Plurilingual Approaches in Chinese Public Secondary Schools：

EFL Teachers' Implementation and Perceptions


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**Abstract**

Plurilingual approaches strive to enhance students' language proficiency by integrating all the languages and cultures they are familiar with. Nevertheless, the empirical research identifying the potential benefits of plurilingual approaches has been largely examined in Western paradigms, suggesting a dearth of research in non-Western settings. My study underscores a notable absence of discussion on language education in China through a plurilingual stance. It investigates how 17 Chinese English-as-a-Foreign-Language teachers at public secondary schools incorporate Chinese languages and cultures in their teaching, as well as their perceptions towards these inclusions.

To address this gap, the study employed three data collection methods: online surveys with 17 participants, semi-structured interviews with 4 among the 17 participants and class observations with 2 among the 4 interviewees. The findings revealed that most teacher participants recognized that they used Mandarin and the local dialect mainly to link English and Chinese languages, consequently enhancing students' comprehension of English content. However, they maintained monolingual language teaching beliefs and expressed a preference for English-only classrooms. Additionally, they incorporated Chinese culture to engage students, nurture students' cultural awareness, and bolster their cultural identities, thereby contributing to the de-imperialization of English in China.

This study serves not only as a platform for these teachers to articulate their views on plurilingual approaches but also prompts them to reconsider their own practices. Furthermore, it contributes to the existing literatures on the implementation of plurilingual approaches within non-Western contexts. The insights gained from this study might also inform EFL professional development and curriculum in China and other non-Western countries.

*Keywords:* plurilingual approaches, languages and cultures, language education in China, English-as-a-Foreign-Language teacher

**Résumé**

Les approches plurilingues s'efforcent d'améliorer les compétences linguistiques des élèves en intégrant toutes les langues et cultures qui leur sont familières. Néanmoins, la recherche empirique identifiant les avantages potentiels des approches plurilingues a été largement examinée dans des paradigmes occidentaux, suggérant une pénurie de recherche dans des contextes non occidentaux. Mon étude souligne l'absence notable de discussion sur l'enseignement des langues en Chine dans une optique plurilingue. Elle étudie la manière dont 17 enseignants chinois d'anglais langue étrangère dans des écoles secondaires publiques intègrent les langues et les cultures chinoises dans leur enseignement, ainsi que leurs perceptions de ces intégrations.

Pour combler cette lacune, l'étude a utilisé trois méthodes de collecte de données : des enquêtes en ligne avec 17 participants, des entretiens semi-structurés avec 4 des 17 participants et des observations de classe avec 2 des 4 personnes interrogées. Les résultats ont révélé que la plupart des enseignants participants reconnaissaient qu'ils utilisaient le mandarin et le dialecte local principalement pour faire le lien entre l'anglais et le chinois, améliorant ainsi la compréhension du contenu anglais par les élèves. Toutefois, ils ont conservé leurs convictions en matière d'enseignement des langues monolingues et ont exprimé leur préférence pour les classes exclusivement anglophones. En outre, ils ont intégré la culture chinoise pour impliquer les élèves, nourrir leur conscience culturelle et renforcer leur identité culturelle, contribuant ainsi à la désimpérialisation de l'anglais en Chine.

Cette étude sert non seulement de plateforme à ces enseignants pour exprimer leur point de vue sur les approches plurilingues, mais elle les incite également à reconsidérer leurs propres pratiques. En outre, elle contribue à la littérature existante sur la mise en œuvre d'approches plurilingues dans des contextes non occidentaux. Les enseignements tirés de cette étude pourraient également

éclairer le développement professionnel et les programmes d'enseignement de l'anglais langue étrangère en Chine et dans d'autres pays non occidentaux.

*Mots clés:* approches plurilingues, langues et cultures, éducation linguistique en Chine, enseignant d'anglais comme langue étrangère

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**Chapter 1 Introduction**

**1.1. Background of this Study**

In today's multilingual world, some scholars contend that the traditional focus on monolingual teaching methods, which exclusively emphasize the target language and restrict students from using their native language in classrooms, is outdated (Cummins, 2007; García & Li, 2014). There's a need to rethink language education strategies to enhance teaching approaches and assess students' overall language ability (Rocafort, 2019; Vallejo & Dooly, 2019).

