Australian Primary School

Lesley Harbon, Ruth Fielding, and Jianlian Liang

Abstract This chapter offers an alternative lens through which to examine the teaching of Chinese language and culture in an Australian school. At this particular primary school in Sydney, New South Wales, Australia, three subjects (Music, Science, Human Society and Its Environment) are taught through Chinese. Offering a languages program within a Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) program is relatively new in Australian schooling, thus the researchers were interested in examining implementation and related issues. In this chapter the CLIL teacher's means of planning, designing, and implementing her teaching of Chinese is explored through her beliefs about teaching as well as her beliefs about languages. Examining the Chinese CLIL primary school model through teachers' beliefs is not a common way of understanding how languages are taught. This research has found that at the core of the teacher's core beliefs is an assumption that humans can cope with more than one language at a time, and that high expectations, from parents and teachers, should surround such programs. A CLIL languages program is a pedagogically sound program offering that can make a difference to students' learning outcomes, with advantages over traditional Chinese-as-a-Foreign-Language practice where language content may not be linked to the child's learning in other curriculum areas. The research is framed and analysed through the 4Cs (content, communication, cognition, culture) lens, allowing a detailed analysis of what language and culture are taught, who participates and how they participate, as well as how the teacher makes decisions and plans.

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1 Introduction

Although relatively widespread in Europe, Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is relatively new in Australian schooling, given what has been a history of a substantially monolingual mindset underpinning Australian state and territory education policy in Australia over the past 100 years (Clyne 2005; Fielding and Harbon 2014).

This chapter reports on research undertaken in one New South Wales primary school which is delivering a CLIL Chinese program. In this school, five hours of teaching time per week are devoted to the delivery in Chinese of selected units from three primary syllabuses, Human Society and Its Environment (HSIE, or social studies), Music and Science. The three authors bring together their academic and practitioner voices to investigate what is essentially 'at the heart' of how the CLIL teacher plans, designs, implements, assesses and evaluates her teaching of Chinese in the primary classrooms.

CLIL is not widely implemented in Australian schools as it is in Europe and some parts of Asia. For that reason, and particularly for its low incidence in school Chinese programs, it may be considered innovative in the Australian context. We maintain that the innovative aspect can be captured through examining the core beliefs of a teacher who teaches in this setting. This research found that at the core of our practitioner colleague's beliefs is an assumption that humans can cope with more than one language at a time, and that high expectations, from parents and teachers, should surround such programs. This CLIL model contrasts with the predominantly 'deficit' model of language ability found in English as a Second Language settings, where the expectations may be that engaging with one language alone will allow the child to proceed and learn in a new language context. It also contrasts with the second language learning models, where two or more languages are compartmentalised, kept separate, and not seen holistically (Corcoll 2013).

In this chapter, after establishing the literature base supporting our understanding of the teaching of Chinese as a Foreign Language (CFL), we explore our practitioner researcher's core beliefs about the teaching and learning at the centre of her CLIL model of delivery. CLIL, we believe, is a pedagogically sound model that can make a difference to students' learning outcomes, with advantages over traditional CFL practice. We argue this, using the CLIL model of 4Cs (content, communication, cognition, culture) (Coyle 1999) as an analytical framework.

In this respect, the chapter can be seen to be responding to Dalton-Puffer and Nikula's (2014, p. 118) call for more research about "the beliefs, perceptions, motivations and orientations of … teachers… as it seems crucial to know more about how those directly involved experience CLIL implementation in order to identify areas for both research and development". We first examine the context for her teaching, then follow this with a review of the relevant literature. We discuss the methods of data gathering and analysis, before concluding with a discussion of our findings.

2 Context of This Study

The research documented in this chapter explores one aspect of a larger research project which involved the two researchers conducting descriptive, evaluative research on the implementation of new bilingual programs in four NSW primary schools during 2011 and 2012. The New South Wales government was piloting what they termed 'bilingual' programs in the four primary-level, Federal-Government endorsed Asian languages (Chinese, Korean, Indonesian and Japanese). As part of the research the term CLIL was explored and stakeholders themselves stated that they believed the following definition applied to their contexts:

> In short, CLIL is a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language…" and "the CLIL strategy, above all, involves using a language that is not a student's native language as a medium of instruction and learning … Language teachers in CLIL programmes play a unique role. In addition to teaching the standard curriculum, they work to support content teachers by helping students to gain the language needed to manipulate content from other subjects (Mehisto et al. 2008, pp. 9–11).

Within the wider study (Fielding and Harbon 2014; Harbon and Fielding 2013), teachers directly involved in delivery of the program and/or involved in the planning and implementation were found to have positive perceptions about various strengths of the program. They also identified what they perceive is needed for ongoing success. Some teachers (and staff less directly involved with the programs) expressed neutrality or concerns about the programs. Results pointed to the need for broader communication with the school communities to ensure that the whole school community has information about and access to seeing the programs in operation. As well, a number of issues arose as ideas which required continuing research, including the key role of the CLIL teachers and their core beliefs as discussed in this chapter.

Jianlian, the teacher researcher in our research team, emigrated from China, and lived and taught in New Zealand prior to coming to Australia. Jianlian has considered the role of her personal background and beliefs in the development of her professional identity and pedagogy (Liang and Moloney 2013). After some time experiencing life within the Chinese community in New Zealand, in 2005 she set up a Saturday school for Chinese learning. It had much community support and was influenced by what she had observed in a French bilingual school and in the Maori bilingual educational settings. This led to her interest in language education and her own personal interest in delivering language education through a bilingual model. When the schools in NSW were looking to staff the bilingual Chinese program, Jianlian was particularly interested to teach in this context.

Jianlian's program is designed following a Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) model interactive approach (Chen 2008) in which both content and language are equally important. Jianlian places equal importance on 4 'C's: language is learned in order to enhance students' language competence and at the

same time content is also learned through the additional language. The 4 C's model (Coyle 1999) places a focus on:

- **Content** – Progression in new knowledge, skills and understanding related to the content (Teacher questions: What do I want them to learn? that is, the learning outcomes);
- **Communication** – Using language to learn, both oral and written. The focus is on the design to ensure (i) the language of learning, (ii) the language for learning and (iii) language development through learning. (Teacher question: What language do they need to use, to work with the content?)
- **Cognition** – Developing higher order thinking skills related to specific topics through the target language. (Teacher question: What kind of questions will develop higher order thinking?)
- **Culture** – Deepening awareness of otherness and self, valuing different home languages and cultures (Teacher question: What kind of cultural implications are there for the students?)

3 Literature Review

3.1 Chinese CLIL in One Australian Primary School

In briefly contextualizing our research within the wider CFL literature, we note the "groundswell of interest in Chinese" (Duff 2008a, p. 3). It is clear that scholars have noted the "differences between teaching, learning, and assessment processes for Chinese and those for other languages" (Duff 2008a, p. 3). Other dominant themes in the research captured and commented upon also by Duff (2008b) and Duff and Lester (2008) include linguistic similarity or difference to the learner's language, script, the best order to teach Chinese literacy depending on learners' first language, time needed for learning Chinese as compared to other languages, grammars of Chinese and the learner's other languages, requiring the Chinese teacher to have "a good metalinguistic understanding of pedagogical/functional grammar to help make their students aware of such phenomena in Chinese" (Duff 2008b, p. 32). Everson (2008) too, noted scholarly interest in teaching and learning of Chinese orthographies, issues for learners whose first language is English, issues for learners of different ages, issues for reading Chinese, the role for pinyin, and learning characters. Particularly for Everson (2008, p. 76), a key related issue for teaching and learning is how to teach Chinese literacy. Everson suggests the teacher's mantra should be (i) "to know your students" and (ii) "the role of practice and extensive reading": that is, you get better at reading by reading.

Chen (2008) examined four models of teaching Chinese language and culture in the West. Chen found that best practice for CFL includes: (i) an additive model, where language and culture are taught separately (Chen 2008, p. 81); (ii) an integrative model, where language taught and learned is for language use in communication

(Chen 2008, p. 82), (iii) a comprehensive model, where learners of Mandarin learn to do things through the language, and to know things (Chen 2008, p. 84), and (iv) an interactive model where there is a "negotiating and mediating of cultural and linguistic knowing, emphasizing this interaction aspect for learners" (Chen 2008, p. 85).

In the Australian context for CFL Orton (2014) notes that much research into CFL practice is very localized and program-specific. She argues that more needs to be done to co-construct pedagogical norms for the teaching of CFL more broadly.

In essence, the CFL literature examines a variety of aspects about the "what" and "how" regarding the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language and argues for more co-constructed work involving researchers and practitioners. These themes will be examined further in discussing the findings of the research.

3.2 Teaching Content through an Additional Language: The 'Bilingual' Approach

In Australia bilingual education is not widespread. The programs that are in place differ from school to school as they have each developed in different circumstances and as a result of different initiatives or as one-off individual programs. Types of bilingual programs in Australia include transitional, enrichment and full bilingual programs (Jones Diaz 2014). Our study looked at bilingual programs that involve development of the two languages in parallel (Jones Diaz 2014, p. 276). These programs are also sometimes termed 'partial immersion', 'dual language' or CLIL programs in other literature (Baker 2012; Mehisto et al. 2008). It is within one such school that the teacher featured in this chapter currently teaches.

On the whole, bilingual programs which are generally considered to be strong are those which add an additional language without detriment to the student's existing languages such as immersion or CLIL (Baker 2012; Garcia 2009; Swain and Johnson 1997). 'Submersion' and 'transitional' programs are considered to be weak programs as they enable a student to use two languages in the early years of the program and then gradually remove the home or heritage language to leave only the dominant language of the schooling context (Baker 2012; Garcia 2009. See Baker 2012 for a full exploration of the terms weak and strong in relation to bilingual education).

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) can be seen to fit under the umbrella of strong bilingual programs. While CLIL is often compared to immersion language learning, this is disputed by some. CLIL differs from immersion in that, under the flexible CLIL model, there is no minimum amount of time required in the new language, whereas an immersion model ideally takes place for at least 50 % of learning time. Recent critique by Cenoz et al. (2014, p. 1) argues that the division between CLIL and immersion is "misguided". They argue that much more understanding of CLIL pedagogy is needed to further clarify whether there is, in

fact, pedagogical distinction between immersion and CLIL settings (Cenoz et al. 2014).

CLIL learning is defined in the literature as schooling where the content of any learning area is taught through the medium of another language, for example Geography being taught through the use of French (Coyle 2007, 2013; Mehisto et al. 2008). CLIL has been adopted in a number of countries as a model of delivering sustained, meaningful and purposeful language education. This approach has been embraced most strongly in Europe. It is seen by teachers as an authentic pedagogy which is practical in terms of time allocation (Ioannou Georgiou 2012).

In Germany, CLIL models have been identified since 2005 and a review of these indicates that students in CLIL programs develop very strong writing skills in German and English, with at least equal competence and achievement in subject area content compared to non-CLIL groups of students (Finkbeiner et al. 2013). Research in European CLIL programs has shown that program goals, teacher motivation, teacher training and professional learning, levels of stakeholder collaboration, and access to teaching and learning materials all differ greatly and thereby impact school offerings (Dalton-Puffer and Smit 2013; de Zarobe 2013). A study of CLIL in Poland has revealed that the models vary depending upon (i) the amount of second language used by both teachers and students, (ii) the particular focus of the subject content (iii) the teacher's pedagogy, and (iv) differences in students' motivations and learning styles (Czura and Papaja 2013). It has been shown to be crucial to explore the pedagogy of individual teachers particularly when more than one adult is present in the classroom (Cummins et al. 2011; Dafouz and Hibler 2013). It has also been emphasised that it is essential to look at individual contexts before making broad generalisations about CLIL programs (Turner 2013), as there are differences between CLIL programs implemented in different contexts.

The supposed failure of many bilingual programs both in Australia and in other countries has been attributed, in many cases, to weak models of implementation (Cummins 1996, 2000, 2003), which have involved students' home languages removed from the educational setting (noted by Jones Diaz in 2014 as 'subtractive' and marginalising children from bilingual homes). Recently, however, in the Australian context, Victoria and New South Wales have implemented a number of strong (or 'additive') bilingual programs (Fielding 2009, 2011, 2013; Fielding and Harbon 2014; Harbon and Fielding 2013; Jones Diaz 2014), where the aim of the curriculum is to see children develop as bilingual and biliterate. The languages in the programs discussed in those research projects are not only Chinese, but also French, Korean, Indonesian and Japanese. As some of these strong programs have been a guide for implementation of the four recently created New South Wales models, the expectation has been that the new programs will also exhibit 'strong' program characteristics (such as is described in Fielding and Harbon 2013; or Wiltshire and Harbon 2010). Jianlian teaches in one such program that may be considered 'strong'.

Bilingual programs, including CLIL programs, are seen as one means of addressing the crowded curriculum barrier to implementing meaningful and sustained language programs in primary schools. Programs which enable the learning of language

to take place at the same time as content learning do not require additional teaching time, although they do require additional allocation for teacher planning. Corcoll (2013) outlines the main pedagogical reasons for CLIL, citing Gonzalez Davies from 2002 in relation to CLIL developing students' cognitive skills, creativity, self-confidence and risk-taking.

Much bilingual education research has historically focused upon the issues surrounding code-switching and code-mixing and the debate over whether these modes of language use are detrimental to students' learning of language. The literature today has moved away from the notion of language switching and mixing being seen as problematic and the term 'translanguaging' has become more widely used to refer to conscious and strategic changes of language which are seen as useful to the bilingual learner in navigating the educational landscape (Garcia 2009). The result is that now there is further refining of this term to look at the use of translanguaging in the classroom (see for example, Hornberger and Link 2012).

As regards language use in the CLIL or bilingual classroom, scholars are now changing focus, honing in on which language is being utilized and in what ways and in which contexts. Hornberger and Link (2012, p. 240) discuss translanguaging as "a practice that is becoming more widely recognized across educational contexts in an increasingly globalized world…[referring] broadly to how bilingual students communicate and make meaning by drawing on and intermingling linguistic features from different languages". In a CLIL classroom it is very likely that translanguaging occurs and important for the CLIL teacher to make a stand on how translanguaging is going to be accepted in the CLIL classroom as it may be counter to traditional views of what "bilingual" teaching must look like.

As well as the balance or use of languages, CLIL researchers are also focusing on choice of delivery models. Creese (2010, pp. 100–101) reviews the current thinking about teaching language in a content-based model. She reviews papers that examine content-based language learning as subject focused immersion through (i) language-conscious language teaching, (ii) content-driven, (iii) contextualized or (iv) theme-based language teaching. This theorization has concluded that there are multiple aims, and multiple models by which we can conceptually frame this type of language teaching and learning. The interface between language and content is at the heart of the issue, and many factors impact how and how well this teaching and learning is achieved.

Cenoz et al. (2014) have recently critiqued the ongoing separation of CLIL and immersion. They argue that much research needs to take place which explores the integration of language and content and gives careful attention to the pedagogical underpinnings of classroom instruction. Lindholm-Leary (2012) discusses not only the challenges of bilingual or dual-language instruction, but also the implications for practice (p. 261). She notes that dual language learning programs must have a "vision and goals associated with bilingualism". In this exploration of teacher beliefs in a new and, for its context, innovative pedagogical setting, it is important to consider the wider parameters of the program, and the pedagogy as we explore the teacher's beliefs about her classroom teaching.

3.3 Teacher Beliefs and Their Impact on Pedagogy

The literature on general teacher beliefs is broad and widespread. For the purposes of this chapter it is necessary to define what we see as teacher beliefs in a language teaching context as we explore Jianlian's experiences of teaching in a CLIL program. We therefore do not explore the notion of teacher beliefs in full, but specify a particular understanding of teacher beliefs as relevant to this study.

Borg (2003, 2006, 2009) scopes much of what we know about what is termed language teacher 'cognition', indicating that there are psychological and philosophical perspectives to frame what is a very complex set of understandings (Calderhead 1996). Generally it is agreed that teachers' beliefs refer to "psychologically held understandings, premises, or propositions about the world that are felt to be true" (Richardson 1996, p. 103).

Teachers' beliefs come into existence due to the teacher's own personal narrative (including their own ideas about teaching and learning) and teaching experience in particular (Calderhead 1996; Richardson 1996). Without systematic, guided consideration about, and reflection on, their own beliefs, teachers may not know how to conceive of their beliefs (Borg 2003). Yet it is widely agreed that teachers' beliefs are "a basis for [their] action" (Borg 2011, p. 371). Due to the nature of teaching in a bilingual context we argue that Jianlian's actions are built on her beliefs about language, culture, teaching, learning and her content knowledge, that is, Chinese.

In our research it has appeared that the New South Wales government has not supported the four CLIL programs through the creation and dissemination of any vision or goal statements (Minister for Education and Training 2009). What we have observed about CLIL program implementation is that in general, it is up to the teacher him/herself to fall back on her own individual vision and goals through their own individual sets of teacher beliefs (Johnson and Golombek 2002), and to push forward with the CLIL teaching in ways which each teacher must develop, using even their intuition (Van Manen 1991) as to what will work best. Duff (2008b, p. 10) says that

> becoming effective teachers is now understood to be a highly interactive, reflective, constructive, experiential process of professional socialization and of developing one's own competencies, beliefs, skills and identity as a language teacher (e.g., Richards 1998; Freeman and Johnson 1998; Freeman 2001; Richards and Lockhart 1994). It cannot be achieved through the accumulation of theory and through book learning alone.

4 Research Design and Methodology

Our data were gathered over an 18 month period working closely with Jianlian, a member of our research team for the purposes of this paper, and one of the CLIL Chinese teachers at the primary school where our larger study was conducted.

We used two key data collection strategies: (i) participant Focus Groups, during which we captured Jianlian's beliefs in a focus group with her colleagues who are also Chinese teachers at the school; and (ii) a collaborative and reflecting writing process involving Jianlian and the two researchers co-writing and questioning each other as we shaped this chapter. We liken our strategy of working with Jianlian to Koopman et al. (2014, p. 128) *Language Teaching Wall*. Each new piece of information Jianlian has provided, has been similar to her setting single bricks in a 'wall' or 'building of a wall' of knowledge about her pedagogy. Each stage led to us returning to Jianlian with questions to further probe her thinking, and her analysis of her pedagogies. Subsequent to her participation in the Focus Groups, Jianlian expressed a desire to work more closely in the research project and thus has been integral to the further investigation into her CLIL teaching beliefs.