Advocates of plurilingualism within Second Language Education (SLE hereafter) posit that plurilingual approaches blur the linguistic boundaries imposed by monolingual paradigms (Cenoz & Gorter, 2013). Nevertheless, the empirical research identifying the potential benefits of plurilingual approaches has been predominantly confined to Western contexts, suggesting a dearth of research across different educational contexts (Lau & Viegen, 2020), especially non-Western contexts (Choi & Ollerhead, 2018). My study highlights this notable absence of discussion, exploring Chinese teachers' practice of incorporating Mandarin and the local dialects and Chinese cultures in English-as-a-Foreign-Language (EFL hereafter) classrooms at public secondary schools, as well as their perceptions towards these inclusions.

Beside filling the void, my personal and educational experiences also significantly influence the trajectory of my master's thesis. Prior to my move to Canada for postgraduate studies at McGill University, I had studied EFL for over 15 years in the public education system in mainland China. During this time, it was commonplace for my EFL educators, peers, and myself to utilize Mandarin and local dialects as a bridge to learn English. This method was so ingrained in my language education that when I tutored Chinese secondary students in EFL as well as taught Chinese as a second language to international students at a university in China, I naturally

employed the same strategy and were satisfied to see that my students' language skill was enhancing with the help of this strategy.

My perspective underwent a significant shift upon my move to Canada. In a French course facilitated by the Quebec government, I was introduced to a strict French-only policy. This monolingual approach, widely embraced by my classmates who did not share the same background as I do, starkly contrasted with my past experiences. My experience of learning French in Quebec, coupled with my encounter to plurilingualism and its related approaches in the Second Language Theory course at McGill University, led me to questions: Were we, in China, inadvertently employing a variant of the plurilingual approach without labeling it as such? How does the EFL pedagogy in China compare to recognized plurilingual approaches? And, crucially, if Chinese EFL instructors are on a similar path, how can we, researchers, formally introduce and adapt plurilingual approaches to the Chinese unique context? These questions drove me to delve into the literature on plurilingual practices within China's language classrooms. However, most of the research I could find centered on higher education, leaving a discernible gap at the primary and secondary levels. Therefore, my study tried to explore the parallels between established plurilingual approaches and those I've experienced in China and to understand the extent to which Chinese EFL educators have embraced plurilingual approaches and their perspectives on them.

## 1.2. Outline of the Thesis

This thesis is structured into six distinct chapters. Chapter 1 Introduction delineates both the theoretical background and personal motivations underlying this research. Following this, Chapter 2 Literature Review underscores the principal features and benefits of integrating plurilingual approaches within SLE. In alignment with the study's emphasis on EFL education within the Chinese context, this chapter also offers a concise analysis of its distinctive

characteristics. In Chapter 3 Methodology, a comprehensive overview of the research design is presented, giving a thorough description of the research gap, participant recruitment methods, data collection methods, and analysis methods. Chapter 4 Findings demonstrates the primary results of the research, while Chapter 5 Discussion critically interpret these findings in relation to the existing scholarly literature. The last chapter, Chapter 6 Conclusion, synthesizes the research, highlighting its contributions, limitations, and future orientations.

**Chapter 2 Literature Review**

This literature review is divided into two main parts. The first part provides an in-depth review of plurilingualism both as a theory and associated concepts that are currently being discussed in the field of SLE. This part commences by providing a brief background, review of linguistic and cultural homogeneity, and how such homogeneity led to monolingualism as a pedagogy in language education. Then, it highlights the academic response to the contemporary multilingual landscape, detailing the development of theoretical models like bilingualism, multilingualism, and plurilingualism that aim to capture the full spectrum of an individual's linguistic repertoire. As my study falls within the plurilingualism framework, this part of the review then summarizes and presents features of plurilingualism as a pedagogy in SLE, including involving translanguaging as an approach, introducing a pluricultural dimension, and integrating the approaches of multimodality. Subsequently, benefits of plurilingual approaches in L2 classrooms are presented, drawing upon recent practical studies. It should be noted, however, most of the practical studies that I could find were situated within Western contexts. There is a noticeable dearth of research on the application of plurilingual approaches in non-Western contexts, even though plurilingualism appears to be a norm in non-Western regions like Asia. To provide more empirical evidence of plurilingual approaches in non-Western contexts, this investigation is anchored in EFL education within mainland China.

The second part of this literature review delves into language practice and education in China, particularly EFL education. China is a plurilingual and pluricultural society where Chinese dialects, English and other foreign languages play an important role in citizens' daily communication. This section firstly highlights the common practice of translanguaging among Chinese citizens' life. Then it narrows its focus to contemporary EFL education in China and

presents three characteristics: the adoption of foreign pedagogies, the incorporation of students' L1 within the EFL classroom, and the shifting objectives of the EFL education system.

**2.1. A Review of Plurilingualism as a Theory and as a Pedagogy**

In Europe, the concept of linguistic and cultural homogeneity among a people serves as the foundation for the traditional notion of nationhood. In other words, people who live in the same state must share similar language and cultural backgrounds. The policies under the ideology of "one state, one culture, one language" (Vallejo & Dooly, 2019, p. 2) can be seen as historical tactics employed by most European nations and extended to other communities, trying to maintain solidarity within a community. Often, scholars use the term of monolingualism to refer to the national linguistic homogeneity (Gogolin, 1997; May, 2014; Fuller, 2018; Kircher & Kutlu, 2023). This monolingual ideology has an impact on countries' language education system. Educational institutions in monolingual countries overlook students' linguistic and cultural diversity because monolingualism and cultural homogeneity, they believe, are the principal norms that can unite the countries (Gogolin, 2002). Monolingualism, then, becomes the ideal way of language use and learning for individuals at school (Hoffmann, 2014; Vallejo & Dooly, 2019). Even in bilingual or multilingual countries like Canada, on the one hand, provincial governments (except Quebec) promote English monolingualism through public education. This is achieved by adopting language policies that prioritize English as the language of instruction and limit the use of French by remaining it as an accessible secondary language and supporting French immersion programs (Roy & Galiev, 2011; Sterzuk & Shin, 2021). On the other hand, Quebec government encourages French monolingualism in school, while only allowing certain exceptions for a handful of English-language public schools (Mather, 2022).

When we look into SLE, there are also monolingual approaches that prioritize utilizing solely the target language (L2 hereafter) and limit students' usage of their other languages, for example, their first language (L1 hereafter) in the classroom (Cummins, 2007; Maatouk & Payant, 2022). Given the prevalence of multilingualism in today's world, scholars argue the reliance on monolingualism is no longer be appropriate (for example, Coste & Simon, 2009; Blommaert & Rampton, 2012; García & Li, 2014; Lamb, 2015; Kalan, 2021). For example, although English and French remain to be the dominant languages in Canada, there are now 4.6 million individuals who speak at least one additional language, making up about 13% of the population of the nation (Major, 2022). With this new worldwide trend, language education should be viewed through a fresh lens to better understand how to teach a new language and assess students' overall language ability (Almoayidi, 2018; Rocafort, 2019; Vallejo & Dooly, 2019).

### 2.1.1. The Definition of Plurilingualism and Relevant Terms

As mentioned, the term monolingualism might no longer appropriately capture an individual's language ability. With the push of globalization, scholars in applied linguistics are increasingly focusing on the fluid, hybrid, and transnational linguistic/language repertoires of speakers who can speak more than one language (May, 2013). Linguistic/language repertoire, according to the Council of Europe (2001) refers to an individual's language ability linked with this individual's personal experiences in a diversity of social contexts. In addition to monolingual, there are three current notions that describe an individual's language repertoire – *bilingual, multilingual, and plurilingual*. For the purposes of clarity and the following discussion, I define these three terms, and my chosen usage of these terms in my study.

**Bilingual.** Scholars in the early twentieth century argued the maximalist view of bilingualism is that individuals could speak two languages as fluently as native speakers

(Bloomfield, 1927; Oestreicher, 1974). Some scholars believe that bilinguals might start by using one hybrid system at an early age when they learn L2 but would develop the ability to differentiate two languages gradually (Saunders, 1982; Volterra & Taeschner, 1978). They still maintain that the systems of two languages will gradually separate and become independent and mixing two languages is a deficiency (Hoffmann, 2014). Nevertheless, more recently, scholars hold an opposite argument, contending that learning L2 is a dynamic process in which L1 and L2 are interdependent and influence one another rather than being the addition of another language (Grosjean, 1982; Heller, 2007; García, 2011; García & Li, 2014; García & Otheguy, 2014). Moreover, with the multilingual turn (May, 2013) in the field of language acquisition and language education, more scholars agree with the idea that a variety of sociolinguistic elements, such as interlocutors and surroundings, have a substantial impact on language practices (Hoffmann, 2014). The idea of bilingualism has moved beyond the interactions of two languages but a way of "languaging through complex communicative interactions" (García & Li, 2014, p. 16).