Two sets of separate questions have allowed Jianlian to reflect and respond to our interrogation of her beliefs as a Chinese CLIL teacher (see Appendix A). These questions enabled us to probe more deeply into Jianlian's thoughts and beliefs about her practice and to co-construct an understanding.

Data were analysed through thematic content analysis (Neuman 2006). The three researchers read and re-read the data transcripts multiple times, and using the literature to frame the analysis, the researchers categorized the data into thematic areas, noting the key comments about the teacher beliefs underpinning the teaching in this context.

The key themes which emerged as being at the 'heart' of successful CLIL programs are the CLIL teachers' beliefs about CLIL teaching, learning, pedagogy, language and culture, framed through notions of content, communication, cognition and culture.

5 Findings

Jianlian's beliefs about content, communication, cognition and culture

Using the 4 'C's frame (Coyle 1999) we take Jianlian's words and shape new understandings about content, communication, cognition and culture in the primary CFL CLIL model program at the centre of our research.

5.1 Content

In 2010 Jianlian came to know us as two interested researchers, eager to know more about how her primary school was making the bilingual Chinese-English program work. She indicated how content was taught through the language. In a first Focus Group with her two teaching colleagues, she made some interesting initial statements about her beliefs in regard to language learning in this new context:

> My experience has shown that when students encounter a new language, they will often go through a period of lots of input with little output (silence)…Teachers should continue to interact with the children both musically and verbally during this time, but avoid forcing them to speak in front of other people or peers…Verbal praise must be given… One way to assist students to build a vocabulary is by the use of hand signs or gestures.

It can be seen that Jianlian's beliefs are strongly linked to responding to children's needs and creating a safe environment for children to learn. She also strongly focuses upon scaffolding language learning. From the time of that initial conversation we have had subsequent discussions to deconstruct her beliefs in more detail. In our first conversation with her she indicated a core belief that children can work in multiple languages and succeed. We have deduced that Jianlian's beliefs drive everything she does, the decisions she makes in planning lessons, and the decisions she makes in the classroom: more so than any overt curriculum policy or scholarly theory. We see these beliefs through our conversations with Jianlian as we hear her comments about translanguaging, where she expresses her beliefs about the interaction of two languages in the classroom. We also hear her beliefs about scaffolding learning when she speaks about strategies such as when teaching science or music, providing graphic organisers, using physical gestures and using music to assist in the early stages of bilingual learning. Additionally we hear her beliefs about the scaffolding process when she speaks about teaching children the step by step language process and about making learning relevant. Finally we hear her beliefs about teaching in the CLIL context through her comments about the need to work with the wider Chinese culture and community.

In Jianlian's program, the four macro skills are included in almost every lesson:

- There are **Listening** activities every lesson, which she believes are very important for students' linguistic knowledge.
- There are **Speaking** activities every lesson, emphasizing 'output'. Jianlian aims for students' fluency, then accuracy.
- There are **Reading** activities in many lessons, using practical material, another major source of 'input'.
- There are **Writing** activities in most lessons, requiring focus on vocabulary, phrases and grammar is usually recycled.

Jianlian's belief is that to motivate the children, the language learning is best set in another mode – for her this is often music. In her New Zealand school she even used the martial arts form, Kung Fu, to support the language learning. She says,

> I believe in weaving together a wide range of musical activities, for example, placing Chinese lyrics into a familiar tune, adding lots of movement-to-music, giving students a chance to create their own language patterns/songs then perform to the class. Actually students are encouraged to use any way that they feel confident to express their ideas e.g. drawing, acting, singing, dancing, writing.

The content she is choosing goes hand-in-hand with the pedagogy she is fostering. Her choices are real-life, practical, linked to the Human Society and Its Environment, Music and Science syllabuses, and plentiful. She builds content for communication.

5.2 Communication

Jianlian teaches through Chinese. She believes that there are two languages in existence in her classroom but she models the language behaviour she wants the children to follow, only using English when explaining really complex ideas. Otherwise she encourages the children to do their best in Chinese. Communication is embedded within everything she does in the classroom. She describes the phenomenon of bridging between languages: "They can also use their stronger language to build the bridges between what they already know with what they are learning."

In that way she validates the children's use of translanguaging as a communication tool. However, she is immovable about her own use of Chinese one hundred percent of the time. She says,

> Don't translate – instead use lots of body language/pictures/photos to help students understand what we want them to know/learn. Don't translate to the students, but explain to them, use pictures and body languages to help understanding. Students will get used to learning the language this way.

When investigating what this may look like in her class, she tells this story…

> I always have the belief that I'm not going to translate for them. I always explain to them. Like when we learn "capital city". I don't say "Shou Du首都 – Shou Du means capital city". I don't do that. I will show them the photo like compared to Canberra in Australia. I say "Australia's capital city is in Canberra." In Chinese I would say that. And if they still don't understand I say that many people and all of the politicians work in the city. They finally get it.

This extended quote from an interview explains more about her conviction about her use of Chinese.

JL: Yes they do that lots. Gradually I help them to get rid of the English. I only use Chinese. They might say, "Lǎoshī, can I speak English?" I say, "can you try to speak Chinese".
I: Is this a useful strategy, do you think it helps them or saves time?
JL: I think it's quite helpful for them. It's like a first step. Helps them to build up their confidence. I don't follow any theories from this area. But from practical way, I find that quite useful.

and

JL: Yes, they said "Lǎoshī, wǒ kěyǐ qù canteen ma?" "Mrs/Teacher can I go and get the lunch orders"? It's patterns, they know how to "I can", "Can I". The same with "can I go to the toilet". And then they will say, because the pattern is "" – "Can I go", then later on they ask "Can I go to Mrs Baker's class to get my notebook. "wǒ kěyǐ qù Mrs Bakers' class to get wǒ de notebook". They know "I" – "I". And then I will help them. I will say "wǒ kěyǐ qù Baker Lǎoshī de jiào shì ná wǒ de bǐ jì běn ma?" and then I will help them. But sometimes if it's too long, I will help them with a simpler one. I will help them with everything. I maybe only put the nouns in. It depends on which student. If they are more capable, I will teach them the whole one. I evaluate the child's ability to cope with the simpler one, or a more complex one.

The CLIL frame allows Jianlian to plan her content choices with the ultimate purpose of communication. She also caters to students' higher-order thinking, an embedded aim of the NSW syllabus, and achievable through her CLIL Chinese program.

5.3 Cognition

In order to build these cognitive language processes, Jianlian believes in scaffolding children's learning. She is the sole language model in the classroom and therefore she puts great emphasis upon her own use of Chinese to build up the students' own abilities to use Chinese in increasingly complex ways. She endeavours to do this through her scaffolding so as not to diminish from the safe learning environment where the children must feel comfortable to participate and use their language, while still having high expectations for achievement.

Jianlian indicates some of the ways that she scaffolds by indicating that she believes in…

> Front loading knowledge; before the new lesson starts, show the pictures of things which are related to the topic, encourage the students to brainstorm and ask students to guess what the lesson is going to be about from a set of clues. I record the ideas on the big piece of paper or a big mind map on Smartboard. All of this is done in Mandarin, only occasionally do we use English to help.

One particular story coming from her classroom revolves around how she believes her pedagogy encourages the children to learn to scaffold their own learning. She said:

> They're really good. And they recognise, for example, they recognise "building 楼". "Building" we have – we can separate to three radicals. One side is the "wood木", and the right hand side with the "rice" and underneath the rice is "lady"/"girl 女". I say "Can you tell me, how can you remember this one is 'building'?" And they come up, using their different ways. "The man use the wood to build a house and the lady cooked the rice inside the building". So everybody remembers that easily. They come up with their own story. It helps the whole class. Some of the kids come up with different stories. But I always strongly emphasize the one that is easy for kids to remember. The ones that are more meaningful.

Jianlian believes in encouraging the students to use Chinese for higher-order mind mapping, tabulating, drawing diagrams and charts to plot their learning:

> To develop students' imaginations, start from individual word to phrases, sentences then stories. I believe this is how we learn our first language without any translation. We started learning from the real objects and real situations then used mind images.

Jianlian believes in following simple sets of steps. The children, she says, learn the steps in language building: "Written Chinese characters at the beginning with understanding, followed by learning to write them."

She believes in a very explicit way of teaching this language process:

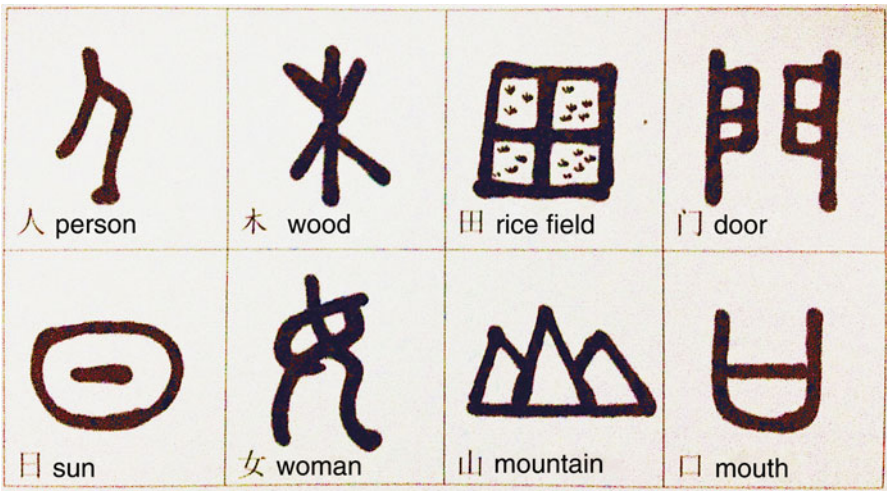
> I encourage the children to listen for the key word (noun or verb) first. I ask them to respond to me by using a body action such as clapping or standing up. Then I will do the action they have given me in the target language. Gradually I move on to phrases and sentences.

In this way students respond physically to language first before having to cognitively process a verbal response. Jianlian attends to students' cognition through her pedagogical choices. She also emphasizes 'culture learning' (Moran 2001).

5.4 Culture

The element of "culture" can be seen as embedded within the language and content learning in the classroom. Jianlian wants the children to

> recognize Chinese characters start from the 8 basic strokes which can make lots of characters, students are encouraged to find the familiar strokes from the characters. Also the students will learn 8 basic characters with pictures which will develop more than 100 characters. From the characters they learned then encouraged them to make phrases and short sentences … The 8 basic Chinese characters…



> Jianlian also says: Most Chinese characters are very visual and picture related, every character can have a picture or story. For example: These are 6 characters from 火 (huo). two fires means burning, three fires means flames, two trees above a fire is a burning forest.
>
> Students can learn 5–10 Chinese Hanzi in 5–10 minutes easily if we scaffold the lesson well.

In the way that Moran (2001) argues that intercultural language learning is fourfold: knowing what, knowing how, knowing about, and knowing self. Jianlian appears also to be allowing her learners to explore the how, what, about, and self aspects of the new language. Written characters, stories about the characters, links to meanings, exploration of personal reactions to those meanings, all combine in the way that Jianlian teaches the 4th 'C', culture.

In addition, the wider community, its culture, and the strength of the heritage Chinese culture become the solid foundation upon which her beliefs are situated. Jianlian believes in "The creation of a context for the lesson that reflects Chinese values, beliefs, culture and heritage." She believes that families can actively join in with language activities by "support and encouragement for continued Mandarin use outside of class time." She says,

> We have a cultural day for bilingual classes, an Open Day for parents each year. When I invite the parents come to the classroom to observe what we learn and how we learn, parents are also encouraged to interact with our classroom activities. My students did some performance for their parents. Some volunteers from the Chinese community participated. Some parents are also actively involved in our program by supporting our cooking and dancing activities. We gave students some information about Chinese New year and Chinese cultural activities around Sydney. Students were encouraged to go with their parents to watch some of the activities, such as Chinese New Year activities in Chinatown in the City and Dragon boat festival in Darling Harbour.

She believes that for the English-speaking or Chinese heritage children, the wider community is essential in creating a positive learning environment.

6 Discussion

As can be seen from the data, Jianlian has a key set of beliefs (or cognitions, see Borg 2003, 2006, 2009; Calderhead 1996) that guide the way she teaches content through language, aligning closely with the 4 'C's frame (Coyle 1999). The key elements of this belief system are based upon an assumption that children can and do manage to learn in and through different languages. She begins from a point of belief that she knows her students (Chen 2008), and that children do not need to learn solely via the common language of the classroom which in this case is English. She also indicates that using many languages is manageable for children, and should not be seen as too difficult for primary school children. From this core set of beliefs, Jianlian has developed a teaching pedagogy that functions through scaffolding of learning and scaffolding of meaning. She uses as much Chinese as possible in the classroom, punctuating this strategically with English if needed.

Jianlian's scaffolding takes several forms. As per Everson (2008), reading is a priority. Jianlian's extension of this is that music can assist in the reading process. She believes that music offers a valuable scaffold to the use of a new language in the classroom. She uses melody, tone and sound to support the learning of new sounds and words. She also draws upon a number of visual learning strategies to support the learning in the classroom.

A further key scaffold is the way Jianlian assists her students to notice their own ways of learning, similar to Duff (2008b, p. 32) and her statements on "metalinguistic understanding". She encourages them to notice how they learn and to be able to explicitly understand those processes. At the heart of her pedagogy are aspects of Chen's (2008, p. 85) interactive model, whereby her learners negotiate and mediate "cultural and linguistic knowing".

Notions of motivation are evident within Jianlian's perceptions about her teaching and she uses a number of her strategies not only to build learning but also to build motivation for her learners, similar to the kinds of notions in Czura and Papaja (2013). Students in the program enjoy achieving and enjoy being able to demonstrate their learning. (It is interesting for us to note that in our wider study quite a

number of students expressed a great deal of enjoyment about the learning they take part in through the bilingual program.)

In this particular context, the innovation for CFL teaching is in the pedagogies being employed in the classroom. The CLIL pedagogies, and their learning outcomes, differ substantially from what one might see in many CFL primary school classrooms. Jianlian's use of student-centred pedagogies and her use of music, while not radical in general Australian primary school education, are innovative in the CFL context. They have much to offer to both primary and secondary CFL programs. Her positive belief that multilingualism is normal and achievable for all, indicates a belief not commonly encountered in language learning in general in the Australian mindset (Clyne 2005).

7 Conclusion

Much of what happens in Jianlian's classroom may not be perceived as particularly different from what is currently considered best practice in many Australian primary classrooms. Yet the innovation in this practice, we maintain, is the integration of content and Chinese language. It is the very fact that this content and language integration so closely resembles a 'regular' primary classroom that makes it innovative. This style of teaching and learning is still uncommon for Chinese as a foreign language. We argue that in Jianlian's context it is the teacher's own beliefs about her practice which are driving innovation and breaking new ground for broader CFL practice. One of the key beliefs shaping this practice is the core belief that multilingualism is manageable for children if teachers have high expectations of their learning.

As with all classrooms that follow a constructivist underpinning, in a bilingual classroom too there must be conscious decision making about suitable pedagogies to create an optimum learning environment. Many of Jianlian's strategies can be seen to reflect elements of accomplished practice in the primary classroom. Specifically her prioritizing of reading, her use of scaffolding tasks and her use of music as a facilitator of learning exemplify innovative practice in the Chinese language classroom. These strategies are selected as the 'heartfelt' choices of a bilingual teacher with specific expectations of herself and her students aligned with her beliefs about teaching Chinese in an English-speaking educational context.

It can be seen in this particular CFL classroom that the adoption of a CLIL pedagogy that combines language learning with high expectations for content learning alongside it, motivates students and makes learning more engaging and fun. Students achieve more language acquisition and also reach a higher level of confidence in their language learning than can be seen in more traditional languages classrooms. There is however, a need for a transition program into a secondary school that offers a Year 7 class which aligns with the learning level achieved by these students because they far exceed other primary languages programs and need to be catered for into their secondary schooling.

Appendix A

First Set of Questions to Jianlian Subsequent to Her FG Participation

1. You say at one point "Don't translate", but then at another point you say "Use English to explain complex ideas". So we want to get to the bottom of your core belief here. What is the essence of what you mean by those two points?
2. You say "front load content", which is really a "scaffolding". We want to know some more examples of this, why it is essential in your mind, some examples from your practice?
3. Graphic organizers can be useful, you say when you said "encourage with mind maps". Why is this in your core beliefs?
4. Re the Chinese script, not the English alphabet version, can we get to the very essence of your core beliefs here. Which should come first? Speaking/listening or reading/writing? How should the script be introduced – exactly the steps.
5. Active involvement of families/wider Chinese community/outside class time. Can you give more information?

Second Set of Questions to Jianlian

Jianlian, can you comment on this please?

> Translanguaging is a practice that is becoming more widely recognized across educational contexts in an increasingly globalized world. The notion of translanguaging refers broadly to how bilingual students communicate and make meaning by drawing on and intermingling linguistic features from different languages. (Lindholm-Leary 2012)

We hope that definition of translanguaging is clear enough. Either vocabulary items, or grammar structures, from one language or the other, appear in the output of the students. I guess it is another way of saying "code-switching" or "code-mixing".

What is your position on allowing your students to translanguage? Do you see evidence of it? Do you ever find you do it yourself? What do you do/say if the student answers you in a mixture of the two languages?

Please include any examples you can remember.