**Multilingual and Plurilingual.** Recent years have seen scholars debating the similarities and divergences in the concepts of plurilingualism and multilingualism (García & Otheguy, 2014). Here, I rely on the description from the Council of Europe (2001) to explain the two terms. In this document, multilingualism is defined as the co-existence of different languages in a particular society while the term plurilingualism is used to describe individuals' language ability. Plurilingualism stresses that individuals do not keep the languages and cultures they experience in isolation, but gradually build up a communicative competence in which all the knowledge and experience of languages interrelate and interact. If a given individual is defined as plurilingual, he or she also possesses the Plurilingual and Pluricultural Competence, which refers to "the ability to

use languages for the purposes of communication and to take part in intercultural interaction… in several languages and experience of several cultures" (Coste et al., 2009, p. 11).

According to García (2011), what is common in bilingual, multilingual, and plurilingual is that these three terms suggest a plurality of languages in societies while the difference among them is that "two (bilingual) or many (plurilingual), [exist] at the individual (bilingual/plurilingual) or societal level "(multilingual)" (pp. 11-12). In this study, I mainly use the term plurilingual to refer to an individual's language ability and the term multilingual to refer to a social group's language diversity.

When it comes to an individual's language practices, there are also several terms — *code-switching, code-mixing, and translanguaging,* and each has their own supporters.

**Code-switching and Code-mixing.** These two terms are commonly used in research around the world. It is not always easy to distinguish the two terms as they both are used in bilingual contexts where speakers use a mixture of their L1 and L2 (Kim, 2006). Many scholars hold a similar view towards the difference between code-switching (CS hereafter) and code-mixing (CM hereafter) - that CS is a mixing of words, phrases, and sentences from two language systems in a speech event while CM is a mixing of lexical and grammatical elements from two languages in one sentence (Heller, 2007).

There have been two distinct views regarding CS and CM in language practice and learning. The early perception of CS as an indication of a person's imperfect language skills, still has a deep influence in language education. More recently, scholars argued that bilingual's ability to CS and CM is an effective communicative method for them to select the appropriate expression for the current situation (Heller, 2007).

**Translanguaging.** This term was coined to refer to a pedagogical approach in which students were asked to switch between languages for receptive or productive use in a bilingual program in Wales (Baker, 2011). Although the initial definition is limited to two languages, recent years have seen many academics expanding the scope of the term to include the complex linguistic behaviors of plurilingual people and multilingual groups (for example, Canagarajah, 2011; García & Li, 2014; Vogel & García, 2017; Conteh, 2018; Li, 2018; Galante, 2020) In this study, I refer to Canagarajah (2011) definition that translanguaging is the ability and practice of plurilingual speakers to "shuttle between languages, treating the diverse languages that comprise their repertoire as an integrated system" (p. 410). In addition to being viewed as a phenomenon of language, translanguaging can also be seen as a pedagogical strategy in language education (Celic & Seltzer, 2013; García & Li, 2014). According to Cenoz & Gorter (2017), while translanguaging can be a spontaneous language practice naturally occurring in different contexts (including inside the classrooms), pedagogical translanguaging is a strategy that is exclusively applicable to the classroom environment. A more extensive discourse on pedagogical translanguaging will be provided in the ensuing section.

The commonality among these concepts is that they all seek to express an understanding of individuals' language practices in multilingual societies that are far more sophisticated than that of monolingual societies (Lewis et al., 2012). In my study, the term translanguaging will be mainly used. I would, however, respect other academics' term preferences and use their preferences when referencing their work.

## 2.2. Plurilingual Approaches in L2 Classrooms

SLE scholars who support plurilingualism state that with the help of plurilingual theoretical framework, the boundaries among languages established by monolingual methods might be

softened (Coste & Simon, 2009; Cenoz & Gorter, 2013), leading teachers' and students' understanding of language learning to shift from "mastering a language" to "having a plurilingual repertoire" (Rocafort, 2019). There are two objectives of language education from a plurilingual perspective. The first one is that students could develop communicative competence in which all the languages and cultures they acquire can play a role. The second goal is that through language learning, students can respect and embrace the language and cultural diversity (Council of Europe, 2001; Rocafort, 2019). Notably, Kubota (2020) also emphasized that plurilingualism needs to find ways to closer align with critical multiculturalism, a discipline that concentrates on addressing the issues correlated with the paradigms of colonialism, imperialism, capitalism, and their corresponding language ideologies. Indeed, plurilingualism arose as a response to the limitations of language hegemony in adapting to the evolution of today's multilingual society. One of the primary objectives of adopting plurilingualism should, therefore, be the conservation of minority languages and fostering the decolonization and/or de-imperialization of the dominant language.

With these objectives, how to adopt plurilingual approaches into L2 classrooms and their benefits for SLE has become an essential theme for SLE researchers and second-language instructors. Here, I summarize three features of plurilingual approaches—regarding translanguaging as an approach, introducing a pluricultural dimension, and integrating the theory of multimodality.

### 2.2.1. Regarding Translanguaging as a Plurilingual Approach

As mentioned above, translanguaging can act as a language practice and as a pedagogical approach. As a pedagogy, translanguaging can be applied in different educational contexts (García & Li, 2014; Lewis et al., 2012). In my study, I mainly focus on pedagogical translanguaging in the L2 classroom.

How to implement translanguaging as an approach in the classroom is a major question for many instructors. Celic and Seltzer (2013) propose several pedagogical strategies to help instructors scaffold translanguaging into their teaching. The overall goal of implementing translanguaging is to build a multilingual classroom in which every student may utilize different languages to negotiate meanings and gain language skills. In addition, some researchers conduct practical research in the classroom. For example, to figure out how to embed translanguaging into the English-as-a-foreign-language classroom in a Turkey secondary school, Yuzlu & Dikilitas (2022) adopted a quasi-experimental design, providing the experimental group with a bilingual environment, by offering bilingual instructions, bilingual reading materials, translation applications, and bilingual language partners. At the same time, there were two control groups. While one group was taught with Grammar Translation Method, the other was taught with Communicative Language Teaching. The result was that students who were exposed to a translanguaging environment outperformed students from both control groups in both receptive and productive skills. While there are some examples of using translanguaging as a pedagogical approach, other publications identify additional issues that need improvement. For example, when Galante (2020) conducted an intervention to investigate the possible advantages and problems of translanguaging, she discovered that, while instructors might have good attitudes about translanguaging, they do not know how much time students should spend using translanguaging. Along with Galante, other scholars (for example, Vaish & Subhan, 2015; Rasman, 2018; Yuzlu & Dikilitas, 2022) have also stated the need of developing teachers' and pre-teachers' comprehension of translanguaging through relevant training.

Notably, under the plurilingual framework, translation can also be regarded as a translanguaging strategy which would facilitate students' L2 learning. While the traditional

definition of translation is that it enables monolingual reader to access to texts which are written in another language, the Council of Europe (2001) proposed that translation and interpretation could also provide those who are unable to interact directly with opportunities to do so. Grounded on this argument, González-Davies (2017) brought up her idea about Translation for Other Learning Contexts (TOLC) which regards adopting translation as an effective translanguaging scaffolding strategy to "acquire linguistic mediation skills and intercultural competence in fields other than Translation Studies" (p. 129). Besides designing theoretical framework, language teachers in translanguaging classrooms, according to García et al. (2019), have adopted translation exercise to help students notice the difference among languages. The authors suggest that although translation is grounded on a different epistemology, with a translanguaging stance, translation can be a tactic to encourage students to use all their linguistic resources to engage with the target language simultaneously, critically, and reflectively.

### 2.2.2. Introducing a Pluricultural Dimension

Researchers from various disciplines, including sociolinguistics, intercultural communication, anthropology, textual culture, and SLE, have underscored the importance of integrating cultures in language education (Lange & Paige, 2003). Acknowledging the interwoven relationship between languages and cultures, educators have refocused the objective of language acquisition from mere proficiency to the development of intercultural competence (Lange & Paige, 2003; Arabski & Wojtaszek, 2011). Intercultural competence, also known as cross-cultural competence, refers to attitudes, knowledge and skills that work together to assist students in communicating and interacting smoothly with others from culturally and linguistically different backgrounds (Chiu et al., 2013). Students with intercultural competence are able to "transcend ethnocentrism, appreciate other cultures, and generate appropriate behavior in one or more