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Task-Based Chinese as a Foreign Language (CFL) in Second Life for Beginner Learners and Educators

Sarah Pasfield-Neofitou, Scott Grant, and Hui Huang

Abstract Virtual Worlds (VWs), such as those created in Second Life (SL) and similar platforms, have been developed for a range of educational purposes, including second language learning. While such environments have much to offer Chinese as a Foreign Language (CFL) learners, they remain infrequently used, largely due to the steep learning curve, time and technical skills necessary for development. Such investments are rarely supported or recognised in teachers' workloads, and yet most educators using VWs start from scratch, rather than building on the existing work of others. Furthermore, there often is a perception that beginner learners are unsuited to online engagement, despite the fact that such novice learners may benefit more than advanced learners who generally have greater access to native speakers, and often spend time immersed in the target culture.

The present chapter addresses beginners in two senses: the student who is a beginner in CFL and may not have had the opportunity to engage with other speakers or be immersed in the target culture, and the educator who is beginning to use or develop VWs. The chapter will illustrate how Task-Based Language Learning (TBLL) in VWs has been developed over a number of years with a view to enriching the CFL learning experience within a formal university curriculum, and will begin by focussing on our major project, Chinese Island, then draw briefly upon some other case studies based on this model before culminating with a discussion of the VEL project aimed at reducing barriers to entry for educators thinking about adopting TBLL and VWs, through the provision of shareable technical and pedagogical resources.

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1 Introduction: Virtual Worlds for Beginners

There are numerous challenges unique to studying Chinese as a foreign as opposed to second language (L2). While frequently used interchangeably, as Richards and Schmidt point out, a foreign language (FL) may be distinguished as one which is not the native language of large numbers of people in the region in which it is taught, nor widely used in government, media etc., and taught as a subject, rather than used as the medium of instruction in education (2002, p. 206, also see Gass and Selinker 2008; Littlewood and Yu 2009). These conditions appear to describe much of the teaching and learning of Chinese in Australia, where our case study is based.

Although China and Australia have a longstanding relationship (evidenced, for example, by Melbourne's Chinatown, one of the oldest in the Southern Hemisphere and reputedly the longest continuous Chinese settlement in the 'Western world'), opportunities for students to interact with NSs remain relatively restricted compared to true L2 settings in mainland China, Hong Kong etc. According to the ABS, while Mandarin is the most frequently spoken language-other-than-English (LOTE) in the home, only 1.6 % of Australia's population speak Mandarin exclusively at home.[1] English dominates Australian government, and free-to-air television and radio discourse, with the exception of multilingual channel SBS, which includes Chinese broadcasts amongst their approximately 75 language offerings.[2] The majority of the 33,000 students in Victoria examined in *The Current State of Chinese Language Education in Australian Schools* report (Orton 2008) studied Chinese as a subject in government-run schools, where the major language of instruction is English (also the language of instruction at university).

Virtual Worlds (VWs) such as those created in Second Life[3] (SL) and similar platforms, have been developed for a range of educational purposes. While such environments have much to offer FL learners (c.f. Grant and Clerehan 2011; Gregory et al. 2010; Henderson et al. 2012; Huang and Grant 2010; Jacka et al. 2011; Jeffrey et al. 2011; Lan 2014; Lan et al. 2013; Pasfield-Neofitou 2014), they remain infrequently used, largely due to the steep learning curve, time and technical skills necessary (Gregory et al. 2014). Such investments are rarely supported or recognised in teachers' workloads, and yet, as Gregory et al. (2014) report, most educators start from scratch, rather than building on the existing work of other educators. Furthermore, there often is a perception that beginner learners are unsuited to online engagement, despite the fact that novices may stand to benefit more than advanced learners who generally have greater access to native speakers (NSs) and often spend time immersed in the target culture. The present chapter addresses beginners in two senses: the student who is beginning use of the FL and may not have had the opportunity to engage with other speakers or be immersed in the target culture (the subject of our previous Chinese Island, Virtual Arabia, and Virtual Prato projects), and the

[1] http://www.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2011/quickstat/0

[2] http://www.sbs.com.au/

[3] http://secondlife.com/

educator who is beginning use or development of VWs (the subject of our current Virtually Enhanced Languages (VEL) project, to be introduced in the present chapter).

2 Literature Review

2.1 Context of the Project

CFL and FL education more generally has struggled with low contact hours and increased budgetary constraints which impact the quality of learning and teaching, and proficiency outcomes (G08 2007; Nettelbeck et al. 2007). Opportunities for meaningful communication in the classroom and to receive individualised formative feedback is limited. A report on the retention of beginners in tertiary programs found that over 60 % of learners surveyed speak only English at home (Nettelbeck et al. 2009). For these learners, the opportunity to actively use the FL outside the classroom is usually limited. Research has also found that the overwhelming motivation for beginners was direct conversational communication and "the desire to travel to the country (or countries) where the language is spoken" (Nettelbeck et al. 2009; Nettlebeck and Levy 2009), a goal subject to financial, family, and time constraints.

Despite recognition of the need for young Australians to learn foreign, and especially Asian, languages (Australia in the Asian Century Implementation Task Force 2012), there has been an ongoing decline in non-background students (who do not have a family background and are only exposed to the language through classroom teaching) studying languages such as Chinese beyond the compulsory 1–2 years at high school (Orton 2008). This decline suggests a major challenge for universities, as well as an important role for educators to play in re-interesting students, promoting the value of Chinese proficiency, and sharing ideas across the sectors. Australian tertiary institutions are in a unique position to connect successful language learning with national goals such as trade, career pathways, international mobility, research capacity, and development (Nettlebeck and Levy 2009). Students' reluctance to begin or continue language study is due to many factors, prominent among which is the lack of access to opportunities to develop 'communicative competence' – the ability to communicate appropriately, taking into account culture and context (Hymes 1992), which we view VWs as potentially facilitating.

2.2 Virtual Worlds in Australian Tertiary CFL

There is significant evidence in the literature that VWs and task-based language learning (TBLL) provide a range of affordances that facilitate deeper learning particularly pertinent to students who have grown up with digital technology (Aldrich

2009; Prensky 2001; Purushotma et al. 2009). Using VWs can enable learners to develop their knowledge of FLs and cultures, and communicative competence both in and out of the classroom, in two ways. The first is through the simulation of everyday scenarios which provide TBLL and meaningful communication opportunities (Richards 2006; Richards and Rodgers 2001; Skehan 1996) enabling students to build associated cognitive simulations (Barsalou 2008) and thus robust, useable knowledge (Brown et al. 1989) that will better prepare them for real-life communication. The second arises from the multiuser nature of the technology which can facilitate collaborative learning between geographically dispersed students, as well as with NSs and teachers anywhere in the world. This dissolving of geographic distance is seen by many educators as a major affordance of VWs (Blasing 2010; Chen 2010; Cooke Plagwitz 2008).

In a longitudinal study of introductory Chinese learners on self-efficacy, Henderson et al. (2009) found a significant increase in their beliefs about their abilities (Pajares 1996), across a range of language skills at the end of a collaborative lesson on ordering food in a virtual Chinese restaurant in Monash University's simulated township environment on Chinese Island in SL. In another study of university student's cognitive skills and strategy use on Chinese Island, Henderson et al. (2010) found that the authentic learning site maintained student focus and promoted utilisation of a range of academically valued thinking skills and strategies.

Grant et al. (2013) compared levels of foreign language anxiety (FLA) experienced by students communicating in Chinese during a lesson on Chinese Island to purchase virtual ingredients for a traditional Chinese dish, and in the face-to-face (f2f) classroom. High FLA negatively effects learner performance and outcomes (Elkhafaifi 2005). Analysis revealed that students experienced significantly lower levels of FLA in the VW whether the communication was via text-chat with interactive non-player characters (NPCs) or voice with live NS teachers. Grant and Huang (2012) presented a number of key affordances for second language acquisition (SLA) learning extant in the overall infrastructure of SL and the specific educational simulation of Chinese Island. Their study analysed breakdowns in communication between students and the NPCs on Chinese Island that led to negotiation of meaning and attempts at self-repair, seen as a precursor to L2 acquisition by many theorists.

Despite the potential benefits of combining immersive VWs and TBLL for beginner and even higher-level learners, for educators considering using the technology for the first time, and as such, also beginners in a sense, getting started can be daunting. Our survey of academic staff teaching introductory level Chinese at 20 Australian tertiary institutions for the VEL project (details below) found that, of the 15 respondents, seven had previously considered using VWs like SL, OpenSim or ActiveWorlds for lessons in Chinese language and culture, while the remaining eight had not. Most used computers and other entrenched ICT resources often, but either rarely played games or had never played them before. All used computers daily, most for 2 h or less for personal use, and 80 % for work for 2–8+ hours a day. The vast majority only taught in f2f mode (see Fig. 1).

Of the eight teachers who had never considered using VWs, the most common reason, other than having never heard about VWs, was not knowing how to start (4

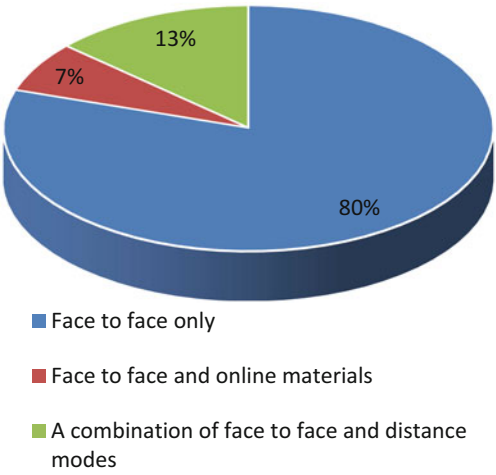

Fig. 1 Teaching mode at time of survey

responses). This was closely followed by the difficulty of developing resources from scratch (3 responses). Of those who had considered using VWs, but in the end did not, the most common reason again was that they did not know how to start (6 responses), closely followed by it being too hard to develop resources (4 responses). Clearly, the main factors affecting the attitudes of educators are a lack of familiarity with VWs and the challenges of development.

This chapter will illustrate how TBLL in VWs has been developed over a number of years with a view to enriching the learning experience within a formal university curriculum. The chapter will begin by focussing on our major project, Chinese Island, then draw upon some case studies based on this model before culminating with a discussion of the VEL project aimed at reducing the barriers to entry for educators thinking about adopting TBLL and VWs, through the provision of shareable technical and pedagogical resources.

2.3 Task-Based Language Learning in Virtual Worlds

The TBLL methodology, a key element of lessons on Chinese Island, gained attention in SLA in large part through the work of Prabhu (1987). Some of the proponents of TBLL view it as incorporating key principles of communicative language teaching (Richards and Rodgers 2001), including communication activities, using language to carry out tasks, language use that is meaningful to the learner and has a purpose, and communication activities that reflect real-life activities with authentic materials (Richards 2006; Richards and Rodgers 2001; Skehan 1996).

TBLL has been posited as having its roots in the views of philosopher and academic Dewey (Ellis 2009) in terms of the emphasis on active, engaging learning

experiences relevant to a student's existing knowledge, powers and needs (Dewey 1913). In Dewey's conception of active learning, the role of "task" is prominent. Moreover, Dewey highlights the importance of both process (means) and product (end) in terms of the educative value of a task. Critical to this chapter on TBLL in VWs, Dewey emphasises the importance of immersion: "character, knowledge, and skill are not reconstructed by sitting in a room where events *happen*. Events must *happen to* him, in a way to bring a full and interested response" (Dewey 1913, p. viii, original italics).

2.4 "Task" in Virtual TBLL

More recently, Samuda and Bygate (2008) defined "task" in relation to TBLL as a "holistic activity which engages language use in order to achieve some non-linguistic outcome while meeting a linguistic challenge with the overall aim of promoting language learning through process or product or both" (Samuda and Bygate 2008, p. 69). Summarizing the definitions offered by Breen, Prabhu and others, Oxford emphasises the planned and structural nature of tasks, stating that, a "task" is something imposed from the outside (usually, teacher-given), designed to enable learners to move towards an objective (2006, p. 96). On Chinese Island, tasks are provided via Moodle, a widely used learning management system (LMS) our students are familiar with. Moodle functions as a portal for students to access Chinese Island in SL (via SLURLs), as well as providing task instructions, and post-lesson assessment.

Ellis (2009) sets out more specific criteria for TBLL:

1. The primary focus should be on 'meaning' (learners should be mainly concerned with processing semantic and pragmatic meaning).
2. There should be some kind of 'gap' (a need to convey information, express an opinion or infer meaning).
3. Learners should largely have to rely on their own resources (linguistic and nonlinguistic).
4. There is a clearly defined outcome other than the use of language (language serves as the means, not an end in its own right).

Clearly, some of the above criteria also fit more form-focused pedagogical models (which Richards calls 'traditional approaches' cf. Long 1997; Richard 2006, p. 6), for example, the use of 'gap' activities and learner reliance on own resources (points 2 and 3). However, Ellis points out two key differences between more form-focused methodologies and TBLL: the semantic focus, and the focus on outcome (points 1 and 4) (Ellis 2009). This also highlights the distinction between 'product-based' and 'process-based' approaches (Richards 2006). The application of Ellis' criteria in VW environments will be discussed in the conclusion of this chapter.

2.5 Task Type

Tasks have been categorised in a number of ways, each maintaining all or a number of the key characteristics outlined above. Ellis (2009) sees tasks as either 'unfocused', providing a context and stimulus for communication without necessarily having a specific grammatical or lexical goal in mind, or 'focused', aimed at creating conditions for communication using pre-determined linguistic features, while still having a defined outcome. Usually, this focus is not made explicit to learners until the third, post-task phase, during which particular vocab, concepts, or grammar may be highlighted (Lochana and Deb 2006; Nunn 2006; Skehan 1996).

Richards' (2006) classification contrasts 'pedagogical' and 'real-world' tasks. 'Pedagogical' tasks have similar characteristics to 'focused' tasks in that they require specific strategies and types of language suited for the classroom. 'Real-world' tasks have a strong "rehearsal" element in that they mimic activities one would expect to encounter in everyday life (Richards 2006, p. 31).

Task type is difficult to neatly categorise, and scholars such as Ellis and Samuda and Bygate have argued for the inclusion of grammar-focused elements in TBLL (Ellis 2009), often incorporated into the post-task phase as mentioned above. The focus of this chapter, the Chinese Island lessons, adopts a hybridized approach, combining elements of pedagogical and real-world tasks, where both real-life language/skills rehearsal and clear language feature/grammar-focus are combined in the one task-based lesson. VWs have a range of features or affordances that facilitate this hybridized approach to TBLL.

2.6 Cultural Learning and Orientation in Virtual Worlds

In addition to language tasks, culture is an integral part of FL learning. Many teachers see it as their goal to incorporate the teaching of culture into the FL curriculum. Up to now, two main perspectives have influenced the teaching and learning of L2 culture. While traditional classroom practice opts for the development of cultural awareness through imparting target culture knowledge such as history, art, customs, etc., recent research views cultural learning as a process (Robinson 1991), of "perceiving, interpreting, feeling, being in the world, wanting to smile, wanting to scream, living, hating and relating to where one is and who one meets" (cited from Robinson-Stuart and Nocon 1996: 432). This perspective posits that cultural learning has to go through juxtaposition; comparison and interaction between the culture of the learner (C1) and the foreign culture (C2) (see Robinson-Stuart and Nocon 1996 for a review). From this viewpoint, cultural learning is referred to as the achievement of "symbolic competence" (Kramsch 2006), a dynamic process rather than a static product (Paige et al. 2003) and an intercultural development (e.g., Scarino 2009, 2010; Liddicoat and Scarino 2010). Even though these researchers started from different perspectives, they resonate with each other in that cultural

learning is viewed as not static, and understanding and learning a C2 is seen as not coming from the individual's observation and knowledge construction, but through interactions with the C2 (Kramsch 2006). That is, culture cannot be taught as separate from and subordinate to the language. Instead, the goals of cultural learning should shift from the memorization of facts to "a dynamic, developmental, and ongoing process which engages the learner not only cognitively, but more importantly behaviourally, and affectively" (Paige et al. 2003: 223).

3 Chinese Island

3.1 Background

Ellis (2008) posits a number of external factors key to language acquisition: exposure to linguistic input, opportunities to produce output, meaningful interaction, and corrective feedback of some kind in relation to output – in short, an "acquisition-rich" environment (Ellis 2009). While the classroom can provide some or all of these factors to some degree, the pressures on secondary and tertiary institutions often renders the FL classroom wanting. One teacher interacting with 20–25 learners 2 h a week is inadequate, particularly for non-background learners whose exposure almost literally stops at the classroom door. Thus, motivation for continuation is in danger of being solely based on passing assessment.

There are a range of possible solutions to the limited communicative opportunities available to non-background Chinese learners, including seeking opportunities outside of class to interact with local NSs and learners, or travelling to Chinese-speaking regions. However, there are also obvious real limitations, including cost and time, the difficulty of making contact, and a lack of confidence in one's ability (self-efficacy). With this in mind, staff teaching introductory level Chinese at Monash sought to find a way within the limitations of the FL classroom and curriculum to provide additional communicative opportunities to potentially enhance students' confidence and competence in using what they were learning in the classroom. Another important goal was to match what was learned in the classroom with scenarios that have a functional emphasis on activities students might experience in a Chinese-speaking environment. While play-acting such scenarios in the classroom is possible, it lacks authenticity and is logistically difficult to implement given time limitations and class sizes, as well as the physical constraints of the classroom itself, which is rarely conducive to such activities, and lacks an authentic atmosphere.

As a result of two current affairs reports about a VW called "Second Life" in 2007 (Fullerton 2007; Hayes 2007), it was decided that the possibility of utilizing such a highly interactive multiuser 3D VW for language learning within the curriculum should be investigated. Early forays revealed a wide range of differently-focused VWs and communities that were well-established within SL, including an educational community that could provide guidance and mentorship. These discoveries resulted in the building of a Chinese-themed virtual city ("Chinese Island") in

SL, and the incorporation of TBLL in SL into the mainstream curriculum of beginner level students in 2008–2009 (Grant and Huang 2010).