different cultures" (Lange & Paige, 2003, p. 237). Building upon this understanding, the Council of Europe (2001) introduced the notion of Plurilingual and Pluricultural Competence (henceforth PPC), as delineated in Section 2.1.3. "The Definition of Plurilingualism and Relevant Terms". This concept emphasizes the confluence of language and culture as an integrated construct, rather than discrete entities. Under the PPC framework, researchers and educators have focused on integrating cultural resources into language education. A notable example is the LINguistic and Cultural DIversity REinvented (LINCDIRE) project (*LINCDIRE Project – Promoting Plurilingualism*, n.d.). With the aim to enhance students' PPC, this project involved a collaborative effort among researchers and language educators to execute action-oriented tasks based on North-American contexts (Piccardo et al., 2021). Detailed information and examples of these tasks can be accessed on the Language Integration through E-portfolio (LITE) online platform. Galante & Chen (2022) further provided an example of how Mandarin-as-a-heritage-language teachers can refer to a LITE task called *Dinner in a Chinese Restaurant in Chengdu, China*. They suggest that by implementing this task, other languages besides Mandarin and cultures in the students' repertoires can be indeed incorporated.

### *2.2.3. Integrating the Theory of Multimodality*

According to Kress (2000b, 2000a), it is important to know that in any communicative mode, language, whether written, spoken, or signed, is only partial to the meaning-making process and other modes whereby meaning is communicated through images, gestures, and speech should also be included. This realization led language education into a new aera, extending scholars thinking to the full range of language and culturally embedded semiotic resources employed by learners (Potts, 2013). In the context of multilingualism, scholars have engaged with the theory of multimodality to investigate its potential application in second language teaching and learning.

Lau et al. (2023) reported an interview study with Chinese international students in an Anglophone university in Quebec, Canada, which explored their learning strategies to support their learning of French as an additional language. They found that one of their interviewees came up with a multimodal method to comprehend and memorize new French vocabulary, linking the new vocabulary with his previous language knowledge and visual images. This interviewee considered this as useful tool and suggested teachers engage multilingual students in language comparisons and find ways to establish more meaningful semantic connections. In addition, another theoretical framework titled the PluriTAV was carried out by a group of language educators (*PluriTAV - Multilingualism and Translation*, n.d.). Guided by González-Davies's TOLC (2017) and PPC descriptor (Coste et al., 2009), these educators regarded audiovisual translation—specifically dubbing and subtitling—as mediation skills which could facilitate the acquisition of PPC in the language classroom of English, Spanish and Catalan (Baños et al., 2021). Nevertheless, while this framework appears theoretically sound, empirical research to validate its effectiveness remains absent.

Notably, while the incorporation of multimodality offers broader possibilities for conceptualizing plurilingualism and implementing plurilingual approaches, this research predominantly concentrates on the utilization of translanguaging and the integration of cultural elements.

### 2.2.4. Potential Benefits of Plurilingual Approaches

Applying plurilingual approaches in the L2 classroom does not necessitate a total rejection of earlier teaching methods but rather can offer a reconciliation (Schmid, 2022). Scholars intend to develop practical frameworks based on plurilingualism and existing teaching methods. The potential benefits they found by implementing the practical approaches were not limited to

improving students' L2 language proficiency but extended to students' language repertoire, thereby fulfilling the aforementioned objectives.

**Improve Target Language Learning.** Whether plurilingual approaches are more effective than monolingual approaches reignites the debate over whether welcoming students' L1 in the classroom would improve their L2 learning (for example, Carroll & Morales, 2016; Carstens, 2016; Li, 2018; Aoyama, 2020; Zhang, 2021). Scholars endeavored to design interventions to fight against the "target language only" argument. For example, by conducting a mixed method study with 25 ESL students in a primary school in Barcelona, Corcoll (2013) investigated whether code-switching would improve students' language acquisition. There were four groups of students in their second year, and the researcher selected one group as the experimental group whose first languages were used to introduce the English content. Conversely, the remaining three groups continued to receive instruction exclusively in English. Through language tests before and after the intervention, Corcoll discovered that although the results of including students' home languages (Catalan and/or Spanish) in the English class did not differ significantly from English-only classes. This implies that using students' home languages did not have a detrimental effect but rather a positive effect on students' language learning as the English-only instruction. Sugrañes (2021) carried out a study in a Barcelona primary school and his findings were similar to Corcoll (2013). By creating story books in English which were then translated into their own languages, students began to employ their own languages for learning English. By conducting pre-test and post-test, Sugrañes also found out that students' home languages did not hinder their academic achievement in three target languages (English, Spanish and Catalan). There are also outcomes from scholars showing that L1 users performed better than L2-only users in the receptive and productive language skills (Yuzlu & Dikilitas, 2022; Zhao & Macaro, 2016). As for the specific

impact of plurilingual approaches on students' language learning, a common finding is that teachers' L1 instructions and explanations, as well as using multilingual resources help students to comprehend complex content in L2 learning (Vaish & Subhan, 2015; Carstens, 2016; Zhao & Macaro, 2016; Gallego-Balsà & Cots, 2019).

**Embracing Plurilingual Identities and Motivate Students.** A key concept introduced by Bonny Norton is *investment*, which is defined as the "socially and historically constructed relationship of learners to the target language, and their often-ambivalent desire to learn and practice it" (Norton, 2000, p. 10). However, a learner may not be willing to be involved in linguistic practices if they feel marginalized in the classroom due to their multiple identities—race, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or sexual orientation (Darvin & Norton, 2021). Thus, it can be concluded that both students' motivation and identity recognition play important roles in students' investment in L2. There is empirical evidence that plurilingual methods foster a teaching and learning environment that supports students' plurilingual identities while also assisting students in the construction of their developing identities (for example, López-Gopar, 2009; Downing, 2012; Corcoll, 2013; Stille & Cummins, 2013; Álvarez & Pérez-Cavana, 2015; García-Mateus & Palmer, 2017; Galante, 2020; Schmid, 2022). Álvarez & Pérez-Cavana (2015) designed multilingual and multicultural task-based scenarios for higher education teachers and students. Through an online survey with 50 students and online interviews with five students, they noticed that when teachers implemented task-based language learning incorporating plurilingualism, participants became more aware of their plurilingual and multicultural identities as well as how they shape their identities in various areas of their life.

Along with students' awareness of their identities, scholars found out other aspects improved during the language learning process such as classroom atmosphere (for example,

Corcoll, 2013; Álvarez & Pérez-Cavana, 2015; García-Mateus & Palmer, 2017; Tian & Lau, 2022; Schmid, 2022) and students' growing confidence coming along in the classroom (for example, Corcoll, 2013; Vaish & Subhan, 2015; Gallego-Balsà & Cots, 2019; Piccardo et al., 2021). These aspects could all contribute to students' investment in L2 learning.

**Develop Language Awareness and Intercultural Competence.** Students' language awareness is influenced by students' ability to detect cross-cultural differences and metalinguistic awareness, and students with plurilingual awareness can notice the differences among languages and explain "why a word has a particular linguistic function in a language" (Jessner, 2008, p. 277). Lucena et al. (2008) implemented a plurilingual project to 66 Brazilian primary-school students from March to April 2006, to develop their inter-comprehension competence and language awareness. After reviewing students' evaluation forms which they filled out at the end of the intervention and researchers' field notes during the activities, researchers found that by implementing a series of activities comparing Portuguese and other languages, as well as explaining the origin of Latin languages and language families, participants were able to conclude that the Romance languages have similarities and sometimes it was hard for them to divide language ingredients into different languages (e.g., Portuguese, Italian, French, Spanish and Romanian).

What might be developed along with language awareness are students' respect for and identification of language and cultural diversity (for example, Fidler, 2006; López-Gopar, 2009; Downing, 2012; Álvarez & Pérez-Cavana, 2015; García-Mateus & Palmer, 2017; Galante, 2020), and more notably, students' intercultural competence (for example, López-Gopar, 2009; Downing, 2012; Galante, 2020; Eren, 2022). In Galante's (2020) study, she helped seven instructors implement plurilingual tasks which incorporate students' various languages into L2 classrooms to

adult students in the English for Academic Purposes in a Canadian university. Through the analysis of data collected from 28 students' demographic questionnaires, language portraits, diaries, and 21 class observations, she found that plurilingual tasks enable learners of diverse linguistic and cultural origins to acquire knowledge of each other's languages and cultural contexts. Furthermore, these tasks equip students to deal effectively with potential intercultural conflicts.