3.2 Pedagogical Design

A total of six 2-hour lessons were designed and incorporated into the formal teaching schedule as computer lab sessions (3 per semester). Apart from the initial lesson, focused on familiarising students with the format, skills and resources associated with the TBLL, the remaining five lessons were constructed around topics appearing in the main textbook (Wu 2010) used by Chinese Introductory students. These include restaurants, shopping, directions, seeing a doctor, purchasing railway tickets, and renting accommodation. Numerous other topics taken from everyday life in China are also touched upon, including several festivals, making a traditional dish (dumplings), buying street food, learning about the setup of a small medical clinic and the types of tickets and seating/berths available on trains, using Chinese currency, buying fresh ingredients from local markets, and reading street signs. Many of this latter group of topics are only hinted at or are not covered in the textbook, so one aim of the TBLL is to contextualise the topics and language from the confines of the textbook in the real-world.

SL facilitates multiple forms of interaction including text- or voice-chat, body language/gestures, and the manipulation of objects and sharing of video, audio and texts in the environment. Students can move around to explore the virtual Chinese city, interacting with other users and NPCs programmed to converse in Chinese. These text conversations can aid in developing students' recognition of homonyms when typing in Chinese characters, and via voice, allow for pronunciation and listening practice, with the potential for reduced FLA (c.f. Grant et al. 2013, 2014).

At Monash, the introductory level of Chinese has an average of 150 students in first semester, and 90 in second semester annually. Lessons on Chinese Island generally involve breaking the larger student body into sessions of 15 ~ 20 students. Since its introduction in 2008, approximately 1000 undergraduates have undertaken the lessons described above on Chinese Island. Early on, the roles of key interlocutors in the scenarios, such as the doctor and nurse, were played by teaching staff via text-chat. This approach soon became overwhelming, as staff tried to respond to chat input from multiple students simultaneously. As a result, programmed NPCs were developed to play these roles, as described below.

3.3 Non-player Characters – A Pedagogical and Technical Resource

The advantage of NPCs is that they can respond to text-based input from multiple students simultaneously without the concomitant stress a real person would feel. By having the NPCs take over these roles, both as interlocutors and gatekeepers for the

various stages of the set task, teaching staff were free to interact with students in the physical computer lab on an individual level, targeting those who required extra support. This use of NPCs addressed the issue of the scalability of the lessons/tasks, as well as opening up new opportunities for zone of proximal development (ZPD) teacher-student, and indeed student-student interaction. The NPCs are also able to provide a range of feedback, including linguistic ("Did you mean to say ……?"; "I'm sorry I don't understand. Could you please repeat that?", i.e. negotiation of meaning in a limited fashion), cultural (relating to clothing, mannerisms, etiquette, bargaining, etc.) and practical (accepting payment and handing over the item, etc.). However, incorporation of NPCs did not spell the end of voice-based communication, which was later utilised with NS teachers overseas and between learners.

3.4 Immersion

The visual and auditory environments of Chinese Island are designed to create a sense of immersion (although the degree of immersion different students feel is different and dependent on a complex range of factors, c.f. Calleja 2014; De Castell and Jenson 2007; Bangay and Preston 1998), to provide additional learning opportunities, and facilitate TBLL (e.g. by providing a spatial environment that needs to be negotiated). While not replicating any particular location in China, the environment contains a range of cultural and physical features that can be encountered in places where Chinese culture is predominant. Chinese Island represents an urban environment, whereas that developed for the more recent VEL project (outlined later in this chapter) has a mixture of both urban and rural locales. In addition to the rich input environment of Chinese Island, a key aspect of the lessons is the use of Moodle to layout lesson plans, objectives, additional linguistic and cultural information, task instructions and summative/formative quizzes.

3.5 Cultural Orientation

Chinese Island in SL provides a platform for immersion in a quasi-authentic C2 environment and opportunities to interact with others through contextualised tasks. Such immersion may reduce FLA and help avoid/minimise "culture shock". Researchers noticed early on that people experience a form of personal disorientation known as "culture shock" when immigrating to or visiting a new country. Many everyday activities such as shopping, eating in a restaurant or seeing a doctor might become "emotionally draining and anxiety provoking" (Schumann and Schumann 1977: 246). The design of Chinese Island, in an attempt to mimic the real "Chinese" environment, is intended to familiarise students with a country they may have never visited in real-life. The architecture (e.g., airport, railway station, hospital, restaurant, etc.) and details of Chinese Island like noticeboards, street signs, and the set-up

Fig. 2 Chinese Island scenes

of the market (e.g., with fresh eel, live poultry, and vegetables), aim to bring real-life China to students. One reason for immersing the student via their avatar in this environment is to reduce the social and psychological "distance" between them and the NS community. Although the settings might not appear exactly as 'real-life', we hypothesise that the quasi-authentic environment of Chinese Island still can help students cope with culture shock when they transit from their home culture to a C2, which can help minimise unpleasant feelings or frustration for their future visit to the country in real-life, or partially mitigate some students' inability to travel (Fig. 2).

In addition to the chance to access and interact with the cultural knowledge in the environment, TBLL in SL provides contextually meaningful and authentic opportunities for learners to interact with avatar-embodied NPCs, other learners, or even NSs, fostering cognitive and behavioural engagement. For example, for the task of making dumplings, students need to (1) know what are the ingredients to make dumplings – i.e., cultural knowledge, obtained via interaction; (2) practice asking for and following directions (to get to the market), asking and negotiating prices, and purchasing items using the language taught in class – i.e., linguistic knowledge of Chinese and interactional competence; (3) input Chinese characters using pinyin to interact with shop assistants – i.e., linguistic knowledge of Chinese pinyin and computer literacy. More critically, students develop knowledge of how and when to interact with the avatar-embodied NPCs or teachers. Fundamental to the completion of the tasks is the authentic and meaningful dialogic engagement in a context where students practise and improve their interactional competence, which is "dynamic and malleable, tied to the locally situated uses in cultural framed communicative activities" (Hall et al. 2011:3). (For a full description and video of this task in action, see https://blendsync.org/case5).

In situations where students may have to converse with shop assistants in Chinese, they can employ the various resources available to them (e.g., linguistic, environmental, etc.) and adapt to the specific interactive practices. Environmental cues such as foods on stands, the outfits of various professionals (e.g. the market stall holder or waitress), the decor and signage of the restaurant or kitchen, and the menus etc. are difficult if not impossible to adequately replicate in a classroom setting. Furthermore, on Chinese Island, students can obtain pinyin readings of Chinese characters or the pronunciation of object names simply by hovering their mouse cursor over the targeted item, an affordance not available in real-life or class settings. During such immersive learning experiences in SL, cultural learning goes beyond mere transmission of knowledge, but includes the engagement of learners in developing the capability to exchange meaning in communication with people (or NPCs) in their L2. The key is the immersion experience where students are able to access and interact with the culture.

3.6 Lessons Learned from Chinese Island

As mentioned in the introduction, one of the most significant challenges facing educators beginning with virtual worlds like SL is the steep learning curve involved, and the time and investment required to develop the 3D environment and tasks. In this section, we briefly outline two projects, Virtual Arabia and Virtual Prato, which have branched off of Chinese Island, leveraging the lessons learned and demonstrating the importance of shared resources. Each of these case studies has added valuable knowledge about how this technology and the associated pedagogy can be used to effectively engage the CFL learner and enrich their learning experience.

4 Virtual Arabia

In response to the limitations of the FL classroom outlined earlier, a LCNAU-funded[4] collaboration was set up between Monash University and the University of Melbourne (UoM) to investigate if a blended approach combining a standard LMS (Moodle) and SL, as piloted in-class with Chinese Island, to facilitate engagement with culturally-based content outside of contact hours could result in learning outcomes at least as good as traditional classroom-based outcomes. “Virtual Arabia” was developed for NNS first-year UoM students of Arabic, asked to volunteer to participate in one of two groups: a test group using the blended approach (SL Group – SLG), and a control group (Classroom Group – CG) who engaged with the same material in a normal classroom environment (Fig. 3).

[4] http://www.lcnau.org/

Fig. 3 Virtual Arabia scenes

A virtual simulation of Arabic family life in Cairo was built in SL. Students in the SL Group played an international student spending a semester studying at the University of Cairo, engaging directly with aspects of Arab culture at both an intellectual and visceral level while learning, practising and consolidating new language. (A video of the types of tasks students undertake is available at http://www.virtual-hanyu.com/?page_id=768). SLG students were given the opportunity to access the VW in their own time, while CG students were taken through the same content in a normal classroom session by an experienced tutor of Arabic 1 originally from Cairo. Both groups were required to complete a graded quiz on Moodle accessed by each group separately, but containing the same content.

Quiz results indicated that the learning outcomes were indeed at least as good in the SLG as in the CG, and possibly marginally better (77.20 % average for SLG n = 7, and 75.23 % for CG n = 5). The main caveat is that the research sample size was limited. Together, the participants only represent 14.11 % of the entire Arabic 1 cohort. The lesson for other language educators, including CFL educators, is that appropriately designed VWs and associated pedagogy can continue to engage language learners outside of limited face-to-face time, producing similar learning outcomes and freeing up valuable class time for other parts of the curriculum that cannot be as effectively covered after class.

5 Virtual Prato

"Virtual Prato" is a simulation of the Monash Prato Centre in Italy and its surrounds. Growing out of the previous work undertaken in the development of Chinese Island and Virtual Arabia, Virtual Prato was designed to promote the Centre, facilitate pre-departure orientation, and act as a learning resource for students of Italian. (A video of the environment is available at: http://www.virtualhanyu.com/?page_id=768)

Virtual Prato makes use of similar tasks to Chinese Island, for example, a coffee ordering scenario (depicted below in Fig. 4) based largely on the restaurant activity in Chinese Island described above, as well as some of the programming, such as the scripting for the waiter NPC. Like Virtual Arabia the environment and tasks are also designed to engage learners in ongoing learning beyond face-to-face contact hours. One lesson from this ongoing project is that both educational and technical design can be shared and adapted within and across languages to save on development time and costs. Although in these two case studies, CFL resources have been used to enhance other language education, CFL educators should not be afraid to draw on other language resources for inspiration. The other is that real physical locations and key cultural content can be re-created virtually for even greater authenticity.

Fig. 4 Virtual Prato scenes

6 Beyond Chinese Island: Virtually Enhanced Languages

6.1 Background

As alluded to above, a current challenge for educators is how to best use technology to add value to student learning and encourage and support young Australians to take up and persist with regional languages such as Chinese that are important for our future development. Mobilising technology in combination with TBLL to add value to existing classroom-based curricula and address some of the limitations of the tertiary FL classroom is at the heart of the Chinese Island project. This innovative approach has evolved through the subsequent Virtual Arabia and Virtual Prato projects and continues to grow through our new project, VEL, funded by the Australian Federal Government's Office for Learning and Teaching. VEL builds on our experience using online VWs to enhance language and culture learning by promoting the use of VWs and TBLL more broadly in tertiary institutions and by reducing barriers to entry for other educators through sharing our experience, research, and resources through the project website (http://www.virtuallyenhanced-languages.com), fostering a community of practice to support ongoing, sustainable development.

The project also aims to engender ongoing research into the ways in which this innovative combination of VWs and TBLL can enrich the CFL and other FL curriculum. The project has run full-day workshops at a number of participating universities, with both pre- and post-surveys, and focus groups at the end of the day. So far, results have been positive, with post-questionnaire comments such as *"[I] felt like i was in china especially talking to teachers online and microphone talking to other classmates and going together exploring china*" and "*This was fantastic. Mostly, I wasn't thinking about the words themselves; instead I was thinking about how to ask a question, which I enjoyed*". However, it is vital that innovative approaches such as Chinese Island and VEL be viewed as an additional language learning environment available to learners and teachers, rather than a replacement of existing opportunities. As students in one focus group commented:

Jessica: "You don't need to go all around the world, just go to Chinatown."
Mark: "Running around, you could actually like talk to chefs in Chinese or something that would be a bit more fun than doing it in the virtual, and having glitches in the system."
Anna: "I talk to chefs in Chinatown anyway"

Naturally, not all students will take the initiative to explore areas such as Chinatown (if accessible in their hometowns), or actually try out their FL skills. However, these comments highlight that VWs are perhaps best seen as an innovative way of expanding students' opportunities for meaningful and authentic interaction. More importantly, we believe that what differentiates Chinese Island from a casual visit to Chinatown is the task framework, mediated via Moodle. While in theory there is no reason why similar hybridised tasks could not be worked up around a Chinatown visit, or that 'real-life' tasks such as actually buying dinner or

finding out about ingredients could not be supplemented in this manner, in practice within the context of a formal tertiary level curriculum, real logistical problems would need to be overcome first.

6.2 Innovation

VEL embodies a number of important forms of innovation for the FL, and in particular the CFL classroom. At the macro level, the first is the breaking down of the boundaries of the traditional FL classroom and enhancement of the learning experience through the innovative combination of two originally unrelated resources to provide students with authentic communication opportunities: VWs and TBLL. The second is the breaking down of barriers to entry for other educators looking for new ways to enrich their FL curricula by the sharing of 6 years of hands-on experience, research, technical and pedagogical resources, and the fostering of a community of practice around these resources to ensure sustainable and ongoing development.

At the micro level, the third innovation is the delicate combination of previously learnt text-book based content with authentic scenarios and new content from real life to provide opportunities for revision, indefinite practice (the NPCs never get tired and are available 24/7), consolidation and extension (via the ZPD). The fourth is the unstructured approach to the design of the dialogues with the NPCs that place cognitive demands on learners not dissimilar to real life communicative interactions and provide opportunities for negotiation of meaning (a recognised precursor to SLA). Dialogue interaction between learner and NPC is not menu-driven, rather, there is a cycle of learners formulating questions and statements appropriate to their immediate and longer term task goals, injecting them into the conversation with the NPC, absorbing and digesting questions and responses from the NPC, and so on until they have the information or artefacts they need to move on. The fifth is the design of tasks where there a clear non-linguistic end goal that requires the use of language learned in the classroom, and language is seen as part of a process rather than as a product in its own right. The sixth is the implicit and explicit resources internal to the virtual world environment that scaffold learner action in terms of communication and task completion as well as provide opportunities to learn more (examples of implicit resources include road signs, sounds of the market place, the layout of venues, NPC body language, etc.; explicit resources include written information in notecards or links to webpages). The implicit resources in particular would be very difficult to replicate in the classroom.

7 Conclusion

As illustrated in the case studies outlined above, the innovative combination of TBLL and VWs can provide a rich environment for language and cultural learning, especially in the case of FL settings. Here, we append Ellis' (2009) criteria for the

design and application of tasks in language learning and teaching, with specific considerations for VW users:

1. **The primary focus should be on 'meaning'.** [In order to facilitate focus on meaning, tasks should be designed with clear end goals and milestones, with particular language points implicitly imbedded, but dialogues with NPCs or live NSs should not be overly structured. Not only the task, but the programming of the NPC's script must take into consideration the potential for creativity in students' input, and respond accordingly (e.g. ensuring that phrases such as "I'm sorry I don't understand. Could you please repeat that?" are logged in addition to the intended script) as described above]
2. **There should be some kind of 'gap'** [In order to fully exploit the affordances that a VW, as opposed to classroom setting, has to offer, this 'gap' should be conceived of not only in terms of linguistic or knowledge resources, but objects and areas in the environment that students can interact with. In addition to information gaps, reasoning gaps (i.e. what do I need to find out next; how do I ask; where else in the environment can I find information) can also provide important practice in thinking at multiple levels during the communicative act.]
3. **Learners should largely have to rely on their own resources** [As with point 2, VWs offer additional possibilities to facilitate resource use, such as pinyin glosses or translations appearing via mouse-over, inaccessible in real-life. Rather than simply providing pinyin for all signs, as might be the only option in classroom settings using static materials, as demonstrated above, this dynamic environment allows students to utilise glosses only when needed, effectively scaffolding their resource use]
4. **There is a clearly defined outcome other than the use of language** [Also like points 2 and 3, VWs provide affordances usually unavailable in classroom settings, offering the ability to set tasks that simulate real life (e.g. making the student avatar visibly 'sick' so they need to seek medical help) where the explicit outcome can be reflected in the receiving of culturally relevant objects as rewards (like a virtual packet of Chinese medicine that restores the avatar's 'health') while achieving the implicit outcome of utilising particular language resources. Students may also be presented with a virtual bowl of noodles in a restaurant role-play, or receive a virtual stuffed panda on visiting the Island. Such objects, which may be kept in a user's inventory or displayed on one's avatar, may be linked to 'gamification' or 'badging' in education (c.f. Paisley 2013), and represent a more cost-effective (and potentially longer-lasting) reward than class-based prizes]

In conclusion, the case studies described above demonstrate how teachers and researchers can build upon existing environments, tasks, and expertise, expanding projects initially developed for a single language at a single institution into resources that can be adopted for a number of languages and institutions, and developing a cross-institutional, even international teaching-research nexus. We advocate such a model of collaborative development in order to address the concern raised by Gregory et al. (2014), and echoed in our own survey findings, that instructors begin-

ning to use VWs often do not know where to start, and/or lack resources and time. Conceiving of the activities conducted in VWs for language learning as "tasks" allows for their modularisation and hence, ease of modification, adaptation, and sharing, as evidenced through the VEL project, which offers CFL and other language educators resources, guidance, and a community in which to try out and develop this innovative approach to enriching classroom-based FL curricula.

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Digital Tools for Chinese Character Acquisition and Their Impact on Student Motivation

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Abstract This research examines the use of newly-developed software applications such as e-dictionaries, digital flash cards, and digital character writing programs in the L2 Chinese language classroom in higher education. The acquisition of literacy in a character-based language such as Chinese can be difficult and time-consuming for the Second Language Learner. The objective is to investigate the extent to which these digital tools can reduce learner frustration, stimulate student motivation, and thus enhance student learning. This study reports on the introduction of a character-learning software application to provide spaced repetition learning at beginner level Chinese in a Western university. A student questionnaire, focus group and data analytics were used to assess take-up, frequency of use, and Chinese character acquisition. It was found that digital tools for Chinese character learning have the potential to enhance student engagement with their learning and allow for a broader range of strategies in the learning of Chinese character script. Challenges remain in adapting digital learning based on space repetition to the typical classroom schedule.

1 Introduction

Researchers in learning methodologies for Chinese character acquisition generally agree that the acquisition of literacy in Chinese presents particular difficulties for the non-background learner. Each Chinese character represents a single morpheme, that is, the minimal unit of meaning. Traditionally, the script has been regarded as either ideographic or logographic in nature. More recently scholars have adopted the term "morphosyllabic" to express the notion that a Chinese character represents

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a syllable that is generally the smallest unit of meaning (De Francis 1984). A character is not the same as a Chinese word because the latter can be either monosyllabic or multisyllabic. However, most common Chinese words have one or two syllables. An individual character (zi字) is presented in its own space (an imaginary square) but words (*ci*詞) are not separated spatially on the page. The written character provides only modest clues as to how it might be pronounced. Its correct pronunciation and tone in Mandarin needs to be learnt together with the written character. Similarly, the character does not transparently reflect its meaning, although individual components might provide helpful indications.[1] In order to write a Chinese character, a student needs first to identify the six types of strokes that are used as the building blocks in all character writing. In addition, they need to know the four basic rules governing the writing of characters (eg. write from top to bottom, from left to write and so on, Sun 2006, p. 108). Characters have widely differing numbers of strokes. Simpler characters may have only one to six strokes while more complex ones run to twenty or more. To acquire reasonable literacy, a student would need to recognize around 2400 characters. This would cover up to 99 % of characters found in the average printed text in mainland China (Shu 1995). Educated Chinese, however, would be expected to have mastery of three to four thousand characters (Ho and Bryant 1997; Walls and Walls 2009:6).

Many commentators have emphasised the difficulty of Chinese character learning (see particularly Moser 1991). However, a recent edited collection seeks to challenge the notion that readers of East Asian scripts require unique strategies to acquire literacy, arguing rather for "a single universal process of making sense of written language" (Goodman et al. 2012, p. xii). The authors put forward a refreshingly revisionist view that Chinese writing is not as hard to learn as traditionally believed. Chinese children, for example, are taught to pay attention to the internal structure of characters and to the syntax of clauses and sentences in order to derive meaning from the written word. Through daily life and the classroom they come to understand the principles of character formation, particularly how semantic and phonetic elements are combined. In addition, they gain a grasp of typical word formation from their knowledge of how Chinese is spoken. The Chinese child thus comes to understand "that characters are composed of components, components are sometimes characters on their own, and components can appear repeatedly in different components or characters" (Hung 2012, p. 27). This volume provides insight into how Chinese children in China, Taiwan and Japan can rapidly acquire Chinese (or Japanese *kanji*) character learning if the pedagogy puts emphasis on the common internal elements of characters. Goodman et al argue persuasively that the character script provided an effective writing system in the past and this is the reason why it has continued into the contemporary period. However, this anthology

[1] The most important of these is the radical, which gives an indication of generalized meaning or categorization, eg. the water radical appears in words to do with rivers systems. A small number of characters are pictograms, eg.*mu*木 to represent 'tree' or ideograms which represent a more abstract notion such as above or below (*shang* 上, *xia* 下). The majority of characters in use in the present day are "ideophonetic compounds", that is, they contain a radical which indicates a root meaning and a phonetic graph that gives an indication of sound (Walls and Walls 2009:7).

focuses primarily on the teaching of character script in East Asian contexts. The potential or appropriateness of these methodologies for a non-Chinese background speaker in a Western classroom remains largely unexamined.

Debate on how to teach Chinese characters has centred on whether to adopt a character-centred approach or a meaning centred approach (Lam 2011). The character-centred approach is the methodology used traditionally in Chinese education over the centuries. The focus is on initial mastery of a large number of characters before learning to read. It also involves the separation of learning how to read from learning how to write, so that a student can often read far more characters than he or she can actually write. In the traditional educational system, the student begins with characters with fewer strokes and builds up to those with a larger number of strokes. He or she is specifically taught the common internal components of characters, that is, the so-called semantic and phonetic elements, and is encouraged to use these elements to infer the meaning of unknown characters. For example, a students would be taught a group of characters that share the same radical, or the same phonetic element, or would be taught memorable stories about the development of a modern character from an ancient ideograph (Lam 2011, pp. 59–60). These techniques are designed to strengthen the mnemonic aspect of character learning and lead to more rapid acquisition.

The meaning-centred approach, largely borrowed from advances in foreign language teaching in the West, is generally the dominant one in the teaching of non-background speakers in the West. This approach places emphasis on the teaching of meaningful texts together with the corresponding character script. The text is presented in characters with pinyin, (that is, romanised representation of the sound) followed by a list of new vocabulary in character script and pinyin together with a foreign language translation of individual words or expressions. While this has the advantage of providing meaningful discourse relevant to student needs, it does lead to problems in the optimal teaching of the character script. The difficulty here is that students would inevitably need to learn how to recognize and write quite difficult characters from a very early stage. A Chinese child, by comparison, would begin with very simple characters and then move to more complex ones. For example, the word for "I, myself, me" *wo*, commonly taught in Lesson 1, is written with seven strokes 我 and is not easy to write. In East Asia, children learning Chinese characters generally have the benefit of a hybrid approach, where lessons on the internal components and etymology of the character script complement the presentation of meaningful text. But in the West, the major focus on teaching meaningful discourse, both orally and in written form, together with time constraints, often means that little time is spent on explicit teaching of characters. Often students do not appreciate that aspects of the meaning and sound of characters can be unlocked in a systematic way by examination of internal elements. As noted by Lam (2011, p. 65) in the teaching of Chinese and by Iventosch (2012, p. 239) in the teaching of Japanese kanji, strategies for learning characters in the West tend to be limited to rote learning and multiple copying out of characters. As investigated by Zhao et al. (2013), lack of familiarity with the script and the difficulties of memorization is a considerable cause of frustration and anxiety for Anglophone speakers in Western contexts. They suggest that strategies to minimize student anxiety could include giving

special attention to the teaching of internal elements such as radicals, fast reading exercises to facilitate a more holistic reading process, and word recognition activities (Zhao et al. (2013, p. 775).

2 The Research Problem

Recent research into the teaching of character-script based languages suggests that a hybrid approach blending both meaning-centred and character-centred approaches should provide a more optimal context to promote Chinese character learning. However, in the context of the Western L2 Chinese language classroom, time constraints make it difficult to devote sufficient time to explicit teaching of Chinese characters, including study of common internal elements that aid memorization and interpretation. This practitioner research project investigates the potential of commercially available digital tools to provide a character-centred approach that could complement the meaning-based discourse approach favoured in the Western classroom. In the case examined here, digital tools were provided to students to facilitate the learning of specific skills in the learning of Chinese characters, such as stroke order, radicals, common elements, pronunciation and interpretation of meaning. Students were encouraged to make use of these digital tools to consolidate learning outside the classroom. This trial project investigates the impact of the introduction of Chinese character digital tools on students' perceptions of the efficacy of their learning. It was hypothesized that the use of a digital tool for Chinese character learning would help to alleviate the commonly felt anxiety of the L2 learner in dealing with an unfamiliar script and would assist students to build up their confidence in acquiring literacy in Chinese. This project asked two main research questions: what was the take-up and frequency of use of the chosen digital tool, and secondly, what were the students' perceptions of the efficacy of these digital tools.

2.1 Chinese Character Learning and Spaced Repetition Systems

New software applications for Chinese character learning have been developed by educationalists, application developers, and online learning entrepreneurs. An example of the former is the work of V. Tam and C. Huang. Tam and Huang are educators who have developed an e-learning software for use on mobile devices to teach correct stroke order, character recognition and pronunciation. Based on an earlier system known as iWrite, Tam and Huang's e-learning software provides a template of selected Chinese characters. Students are encouraged to write with their fingers in the correct stroke sequence. Automatic feedback is provided on areas of weakness (Tam and Huang 2012, p. 193). This is an example of educator-developed

software for use in an institutional setting. A different type of digital tool or eLearning has been developed in commercial settings. These were originally developed by entrepreneurs to meet the needs of the community of Western expatriates living in China but later gained a following amongst Western learners outside China. In these cases, the learners subscribe to particular Chinese learning tools or enrol in online Chinese programs to complement or substitute for learning in the classroom. Entrepreneurial products tend to use technologies popularised in the development of digital games and promise an enjoyable way to learn the language. Researchers are beginning to investigate the potential role of these commercially-available products on student learning of Chinese. One example is J. De la Rouviere, who has investigated the use of spaced repetition in online applications for commercial Chinese character learning applications such as Anki and Mnemosyne (De la Rouviere 2013). He noted that students had higher scores for character recognition in the context of spaced repetition learning.

This project is based around an example of another commercially-available digital product for learning Chinese. Skritter, a digital tool to teach Chinese character writing and other skills, was developed by a North American student of Chinese, Nick Winter. Inspired by a Nintendo ninja game, Winter developed an innovative software model for writing Chinese characters that rapidly developed a following amongst Western learners of Chinese. Skritter began as a web-based service, implemented as a Flash application, and achieved modest success among motivated learners of Chinese despite the fact that it was most effective when used with a pen and graphics tablet. Later an iPhone application was developed utilising a touch-screen interface. Android capability was added at a later stage. An important feature of Skritter is that it is licensed to include a library of vocabulary lists and material from Chinese L2 textbooks commonly used in the Western classroom. Others can be added at the request of users. This enhances the potentiality of Skritter to be used as a complementary learning tool for students enrolled in classroom learning. Registered users sign up to an account and can indicate a particular word list to add to their study queue. Skritter prompts the user to attempt to sketch a character either by using a finger on a smart phone or tablet, or a mouse or graphics tablet if using a desktop computer. If the strokes are in roughly the correct place and direction then Skritter will snap the hand-drawn stroke into place. Pronunciation in pinyin script, voiceover in Mandarin, and English translation is also provided. Skritter provides a separate self-testing facility for stroke order, Chinese pronunciation, including tonal recognition, and English translation.

Another important feature of the Skritter application is the use of automatic spaced repetition (SRS) methodology. This allows students to incrementally acquire characters in a particular textbook or word list at their natural learning pace. Characters that are misremembered are automatically placed in line to appear at a later stage. Recent research has found that SRS methodology can lead to stronger retention rates compared with traditional methods (Hirschel and Fritz 2013). Students acquire character learning by ‘writing’ with a finger or graphic pen and are given automatic feedback on correct or incorrect stroke order and placement. The same techniques can be readily transposed to writing characters on paper. Mnemonic

devices are used to assist the learner to recall the characters and character components, and a voice-over congratulates students in Chinese when they have mastered a particular section. In this way, the student who regularly uses Skritter can gain a sense of measurable progress. Skritter also allows the student to create his or her own vocabulary lists and provides detailed statistics on progress towards character mastery. While the software has been designed to assist with character writing and learning, it can also be used to listen to the texts provided in the lessons using the voiceover. In this way the student can learn how to read the non-phonetic script out loud without the aid of a teacher. While most learners of Skritter are individual students, the application can be licensed to institutions at a monthly or yearly rate based on student numbers.

2.2 Trial Project of Skritter

In a trial project conducted in two semesters during 2014, Skritter was introduced to a class of beginners in Chinese for non-background speakers at an Australian university. Class enrolment was 182, divided into separate classes of 20–25 students. Inkren, the makers of Skritter, provided a cost free institutional licence for the purpose of evaluation during the first semester 2014, no doubt with the hope that this would translate to an ongoing institutional licence paid by the university. Skritter normally costs US$14.99 per month for each user, but institutional pricing is approximately US$1000 per year for up to 300 students. The students were encouraged to use Skritter as a complement to but not as a substitute for traditional paper-based methodologies. Squared character writing sheets were provided through the subject website for students to download and print off for practice writing with pen and paper. Students were encouraged to practice on paper as well as with Skritter and their learning of Chinese characters was assessed by paper-based texts and examinations.

In the first week of semester 1, 2014, the students were introduced to Skritter and other e-learning features provided on the subject-level Learning Management System. These additional features comprised Chinese character worksheets for printing off, audio files of new words and listening comprehension exercises, sets of word definitions, and class notes. The sign-up process required each Chinese 1 student to individually sign up to Skritter with a particular code in order to gain free institutional access. They were also asked to join a group dedicated to their class. Skritter's group functionality allows an administrator to add a particular vocabulary list for all group members to study. Vocabulary from the Chinese 1 textbook, Sinolingua's *Contemporary Chinese* (当代中文) was selected. Technical assistance to students and teaching staff was offered throughout semester (12 weeks). In the final weeks of semester a questionnaire (see Appendix 1) was distributed to students to investigate their perceptions of the value of Skritter in learning Chinese characters. In addition, students were invited to attend a small focus group to discuss their experience with Skritter and learning Chinese. The questionnaire was designed to ascertain the take-up rate of Skritter by the student cohort, which devices were used

to access Skritter, frequency of use, preferred choice of electronic materials, and perceptions of the usefulness of these electronic tools in their learning. These issues are discussed in turn below.

3 Analysis of Data

3.1 Take-Up Rate of Skritter

Responses were received from 105 students in beginning Chinese. The majority of respondents had signed up to Skritter (93 students, 86 %). Most students chose to use Skritter on an iPhone (40 %), desktop computers were used by 36 %; followed by iPads (27 %) and Android devices (8.5 %), other tablets (less than 2 %). The relatively high number of students using a desktop computer to access Skritter is surprising because this application is most conveniently used on a mobile device. Approximately half the students claimed to use Skritter once a week or more. Of these, 18 % said they used Skritter more than once a week. However, 27 % of students accessed it less than once a week and 28 % claimed not to use Skritter at all. Some indicated they used Skritter more heavily at the start of semester and less towards the end. Some students compared the relative merits of Skritter as opposed for writing on paper. One student commented:

> I find Skritter is good at developing one's reading knowledge; but there is no replacement for writing the characters manually.

A sizable minority of students (21 %) preferred to use PLECO, a commercially available electronic dictionary with facility to make electronic flash cards, in preference to Skritter because the former is an electronic dictionary.

> I [would] find it more useful if Skritter had a dictionary. I find Pleco more useful because not only [does] it provide flashcards, but it is a convenient app for dictionary use.

Electronic flashcard files comprising vocabulary from the textbook were provided for students who wished to create flashcards for mobile devices. Twenty-two per cent of students downloaded these files and many commented positively on the importance of flashcard features. We observe here the rising popularity of PLECO among the Chinese L2 student cohort and also, that students are making a more sophisticated use of this application. PLECO's flashcard interface is considerably more complicated than its electronic dictionary function.

3.2 Student Perceptions of the Usefulness of Skritter

Students who had used Skritter were asked to rate their view of its value with regard to learning how to write characters, how to understand the meaning of new words, and how to pronounce the words correctly. They were asked to respond

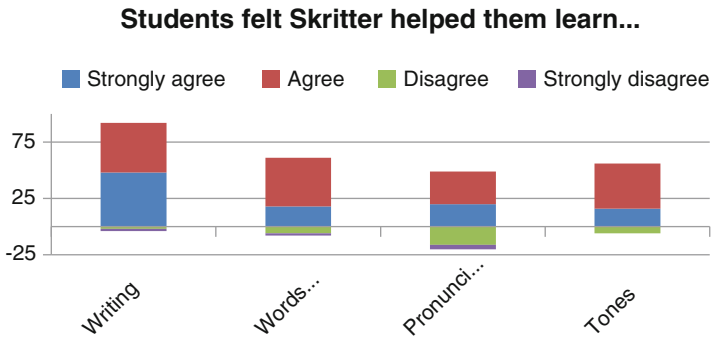

Fig. 1 Student perceptions of Skritter (how it aided learning)

along a five-point kline from strongly disagree (−2) to strongly agree (2), where 0 means neither agree or disagree. For a summary figure of student responses see below (Fig. 1).

There was a broad level of agreement that Skritter was helpful in learning correct stroke order and learning how to write characters, also in understanding the meaning of new words and learning how to pronounce Chinese characters with the correct tones. We note that Skritter has a testing facility which calls on users to correctly identify tones (as distinct from other pronunciation features). This could account for the higher result in learning tones than in learning pronunciation.

Students were also invited to offer free comments on their experience of learning with Skritter. Many reported positively on their experiences.

> Loved Skritter, would be great to add a brightness adjustment function, also, if you want, a male or female voice. Also very helpful to have a vocab list you can access.
>
> Skritter is a useful tool for Chinese learners.
>
> Overall, I think Skritter is an exceptionally useful tool and I appreciate having the service provided-just wish I could get it to work on our Android!

The comments below come from a small group focus of three students in Chinese 1 at a meeting convened at the end of semester.

> Skritter helps me recognize Chinese characters and helps me to read Chinese. Very good for understanding stroke order. I also use it in revision. It gives me characters not yet studied in class. However, I find there is no substitute for writing Chinese characters on paper. One's muscles need to learn this skill.
>
> I find Skritter a casual and fun way to learn the language. It doesn't feel like you're really studying because you haven't got a textbook out with pen and paper. It helped me to focus on material needed for the exams. Very useful for stroke order.
>
> Skritter has helped me build confidence in the language.
>
> I really got a kick when I hear that encouraging voice saying feichang hao (非常好, very good)!

The focus group students had devised their own strategies to use Skritter to assist their learning:

> I sort out the harder characters eg 喜欢 (xihuan, to like). I find it easier to remember when you hear little stories about the shape or origin of the characters.
>
> I go lesson by lesson and try in my learning strategies to emulate the textbook itself. So I take 20 characters and jumble them up, write out the characters, and then repeat the test until I reach 100 %.

Students were also asked if they experienced any problems with Skritter or the other electronic material. Fifty-five students chose to respond. Five of these expressed satisfaction with Skritter. Nine declared they preferred to use Skritter to study exclusively the characters for that week's lesson rather than take advantage of the spaced repetition function to follow their individual rate of character acquisition. This was no doubt due to the need to meet the requirements for class assessment in that week. One such comment is given below:

> Skritter would be even better if it could make a distinction between the chapters [ie lessons in the textbook], rather than mixing them all up.

3.3 Discussion

Data analysis demonstrates that some students perceived a clash of goals between the assessment focused student desiring to practice only material required for the next assessment, and the spaced-repetition (SRS) methodology as employed by Skritter. This methodology provides automatic testing of earlier material based on the student's prior learning rather than testing on the material most relevant to the particular week of a teaching program. Some students appear to want to use Skritter primarily to prepare for particular assessment tasks, while others had a stronger appreciation of spaced-repetition learning in aiding their retention of the course as a whole.

Skritter also provides extensive metrics for administrators of Skritter groups that allows for intensive examination of participation data. This data consisted of logs of student activity in minutes studied and characters learned over time. In this project one hundred and thirty four students signed up to Skritter and joined the Chinese 1 group, however 11 of these did not use Skritter at all, leaving a total of 123 students who made some use of Skritter. In order to make sense of the pattern of student participation, the researchers calculated a histogram of student participation in total minutes of usage. Figure 2 sets out the number of students who have used Skritter over a 12 week period together with the number of minutes of usage. The histogram demonstrates that 52 students used Skritter for at least 120 min. Within this group, 22 used Skritter for between 240 min to 480 min, 7 for 480 to 960 min, and a further 1 student used Skritter for 960 min or more. There was a very wide variation in usage, from students who made minimal use of Skritter at one end, to students who apparently made Skritter their primary method for learning Chinese characters at the other.

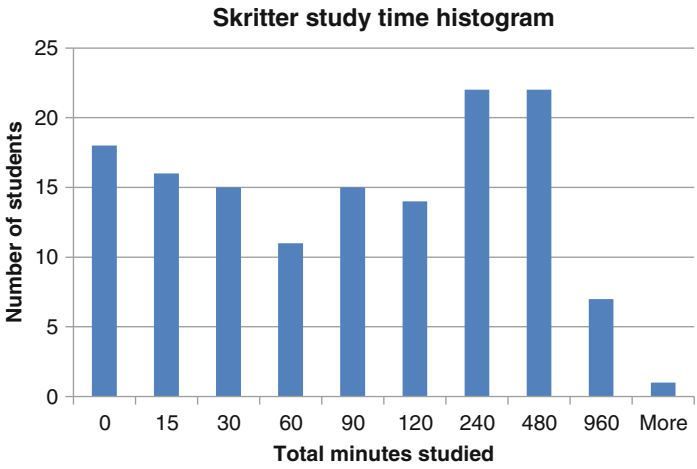

Fig. 2 Histogram of times spent using Skritter by minutes

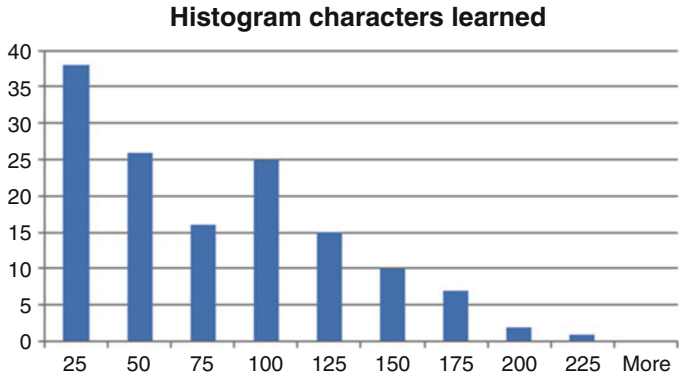

Fig. 3 Histogram of Chinese characters learned using Skritter

The number of characters learnt using Skritter showed a similar pattern of variance, from around 25 characters learnt up to 225 plus, see Fig. 3.

We observe that the students had access to both traditional and digital means to learn Chinese characters. Further, as discussed above, a sizable minority of respondents to the survey stated they preferred to use the electronic dictionary PLECO rather than Skritter (around 22 students). This means that students who made less use of Skritter were not necessarily disadvantaged in their learning of Chinese characters. However, there is some evidence that the more students used Skritter the

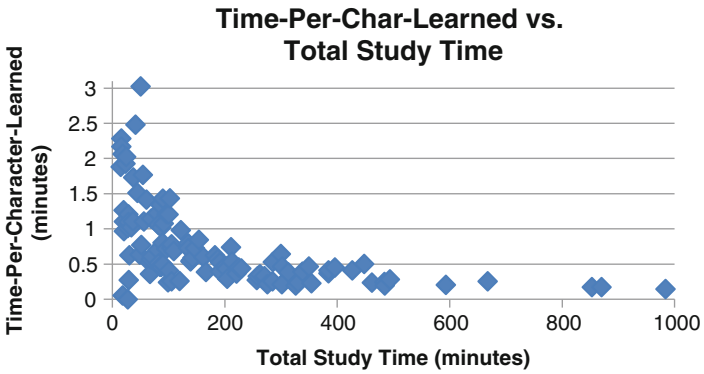

Fig. 4 Scatter plot of time-per-character-learned using Skritter (*vertical*) against total study time using Skritter (*horizontal*)

more rapidly they acquired characters. There was a wide variation in the derived metric of time-per-character learned, with a median of 45 s and a standard deviation of 34.56 s. Figure 4 presents a scatter plot of time-per-character-learned versus total time. It illustrates that in the case of the heaviest users of Skritter, there was a continual reduction in time spent per character as they gained more experience in learning Chinese characters. In particular, students who spent more than 240 min using Skritter over the semester took far less time to learn a character than those who spent less than 240 min.

These observations, however, need to take into account the basis on which students decided they had 'learned' a character. More research is needed into the comparative merits of Skritter, other electronic tools, and paper-based learning, to further investigate this issue. In its automatic function, Skritter will only deem a character to be 'wrong' if a student has got the stroke order wrong several times. However, one learner could use manual means to mark a character as 'wrong', while another student might be happy to accept a half-learnt character as 'correct' and move on through the list. These findings suggest that it is important to assess how students use the device and point out to students using Skritter how the application can be best used for optimal learning outcomes.

4 Conclusion

In the present day the typical Western L2 learner of Chinese, enrolled in an institutional learning program, chooses freely from an array of commercially or freely available digital tools to assist them in their learning. Electronic dictionaries that can be loaded into smart phones are particularly popular. Students are increasingly choosing to 'customize' their learning strategies by including the use of digital applications in their individual patterns of learning. However, there is considerable

variation in the extent to which these students choose to use digital tools or not to use them. Some less 'techno-savy' students could be missing out on potential benefits from the use of digital tools. Few studies of this recent phenomenon are available in the case of Chinese language learning. Apart from the previously-mentioned study by De la Rouviere (2013), we note here the research of Shei and Hsieh (2012), who investigated the use made by UK students of digital tools freely available on the BBC Chinese Languages webpages. They found that 42 % of the enrolment in classes studied made use on a voluntary basis of the BBC materials. They concluded that this was part of a trend when "the technology becomes 'invisible', that is, integrated into the environment which it is designed for" (Shei and Hsieh 2012, p. 322). They also point out what they see as inadequacies in available free and commercial software and propose a new CALL system to link phonology, morphology, orthography, vocabulary and phraseology (Shei and Hsieh 2012, p. 331).

In the case of Chinese, individual learners are independently embracing a wide range of free and commercial applications. This is a trend which can hardly be ignored by the classroom educator. However, teaching practitioners have been relatively slow to take into account or to encourage student use of digital tools when setting up classroom-based Chinese language programs, and little research has been undertaken on this important topic. In this study, the teachers specifically encouraged but did not mandate the use of one specific digital tool in a classroom of L2 Chinese learners in a Western university. They acquired a license to provide the tool to students at no additional student cost, offered access to the digital tool through the subject website in the Learning Management System, and offered training and technical assistance. It was found that the introduction of a digital tool to learn Chinese characters offered through institutional means was beneficial in several respects. First, it improved the confidence of the L2 beginning language learner in acquiring the initial stages of Chinese literacy. Student response concerning the benefit of the use of Skritter in their learning was strongly positive. Students enjoyed devising individual strategies to make the best use of the technology. Overall, it was found that the use of character-learning digital tools promoted stronger student engagement with their learning and enhanced student motivation. A second advantage for the teaching practitioner lies in being able to select the best available e-learning tools and encourage broad student use in and beyond the classroom. In other words, it becomes possible to significantly broaden participation by the student body in selected digital technologies. The provision of ongoing technical assistance benefits students who might be less inclined to experiment with new online tools and who could potentially miss out on learning benefits. A systematic approach to the use of specific digital tools also allows for better co-ordination of pre-class, in class and post-class activities. It allows educators to provide learning strategies that are user-friendly for younger generation learners accustomed from their earliest years to the increasingly 'invisible' integration of technology within daily life.

This trial study also demonstrates potential challenges in the broader provision of Chinese character learning tools in classroom-based language programs. First,

we found considerable divergence in the take up of Skritter, with some avid users at one end of the extreme and non-users at the other. In other words, students preferred to use a range of strategies, including the traditional means of copying out on paper, and not everyone preferred digital methods. Further research is needed to establish whether dedicated users of Skritter were able to learn characters faster and retain them for a longer period of time. Another concern that arose in student comments is the potential conflict between student study preferences and the optimal learning strategies employed in spaced repetition learning technologies. We refer here to the frequent student preference to cram for a particular assessment item as opposed to the aim of long-term retention of a corpus of material, which is the goal of the spaced repetition schemes deployed in e-learning applications. It could be that more work needs to be done in explaining to students the benefits of spaced repetition learning for longer term retention. Assessment objectives could be modified to reflect this goal. In other words, assessment methods could be readjusted to prioritize the use of mastery of a segment of the target corpus of language material, as distinct from mastery of a particular lesson by a certain day or week of the course.

Other practical challenges need to be addressed by the teacher practitioner. If participation in e-learning methodologies is to become an integral part of a particular course then it will be necessary for educators to decide on particular eLearning applications and electronic platforms. Students will need to be informed in advance about what sort of electronic devices will be employed and whether there is an extra cost. In the case of the use of Skritter in Chinese beginner classes, institutions have the choice of either making participation a matter of individual choice, or deciding to pay for a licence for all enrolled students. This is not necessary in the case of PLECO electronic dictionary, where a (minimal) free package is adequate for online reading. In future, it might make sense to mandate a particular smartphone application, in much the same way that we mandate a particular textbook.

One important aspect not taken up in this study is the issue of the efficacy of eLearning tools in improving learning outcomes. Golonka et al. (2014) seek to address this issue in their recent report. They surveyed over 350 experimental studies dealing with the effectiveness of electronic technologies on foreign language teaching and found a "moderate support for claims that technology enhanced learners' output and interaction, affect and motivation, feedback, and metalinguistic knowledge." (Golonka et al. 2014:70). The greatest efficacy was reported for pronunciation training and the use of online chat networking. They conclude: "At their best, technological innovations can increase learner interest and motivation; provide students with increased access to target language (TL) input, interaction opportunities, and feedback; and provide instructors with an efficient means for organizing course content and interacting with multiple students. At their worst, the use of new technologies can result in inappropriate input, shallow interaction, and inaccurate feedback; student frustration with software and hardware; distraction from the learning task; and a general over-emphasis on delivery modality over learning objectives" (Golonka et al. 2014, p. 70).

Given the rapid transformation in eLearning technologies in recent years, it is understandable that most attention has been paid to issues relating to the adoption of the new technologies, rather than to an assessment of learning outcomes. However, according to Golonka et al. (2014) studies of language learning e-methodologies generally report positively on the impact on student motivation. This was also the major finding from the trial presented here. If the adoption of digital applications and online learning results in a more engaged student cohort and lower rates of attrition, then the investment in e-technologies will be considered worthwhile. In future, as technological problems are resolved, one would expect eLearning tools, whether adopted by the individual learner, or by the teaching practitioner, to become increasingly a matter of course in the language curriculum. One would also expect to see a greater use of mobile devices as distinct from desktop computers. Language curriculums of the future are likely to provide learners with an introduction to relevant electronic applications at every stage of their language learning, beginning with the first year of an ab initio program. Existing print-based courses could be re-designed to better integrate digital resources or even be eliminated in favour of an entirely online platform. This project is intended as a preliminary trial study. More practice-based research is required into emerging digital technologies to assess their relative efficacy in learning outcomes and to establish optimal ways to integrate these into classroom based courses.

Appendix 1: Survey Instrument[2]

Chinese E-Learning Survey 2014

You are invited to fill in this survey which will enable the Chinese program to learn more about your experience using the eLearning materials provided for Chinese in the second semester 2014. This will help us to further refine our teaching methods and improve student learning in this subject in future.

Your participation is warmly encouraged but entirely voluntary. In accordance with standard university research ethics, before you fill in this survey we ask you to read the Plain Language Statement and to read and sign the accompanying Consent Form.

This survey is anonymous. Please don't write your name.

1. We provided free access to Skritter to help you learn Chinese characters. How often did you end up using Skritter:

Not at all ❑ Less than once a week ❑ About once a week ❑ More often ❑

[2] Note that Q. 7–9 refer to an uploaded dialogue exercise that does not form part of the present study.

2. If you answered "Not at all" above, please tell us why you didn't use Skritter:

_____
_____
_____
_____

3. If you used Skritter, please indicate how you feel it helped:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Learning to write Chinese characters	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Learning Chinese words and meanings	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Learning Chinese pronunciation	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Learning Chinese tones	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

4. We provided an introduction to the mobile phone dictionary app Pleco. We'd like to know how far you got:

(a) Looked over Pleco information (LMS, App Store etc) ❑
(b) Downloaded Pleco ❑
(c) Bought Pleco (pack or add-on) ❑
(d) Used Pleco during Chinese 2 ❑
(e) Used Pleco flashcards for Chinese 2 (from the LMS) ❑

5. If you didn't get as far as using Pleco (4d) please briefly tell us why:

_____
_____
_____

6. Concerning the materials provided on the Chinese 2 subject LMS, please indicate which you read, accessed or downloaded (you can tick more than one):

(a) Weekly schedule ❑
(b) Chinese character worksheets PDFs ❑
(c) New words audio files ❑
(d) Listening comprehension audio files and reference PDFs ❑
(e) Word definitions PDFs ❑
(f) Class notes PDFs ❑

7. We introduced a new Dialogue Task

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The Tasks were adequately explained	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
I knew what was expected of me	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
I valued the opportunity to practice outside of class	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
I felt the Task helped me prepare for the oral examination	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
The peer-review transcription was helpful comprehension practice	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
The peer-review transcription gave me helpful feedback	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
I was able to coordinate with my group effectively	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
I discussed the Task with students not in my group	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

8. Did you experience any problems during the Dialogue Task? Please describe below:

_____
_____
_____

9. Did you access the other recordings and transcriptions in the Dialogue Task Files section of the LMS?

Yes ❑ No ❑

10. If you are continuing next year. Would you find it useful to attend a workshop on Pleco (and other eLearning tools) outside of your usual classes?

Yes ❑ Maybe ❑ No ❑

11. Please provide any other comments on the eLearning:

_____
_____
_____
_____

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT!

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Innovative Learning Design for Online Language Learning: A Systems Design Framework

Yuping Wang

Abstract With the demand for access to diverse modes of learning, this chapter focuses on how online Chinese language learning can be effectively designed to maximize learning outcomes. As teaching and learning a second language in a fully online mode is a new and rapidly evolving process, there are many challenges facing language professionals. Online language learning in this research refers to learning conducted fully online, in which learners are separated from education providers and their peers by distance.

This research first proposes a framework for online language learning design based on established instructional design models, a systems approach to learning design, and language learning theories. The proposed framework addresses six basic elements in online learning design, namely, the analysis of learners, the assessment of technological affordances, course design, learning support design, ongoing reflection and evaluation, and continuous improvement. A systems approach is adopted to emphasize the inter-relationship between the six elements which interact to constantly improve learning outcomes. This framework is then evaluated using the learning design built into a fully online Chinese program offered at Griffith University in Australia, as a case study. The evaluation indicates that the proposed framework is effective in capturing the essential design elements in online language learning, and more importantly, in promoting the inter-connection and interaction between these elements which constantly interact with each other to form an iterative cycle of analysis, design, evaluation and improvement. It is expected that this research will advance our understanding of the optimal design for online language learning in particular and the potential of online language learning as a whole.

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1 Introduction

The Online Chinese program at Griffith University is offered through the Open Universities Australia (OUA), in response to the demand of those who cannot attend regular on-campus classes. This may be due to reasons such as personal commitments and geographical distance or the demand of those who simply prefer the flexibility of ubiquitous learning. Such a demand has been driven not only by the world-wide enthusiasm for learning Chinese but also by the increasingly enabling power of educational technology that has transformed distance language learning into an interactive and communicative experience. The inherent deficiency of distance language learning, that is, the lack of synchronous interaction, can now be adequately overcome by synchronous technologies such as videoconferencing tools and live chat tools. A wealth of online language learning resources freely available to learners can also help make online language learning more effective and enjoyable.

In a broader context of education, the last 5 years have witnessed the exponential growth of online education, especially since the emergence of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). As a result, there are many pressing issues confronting online educators, such as how online learning can be effectively designed to maximize its advantages over other learning modes and the potential of innovative technology, and how best to support effective interaction and collaboration in an online environment. These issues are particularly relevant to language learning. Interaction is integral to the communicative language learning process, because it is both a goal and a means of language learning (Vygotsky 1978; Long 1996). However, insufficient support for interaction and collaboration has also long been recognized as an inherent issue in distance language learning when physical distance among the learners and between learners and teachers prevents effective personal interaction, despite the advances in technology (Dreyer et al. 2005; Kennedy and Duffy 2004; Chen and Wang 2008). Thus supporting and facilitating effective interaction and collaboration is now becoming increasingly urgent as the technology has been ready and available. How it can be best designed into effective online learning, especially fully online learning, is a challenge facing online language professionals.

This research aims to address this issue by first proposing and discussing a design framework for online language learning that specifically addresses the provision and support of interaction and collaboration in a fully technology-mediated context. This is then followed by a detailed evaluation of the proposed framework through an analysis of the learning design for a Chinese program offered at Griffith University in Australia. The chapter concludes with a brief reflection from the program designer and an overview on the significance of this research.

2 The Proposed Design Framework for Online Language Learning

In this research, the term learning design is used, rather than curriculum design, course design, instructional design or educational design. Conventionally, learning design is defined as "a range of activities associated with better describing, understanding, supporting and guiding pedagogic design practices and processes" (Cross and Conole 2009). It often focuses on designing and sequencing learning activities and linking those activities with available resources, at a course level in order to realize course objectives. Although the concept of learning design is not new, it has been increasingly used recently in the application of educational technology to learning, promoting the idea that "designers and instructors need to choose for themselves the best mixture of behaviourist and constructivist learning experiences for their online courses" (Carr-Chellman and Duchastel 2000, p. 148).

However, learning design adopted in this research is somewhat different from the prevalent ones, with an unprecedented focus on the technology-mediated learning environment. It is operationally defined here as a design process that goes beyond the mere design of learning activities to specifically include the assessment of technological affordances and the design of learning support. In other words, it focuses on a learner-centred teaching and learning process, which considers the affordances and impacts of educational technology on each phase of learning design. Learning can be designed at both the course and program level. Program here is defined as a suit of courses offered at a tertiary level for the completion of a degree or certification.

Many design models have been proposed in conventional education but few have been identified that particularly attend to the needs of online learning. In developing our own online learning design framework, we have been particularly influenced by two models; the Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation (ADDIE) model (Morrison 2010) and the Dick and Carey Systems Approach Model.

Since its development in 1975 by Florida State University, the ADDIE model has provided a generic framework and guideline for many instructional designs. According to this model, "Analysis" includes the evaluation of learners' information, task requirements and the overall objectives of learning. Such evaluation will inform the "Design" phase in which learning activities are planned in accordance with learning objectives and learner needs. This is actually a planning stage to determine the kind of activities to be designed in the third phase, "Development". The development phase sees the creation of activities to be tested in "Implementation". The last phase is "Evaluation", consisting of both formative and summative assessments of the activities designed and implemented. This is a crucial stage in which data can be collected and analysed in order to improve the activity design.

Another influential design model is the Dick and Carey Systems Approach Model. Although the two models overlap in many aspects, the Dick and Carey Systems Approach Model stands out among many design models by the systems

approach it promotes. This is also the approach that we have chosen in developing our own design framework for online leaning. The Dick and Carey model views instructional design as an integral system with the constituent elements connecting and interacting with each other. When carefully designed, all the elements in instruction such as the instructor, learners, materials, activities, delivery systems, and learning and performance environments, interact to achieve the planned learning outcomes. This model captures the following ten essential components in instructional design (Dick et al. 2014):

- identify instructional goal(s);
- conduct instructional analysis;
- analyse learners and contexts;
- write performance objectives;
- develop assessment instruments;
- develop instructional strategy;
- develop and select instructional materials;
- design and conduct formative evaluation of instruction;
- revise instruction; and
- design and conduct summative evaluation.

This model is significant in that it does not treat these components as separate entities. Instead, these components interact with one another to form an effective system of instructional design.

Informed by both instructive and constructivist learning theories, and on the basis of the basic tenets promoted in the ADDIE and the Dick and Carey models, this research proposes a systems learning design framework that centrally concerns itself with online learning. Figure 1 illustrates the major components of the proposed framework.

As shown in Fig. 1, this systems framework consists of six basic elements, starting with the Analysis of learners, and then proceeds to the Analysis of technological affordances, Course design, Learning support design, Ongoing evaluation, and finally Constant improvement. Therefore the framework is known as the AACLOC model. This model is a broad framework that promotes a cycle of design, evaluation and improvement with the six elements interacting with each other to constantly inform learning design and improve learning outcomes.

The analysis of learners includes the assessment of learner characteristics and needs, their learning goals, demographic features, time and place of learning, specific knowledge and competence, such as their digital literacy and prior knowledge, among others. Learner analysis in this framework focuses on the needs of online learners, which often differ from campus-based learners. For example, academic and technical support provided for online learners is a higher priority than for campus-based learners, because they work primarily on their own and often in a technology-enriched environment. Such information is particularly important to online learning design as it determines what technologies to use or avoid, and what kind of learning environment should be created to facilitate such needs.

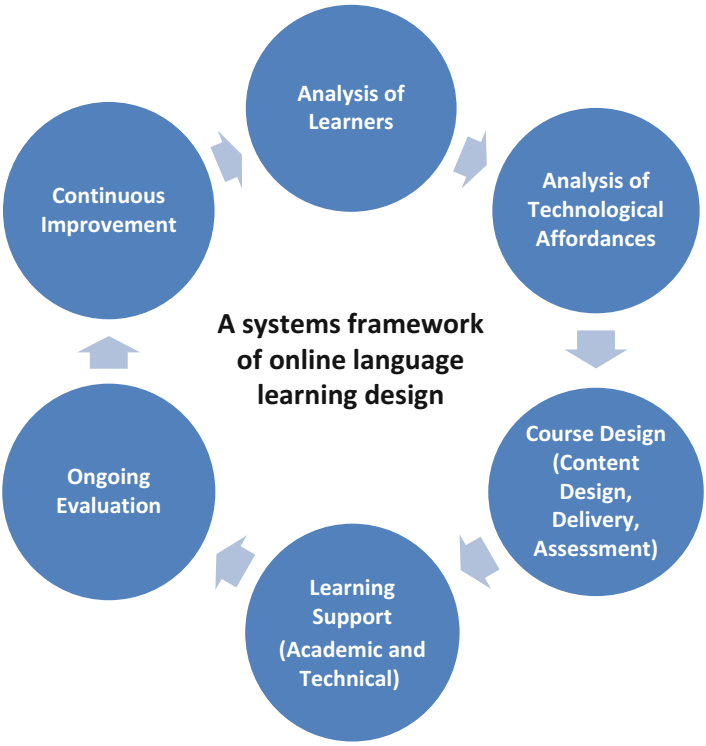

Fig. 1 The proposed systems framework of online learning design- the AACLOC model

The analysis of learners informs the second phase in the framework, the analysis of technological affordances. A central concern in this analysis is to understand, and sometimes, to test the potential of available technologies for meeting the needs of online language learners. This analysis will lead to the creation of an effective learning context that supports interaction and collaboration in course design. It therefore constitutes a crucial component in online learning design as technological affordances determine, to a large extent, the quality of online learning.

These two components in the framework provide a solid foundation for the course design phase. Course design is an overarching term covering both content and assessment design and delivery. Content design focuses on designing and sequencing learning activities that maximise the potential of the online learning environment. How to deliver the designed activities effectively and successfully is a prominent issue in online course design as the delivery relies heavily on technology. The assessment design comprises the design and description of online assessments in terms of the assessment criteria, content, mode and format. Again, the capabilities and reliability of technologies at hand must be carefully evaluated as the fit between the task and the technology, and the creative use of the technology to maximise learning are two crucial factors in online course design. This process is also a

process of understanding effective ways to meet learner needs through appropriate technologies in the online environment.

The course design process also advances our understanding of the type of learning support students will need in order to accomplish the tasks and assessments designed for the course. What makes our proposed framework distinctive from existing models is the inclusion of learning support. Different from institutional support, generally known as student services, such as providing generic academic skills and counselling, learning support here refers to the support at both a course and task level, focusing on assisting the learner to better control their learning path. In this framework, learning support consists of academic and technical support, with the former concentrating on helping learners to develop sound learning strategies for task completion and the latter on providing ongoing support for the effective use of technologies needed for completing learning tasks. With the advent of learning analytics, learning support can be designed with more accuracy to target specific learning difficulties. Learning analytics refers to the use of learner-produced data to seek understanding of learner behaviours and their learning contexts, in order to maximise learning outcomes (Siemens 2010; Sharkey 2013; Stephen and MacNeil 2012).

Effective technical support facilitates effective learning. Comas-Quinn (2011, p. 220) identifies that, "the key challenge is how to enable learners and teachers to make the most of these tools, and support them as they acquire the necessary literacies and skills". Such support can be offered through visual demonstration and hands-on training in the online classroom and detailed instructions on how to use a specific tool effectively and creatively for task completion. We argue that this kind of learning support is indispensable for quality and successful online learning.

Ongoing evaluation consists of constant reflection by the learning designer as well as ongoing formative and summative evaluation from the teacher and the learner. Different from the ADDIE and Dick and Carey models, this framework promotes the constant reflection by the learning designer on each stage of the design process to assess the inter-relationship between each design component. For example, when designing a learning task, the course designer should constantly reassess learner characteristics and needs, and the technological affordances impacting the learning task to be designed. Formative evaluation is also emphasized in this framework to test run crucial learning design with colleagues and a small group of learners before it is formally implemented. This research maintains that formative evaluation is more important than summative evaluation in an online learning context as learning design needs to constantly assess that the technology involved is appropriate, effective and reliable. Learner feedback is often sought through summative evaluation at the end of the implementation of the learning design.

Data from such reflection and evaluation leads to a comprehensive understanding of learners, technological affordances, course design and learning support design. This ensures improvement in each of these phases. The six components in the AACLOC model constantly interact with one another, forming a "fitness landscape that is constantly changing as they change" (Cleveland 1994). The framework also underscores the iterative cycle of analysis, design, evaluation and improvement,

which is particularly important to online learning. This is because online learning is still an emerging phenomenon with many uncharted territories and new possibilities.

The next section illustrates how each element of the framework has been developed and applied in the learning design of the online Chinese program offered at Griffith University. We believe that this review is a process of reflecting on our experiences and evaluating the validity of the learning design for the Chinese program. Examples from the program will be used to test the effectiveness of the proposed framework.

3 The Evaluation of the AACLOC Model Using the Online Chinese Program at Griffith University

The fully online Chinese program offered at Griffith University consists of six courses at three levels from the beginner to the advanced level. As a fully online program, students study online without physical face-to-face contact with their teachers and peers.

3.1 The Analysis of Learners

The learning design adopted in our online Chinese program started with the analysis of the learners needs. The analysis indicated that students enrolled in this program are all distance learners who live in various parts of Australia or overseas. The great majority are adult learners who choose to study through the OUA, because of the flexibility of the learning model. As there is no requirement to attend lectures or tutorials at a physical campus this suits learners who, with distance, varying time zones for interstate and overseas students and personal or work commitments, are still able to access a quality language learning program. Although most of the students are not the so called digital natives, they do possess basic digital skills such as accessing online materials using the computer. These skills are the basic requirement for enrolment in OUA courses.

As far as learner needs are concerned, the most urgent need for distance language learners identified in the literature is to interact with teachers and peers in the target language in an authentic learning context, preferably face-to-face, as their main purpose of learning a second language is to communicate with others in the target language (see Dreyer et al. 2005; Kennedy and Duff 2004; Miwa and Wang 2011; Chen and Wang 2008; Wang 2008). However, distance has prevented effective interaction from happening. This is also the key need identified in our distance teaching experiences over the years. Overcoming the lack of effective interaction through appropriate technologies is the focus of our learning design for the Chinese program. Interaction, especially oral interaction is particularly conducive to learning

Chinese as Chinese is a tonal language which requires constant speaking practice to attain correct tones and tone changes. The provision of such a practice through synchronous technology constitutes a crucial part of the learning design of the Chinese program.

3.2 The Analysis of Technological Affordances

These assessments have led to the identification of appropriate tools to meet the special needs of distance learners. Another consideration in our analysis of the technological affordances is to ensure that the tools we use are mature and reliable, and supported by the university.

The online Chinese program uses the Blackboard suite, a learning management system used at Griffith University, which integrates a range of online tools to support learning. This means that students only need to log into Blackboard once to access their course site and the various online tools needed in their learning. The online Chinese program has employed the following tools in the Blackboard environment: the synchronous online classroom called Blackboard Collaborate, the Wiki, the Journal, the online quiz and the voice board.

The Blackboard Collaborate classroom serves as the backbone tool used in this program to support synchronous interaction and collaboration. This is where we conduct synchronous online lectures and tutorials, office hours, and various assessments (See Fig. 2). All the activities in the online classroom can be recorded using its inbuilt archiving feature, either manually or automatically, and can be accessed by students after class at anytime. Multiple Blackboard classrooms can be created for different purposes. In our program, the following Blackboard Collaborate rooms

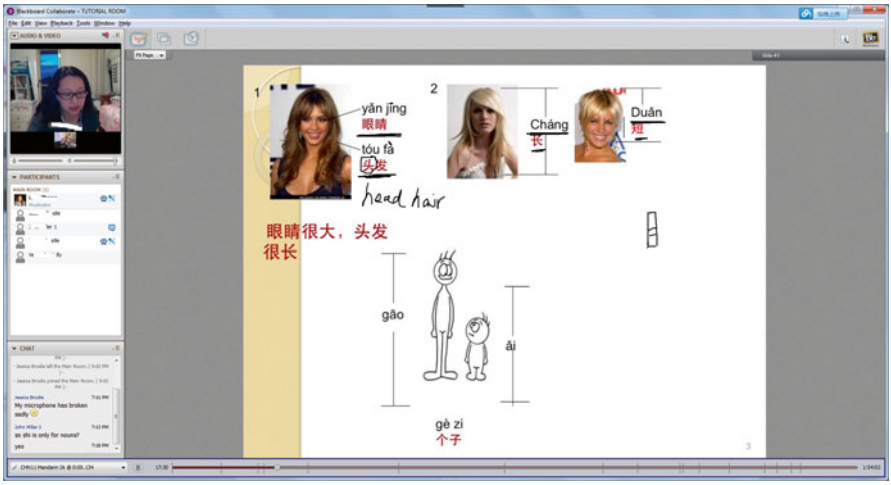

Fig. 2 Blackboard Collaborate online classroom environment

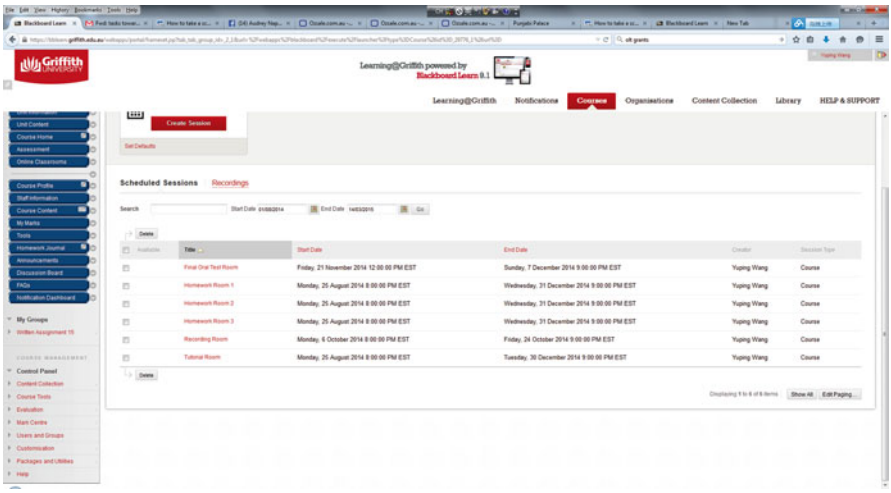

Fig. 3 Blackboard Collaborate classrooms

are set up for each course (see Fig. 3): the lecture room for content delivery, the tutorial room for task-based interaction and collaboration, the homework rooms for weekly speaking practice used by individual students and their language partners (note: the number of homework rooms created are determined by the enrolment numbers in order to avoid clashes with other users of the room), the recording room for the recording and submission of the speaking assignment, and oral and written test rooms for conducting oral and written tests in a synchronous manner. Wikis and journals are used mostly for conducting and submitting individual or collaborative writing tasks. The online quiz tool is used to create online quizzes to provide students with an opportunity to practise their reading and listening skills and for students to reflect more deeply on their learning. This is also a tool for the teacher to monitor students' comprehension of key grammatical points and acquisition of listening and reading skills. The voice board serves as a recording tool for assessing students' Chinese character recognition, pronunciation and tones. In online learning, all the learning activities need to be conducted with the support of one or more technologies, and these should be matched to the right tool to maximize the potential of both the tool and the task.

3.3 Online Course Design

3.3.1 Course Content Design and Delivery

The analysis of both our learners and technological affordances of our online environment informed our decision to focus on catering for interaction and collaboration in our course design. This decision led to the adoption of the flipped classroom

model as the main approach to our course content design and delivery. This approach is also known as reversed teaching, reversed instruction, flipped teaching, and flipped learning. In the last few years, the flipped classroom has become part of the pedagogical movement promoting a better use of classroom time for flexible, authentic and collaborative learning. Amongst its many definitions, Tucker's (2012, p. 82) definition below captures the basic tenets of this approach:

> With teacher-created videos and interactive lessons, instruction that used to occur in class is now accessed at home, in advance of class. Class becomes the place to work through problems, advance concepts, and engage in collaborative learning. Most importantly, all aspects of instruction can be rethought to best maximize the scarcest learning resource -time.

Simply, this model turns the class inside out with lecture content learnt outside the class and practice in class. Although most practice stops at flipping the class, we argue that what we do after flipping the class is more important than flipping itself. In other words, an important feature of the flipped classroom approach that has often been overlooked in its definitions is the use of student performance data to support learning. In a digital learning environment online resources, such as pre-recorded video lectures and online quizzes, form the main venue for learning. In this environment, data such as how long students spend on a particular video segment, and what questions present what challenges for which students, are all easily accessible to teachers before class. Armed with relevant data, the teacher can design customised tasks to cater for individual needs in class, resulting in more engaging and effective learning.

The flipped classroom was initially developed for K12 schools in 2007 and has now been increasingly adopted in tertiary education (The *NMC Horizon Report:*2014*Higher Education Edition*). It has proven to be effective in improving learning outcomes, as mentioned in this Report, "Today, many universities and colleges have embraced this approach, enabling students to spend valuable class-time immersed in hands-on activities that often demonstrate the real world applications of the subject they are learning" (p. 36).To date, published research on the effective application of flipped classrooms to language learning is still scarce. However, our research indicates that this approach particularly suits language learning which requires considerable external practice to gain proficiency. The pre-recorded video lectures enable students repeated exposure to authentic learning materials.

Translating the flipped classroom model into our course design, we ensure our online Chinese program features pre-recorded video lectures as the main content delivery method and online tutorials as the main venue for practising what has been learnt through video lectures.

Short video lectures of about 5–10 min duration on grammar covered in each lesson, are created and placed on the course site for students to access at anytime. Students are required to watch the video lectures before the online class to acquaint themselves with the grammar and vocabulary lesson so that they are more prepared to use this new knowledge in class guided by the teacher. These video lectures were created using the desktop personal capture tool Echo360. This tool records the teacher's voice, the PowerPoint slides and any mouse movement on the com-

puter. Quizzes relating to the specific contents of each video are also designed using an online quiz tool to check students' comprehension and acquisition. These quizzes are placed next to the videos for easy access and students are required to watch these videos and immediately complete the quizzes online before class. They can also pause the video at anytime to answer questions or complete a question in the quiz.

To further check student understanding of the video lectures and to provide students with synchronous interaction and collaboration in Chinese, we conduct online tutorials in the Blackboard Collaborate classroom once a week for each course. For the beginner's courses, we allocate 2 hours for the weekly online class as we have more students at this level, whereas for the advanced levels, we offer 1 hour weekly tutorials due to small enrolment numbers. The once-a-week tutorial schedule was determined by the distance learners' needs for both synchronous interaction and flexibility as most of them are unable to commit more synchronous online time due to other commitments. As shown in Fig. 2, the Collaborate classroom is a multimodal environment with multiple parallel communication channels operating simultaneously, that is, the video, audio, textchat and eboard. In class, instead of lecturing on grammar and new vocabulary, the teacher guides students to practise what they learnt from the video lectures before class. Usually a task-based approach is used so students can interact and collaborate with their peers synchronously in the target language. Pairs or groups are used to perform a variety of language tasks such as a role play in Chinese, questions and answers or a class debate. Our experience using this approach indicates that this interactive flexibility, together with a multimedia rich classroom effectively facilitates task-based learning.

3.3.2 Online Assessments

Online assessments are also designed to support interaction and collaboration. A more detailed discussion on the rationale and types of assessments in the online Chinese program has been reported in Wang and Chen (2013). Again, a task-based approach has been applied in the online assessment design. The assessments aim to promote both paired and group interaction and collaboration in completing written and oral assessable tasks using online tools such as Blackboard Collaborate, Journals and Wikis. Table 1 summarizes the types of assessment, the tool(s) supporting each assessment, the mode of assessment, and the major learning theories underlying each assessment.

In designing these assessments, we place greater emphasis on assessment for learning, distinguishing it from assessment *of* learning. Assessment *of* learning is generally summative in nature, focusing on the end product of learning with a judgment on the outcomes of learning (Banks 2005; McMillan 2004), whereas assessment *for* learning treats assessment as a dynamic part of the learning process and as an opportunity to promote deeper learning (Harlen 2007). Wang and Chen (2013, p. 18) contend that "assessment *for* learning can be both summative and formative" because it can and should still be designed in such a way that it promotes further and

Table 1 Online assessments in the Chinese program

Skill	Tools used	Type of assessment	Mode	Learning focus
Listening	Online quiz	Ongoing weekly listening comprehension quizzes	Asynchronous, individual	Listening comprehension, tone and tonal changes
Speaking	Collaborate classroom	Speaking assignments conducted in Collaborate classrooms;	Synchronous group or paired	Communicative skills, pronunciation, tones and tone changes
		Oral tests; and		
	voice board	Weekly homework		
Reading	Online quiz	Ongoing weekly reading comprehension quizzes	Asynchronous, individual	Content comprehension, character recognition
Writing	Wiki	Collaborative group writing assignments; and	Asynchronous group, or paired; and	Grammar, usage, character recognition, character typing skills
		Written tests	synchronous	

deeper learning by encouraging collaboration, interaction and reflection on learning, in both the process of preparation for, and conducting the assessment". In other words, the preparation for assessment process is an integral part of learning that should be included when assessing learning outcomes.

Guided by this understanding of assessment, in assessment design, we focus on helping students to adequately and appropriately prepare for assessments. Typically, our assessment description contains the following sections:

- task description;
- task objectives;
- suggested step-by-step procedure for task completion; and
- task criteria and suggestions for using the tools needed for task completion.

As an example, the assignment shown in Fig. 4 requires students to collaborate in groups of three in developing a Wiki page about learning Chinese. In addition to detailed instructions such as content requirements and suggested timeline for each stage of the assessment, care has been taken in writing step-by-step procedures for task completion, suggested collaborative strategies and a tip sheet for using the Wiki. A scaffolding of the task is supplied to guide students' collaboration at each stage. Figure 4 exemplifies a scaffolding page for this task. A general description of the writing task, and the three stages of the task are also outlined and hyperlinked to the pages for each stage. The Wiki assignment is usually designed to cover a semester's work so that students have sufficient time to learn to use the technology and collaboratively build their sites incrementally with their group.

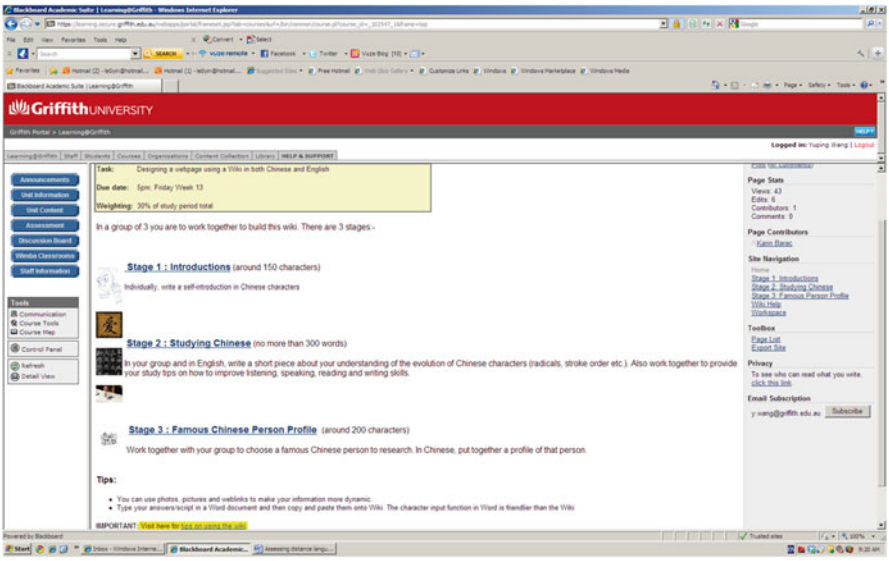

Fig. 4 The scaffolding page of a group Wiki site in CHN11

3.4 Learning Support

As discussed in section "The proposed design framework for online language learning", learning support as an essential component in the AACLOC model contains two kinds of support: academic and technical support. Academic support focuses on helping learners develop effective learning strategies for task completion, and technical support caters to the needs of learners for strategies in using specific technologies effectively and creatively in their learning. This section will discuss the learning support provided in our Chinese program.

3.4.1 Academic support

Academic support here refers to the support at both the course and task level, and is provided generally in five types; three at the course level and two at the task level (see Table 2 for a summary). At the course level, it is essential that students in a fully online learning context are guided to navigate into the course at the start of the semester. A well-designed and user friendly course website and a detailed study guide expedite this approach. To this end, a course map and a study guide are designed for each course. As shown in Fig. 5, the course map provides a bird's-eye view of the course schedule clearly mapping out the topics for each week, the availability of online tutorials and assessment schedules for the semester. The study guide is both paper-based and in electronic format, with the former posted to students before the start of semester and the latter placed on the course website.

Table 2 Summary of academic support

Kind of support	Content of support
Course map (course level)	A course schedule is placed on the course website summarizing the activities for each week and the assessment items for the whole semester.
Study Guide (course level)	Each course offers a study guide explaining course structure, content, requirements, assessments and technologies used. Generic language learning strategies and study routines are also provided.
Office hour	Office hour was offered in Blackboard Collaborate once a week for 1 h for individual consultation with the teacher.
Scaffolding of learning strategies in task description (task level)	In each task description, specific steps on how best to complete the task in collaboration with others are suggested.
Catering to individual needs (task level)	Teacher identifies learning difficulties from learners' performance data to design tailor-made tasks for completion in the online class.

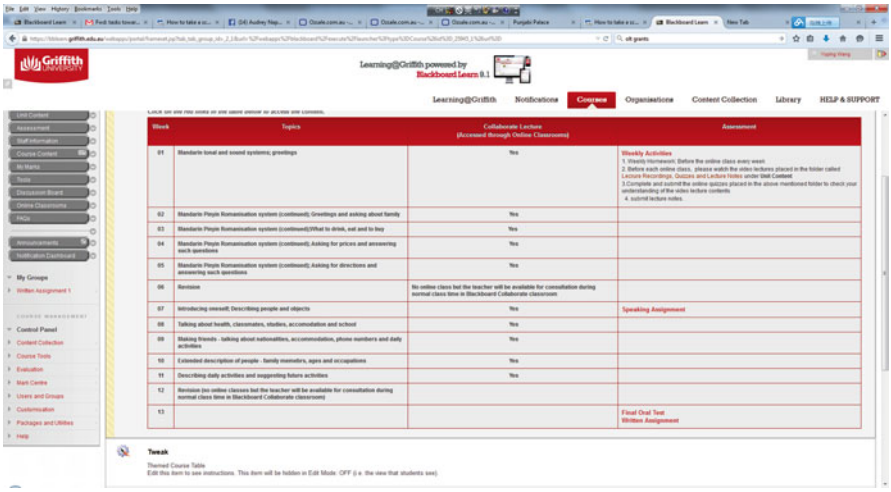

Fig. 5 The course map of CHN11

A typical study guide outlines the general course information as well as generic language learning strategies and suggested study routines. The study guide for CHN11, the first semester course in first year Chinese, is an example of this and covers the following:

- basic information on Chinese language and culture;
- teaching approaches, online class schedules, assessments and technologies used, etc;
- objectives and learning outcomes;
- language learning skills and strategies for developing the four macro skills, listening, speaking, reading and writing;

- suggested day-by-day and step-by-step study routines;
- instructions on installing and using the software/tools employed in the course, e.g., the Blackboard Collaborate; and
- contact information for support services.

The third type of academic support at the course level was offered in the form of online office hour. Once a week, the course teacher would be available for individual consultation in the online classroom. Students with questions for clarification could drop in at any time during the 1 hour consultation.

Academic support at the task level is manifested in the scaffolding of learning strategies in the task description and caters to individual learning needs identified in online data. Specific strategies for task completion regarding procedures and collaborative methods are usually suggested in the task brief. The following strategies were recommended in a task brief for managing a collaborative written assignment, relating to collaborating with others and managing timelines for each phase of the assignment:

> **Stage Three:** You may need to discuss in Collaborate or by email whom you want to write about first. Each of you will then go and do some research on the person and post your findings on your Wiki page for others to comment on. …It is suggested that you set up a deadline for the completion of each component of the Wiki page, and adhere to it. (taken from CHN11 Written Assignment Brief)

At the task level, ongoing support to students' specific academic needs, identified through student performance data, is also provided. In flipped teaching, the teacher has ready access to a range of learner-produced data on the teacher's dashboard, for example, how long and what segment of the video lecture a particular student accesses, which quiz generates the most challenges and what problems have emerged in students' submitted lecture notes. Armed with such data, the teacher is able to tailor the teaching to individual needs. Support and interventions are designed and then implemented in the online tutorials. For example, if the teacher identifies that most of the students find a particular grammatical item difficult to grasp after watching the pre-recorded lecture, more tasks relating to this item would be designed and implemented in class to assist its mastery.

3.4.2 Technical Support

In an online learning environment, technical support is crucial as some students are not technically competent or have the required digital literacy. Technical support as an individual component in the proposed framework is much more than just providing an emergency contact point that students having technical difficulties can turn to at anytime. Technical support here entails the demonstration through online tutorials on the effective and creative use of tools to best achieve learning goals. For example, how the text chat tool in the online classroom should be used in class synchronously with other tools for asking questions discreetly or for rendering translations when others are translating orally. In addition, step-by-step instructions

are also written, in study guides and task descriptions, on how to use a particular tool to achieve learning objectives. The following excerpt from the brief of a speaking assignment illustrates the instructions on how best to use the Collaborate classroom for submitting the assignment:

1. Log into L@G at least half an hour before your reserved time slot to test your video and audio in the practice or homework room and do a test run of your conversations with your partner.
2. Enter the Recording Room at the beginning of your time slot. Please be punctual as you will only have 15 min for doing the recording.
3. After entering the Recording Room, click the video icon to start the video transmission.
4. Click "Recording" on the upper left corner to record your interviews when you are ready.
5. Please say your name and student ID before starting your conversations.
6. Look into your webcam all the time when you perform the conversations.
7. If you make a mistake during your conversations, do not stop the recording but you can re-dong the sentence and keep the conversation going.
8. When you finish your conversations, please say: "this is the end of the recording".
9. Stop the recording and leave the room at least 5 min before the next time slot.

Such technical support is embedded in every task brief and fine turned for accuracy and clarity whenever needed. Learning support forms an important part of our learning design and proves to be indispensable for successful task completion.

3.5 Ongoing Evaluation

Since it was launched in 2011, the online Chinese program has been evaluated through reflection and formative evaluation by the course designer and teachers, together with summative evaluation by the students.

During course design, the designer constantly reflected on what had been designed and tested in order to determine the design for the following stage. Each task scenario is tested when designing the first online course. For example, we tested such task designs in the Collaborate classroom as group task performance using the breakout rooms, a bingo game played by two students on the whiteboard using different pen colours. This ensured that the task design matched the capability of the technology used. As we implemented each course, the course conducted in the preceding semester informed the design of the courses to follow. This was achieved through data collection from students, formal end-of-semester teaching and course evaluations together with informal feedback collected from various sources including student emails, discussion forums and online tutorials. Feedback has been very positive, as students believe the program has engaged them in effective

interaction and collaboration with their peers and teachers. Due to the length limit of this paper, and the focus of this chapter on design framework, detailed evaluation results are not provided.

3.6 Continuous Improvement

Constant reflection and formative and summative evaluation have led to some fine tuning of the task design and a major revision of content delivery. Each semester, we update task briefs with new information, more accurate instructions or readjusted assessment requirements in response to student feedback. To ensure that viewing pre-recorded lectures was more engaging and effective, we replaced the original 2 h lecture recording for each lesson with a suite of mini video recordings of about 5–10 minutes' duration. The framework of a continuous process of analysis, design, evaluation and improvement has provided effective online Chinese language learning environments.

4 Further Reflection from the Course Designer

This research has concerned itself with the effective learning design for a fully online language program offered through a university. The AACLOC design framework has been developed and applied in this formal learning context, covering: (1) the analysis of a particular student group - distance students, (2) the technological affordances of a university supported e-learning environment, (3) course design supporting interaction and collaboration, (4) learning support design, (5) ongoing evaluation, and (6) continuous improvement. This design framework has been implemented in six courses, which have been conducted for just over 2 years.

In terms of technological affordances, our decision to use certain types of technology was informed by leaner needs. At the same time, we emphasize a balance between using cutting-edge technologies and the reliability of the technologies used. In other words, we have ensured that the technologies are fully supported by the university, and that reliability is a priority, especially for tools used in supporting or enabling online assessments. Also, we ensure currency with the latest technological advances together with reliability and user-friendliness of the tools to be employed. For example, we have replaced Wimba, a previous version of the online classroom, with Blackboard Collaborate which is more user-friendly and pedagogically sound.

For course design, we have used the flipped classroom approach to promote a deeper understanding of key course content outside class and to more effectively use in-class time for more effective interaction and collaboration in the target language. The use of pre-recorded video lectures accurately addresses online and distance language students' needs for flexibility in time and place and for repeated exposure

to authentic language input. This enables students to view the video lectures anytime anywhere and as many times as they need to. However, we identified that not all students were taking advantage of the pre-recorded video lectures before class. To overcome this issue, we request students to submit lecture notes each week, before class as ongoing homework, summarizing the major contents covered in the video lectures. This submission attracts 10 % of their total semester marks and has proved to be effective in facilitating pre-class study. The flipped classroom approach also informs our learning support strategies, particularly in catering for specific learner needs, as we can access more learner-produced data before class. As a result, we constantly update both the study guides and task descriptions.

5 Concluding Statement

Informed by established models of instructional design, we propose that a learning design framework, the AACLOC model, can consider the nature and unique characteristics of technology-supported online language learning. Different from existing models of instructional design, the framework specifies the analysis of technological affordances and learning support as two integral components in online learning, bringing them to the foreground of learning design. This research promotes the idea that these two components should receive appropriate attention in online learning design as they can determine, to a large extent, the success of learning in a fully online mode. The inclusion of these two components further facilitates the learner-centred focus of the AACLOC model.

Another attribute of this model lies in its systems approach to learning design, stressing the interconnection and interaction between components in the framework. The six components are not separate entities; they constantly impact upon each other to work towards an optimal learning design for online learning. This systems approach is particularly dynamic for online learning, which continues evolving in line with technological advances. Only a systems view can capture the essence and dynamics of online learning as it evolves.

As teaching and learning a second language in a fully online mode is an evolving innovative process for us, there are many challenges facing language professionals and new possibilities continue to emerge. The evaluation of the proposed framework demonstrates its effectiveness in capturing the essential design elements in online language learning, and more importantly, in accentuating the inter-connection and interaction between these elements which constantly feed into each other to form an iterative cycle of analysis, design, evaluation and improvement. Nevertheless, the model is still generic, so it should not be considered, at this stage, complete and comprehensive. Instead, it should be used as an adaptable template for a range of online learning contexts, including Chinese language learning, and continuous improvement and adaptation is a key imperative. It is expected this research will advance our understanding of optimal learning design as a precursor for best practice in online language learning. It is an important addition to the future of innovative and flexible modes of delivery of Chinese language teaching.

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