**Decolonizing and De-imperializing Hegemonic Language Ideologies.** The integration of this benefit can be regarded as a culmination of the preceding advantages, especially when it comes to teaching a dominant language such as English language as a second language. The term "linguistic imperialism" refers to the dominance and hegemony of one language at the expense of other languages, as noted by Phillipson (1992). Such linguistic dominance might result in cultural, social, economic, and political inequality within the society. Consequently, individuals proficient in the dominant language often acquire more power and prestige, while those lacking fluency face potential marginalization.

By weaving students' home languages and cultures into the language learning process, educators and students are afforded the opportunity to confront and dismantle the colonial legacies that have become entrenched in the field of language education. In this context, fostering plurilingual identities, motivating students in language learning, and developing students' language awareness and intercultural competence become integral to the decolonizing and de-imperializing process.

An illustration of this can be found in the research conducted by Piccardo et al. (2021), who studied the application of LINCDIRE's action-oriented plurilingual approach across different target-language classrooms in North American settings, where English predominates as the principal language in many regions. In these classrooms, there is a group of speakers of English,

and groups of speakers with a range of minority and immigrant languages. Through a combination of pre-surveys, post-surveys, interviews, and classroom observations, the researchers were able to discern that student participants not only exhibited increased interest and motivation in task completion but also a greater willingness to engage with different cultures. The findings of this research indicated that the plurilingual tasks had a positive impact on the self-confidence of immigrant and minority language speakers within the dominant English-language classrooms. Another example could be Cummins & Early (2011)'s introduction of the identity texts. These texts encompass various forms including, but not limited to, "written, spoken, signed, visual, musical, dramatic, or combinations in multimodal form"(Cummins & Early, 2011, p. 3). Further exploration of this pedagogical tool has been conducted through empirical studies by SLE educators (e.g. Cummins & Early, 2011; Prasad, 2014; Stille & Prasad, 2015; Galante, 2020). For example, through interviews conducted with students and teachers who presented their multimodal texts at regional conferences for ESL teachers in Ontario in 2012 and 2014, Stille & Prasad (2015) found that students were actively engaging with multimodal resources to narrate their identities, communities, and language learning experiences in English-dominant classrooms. This multimodal approach enables students to integrate new information and skills with their existing background knowledge and facilitate target-language learning. Notably, it also fosters a more equitable learning environment for students from marginalized social backgrounds in the English-dominant classrooms.

### 2.2.5. The Lack of Discussion in Non-Western Contexts

Although researchers have discovered some potential benefits of plurilingual approaches which were not only limited to improving students' L2 language proficiency but extended to students' language repertoire, this research has been restricted mainly to Western context. There

is a lack of discussion about plurilingualism and plurilingual approaches in non-Western contexts. Notably, Chen et al. (2022) presented a research synthesis of plurilingual pedagogy in L2 classrooms in global contexts, by reviewing 30 empirical studies on plurilingual approaches. Although this synthesis provided up-to-date progress as well as challenges of promoting plurilingual pedagogies across different contexts, the limitation of this synthesis is that all 30 studies reviewed are English-written articles published in English journals, and most of their practice was conducted in Europe and North America, with only two situated in South Africa, one in East Africa, and one in Asia. This also echoes with what Reagan (2005) argues— compared with data offered by the Western scholars, there are fewer publications and courses focused on the history and philosophy of indigenous educational concepts and practices in Africa and the Americas, and even fewer on educational ideologies in Asia.

However, some language scholars in the early twenty-first century found that plurilingual practices are common in linguistic diversity nations and territories such as South Asia (Canagarajah, 2009), Africa (Makoni, 2003), South America and the Polynesian Islands (Menezes de Souza, 2002). Plurilingualism, according to Bhatia & Ritchie (2006) has been naturally nourished in central Asian ecology—language groups, for example, domestic languages and foreign languages, official languages and non-official languages, are always interacting and influencing each another in many ways. Kalan (2021) further pointed out that plurilingual practices have existed across various language learning contexts. Their relative absence in Western education compared with in non-Western education can be attributed to the overarching influences of colonial and industrial educational paradigms.

To sum up, plurilingual approaches might exist across contexts without being explicitly recognized or labeled as such. To design and assess the broader application of plurilingual

approaches, it is essential for scholars and educators to closely investigate the potential and challenges associated with these approaches across contexts (Choi & Ollerhead, 2018; Lau & Viegen, 2020), especially within non-Western contexts (Canagarajah & Liyanage, 2012; Wandera & Farr, 2018; Moore et al., 2020; Rabbi & Canagarajah, 2021).

## 2.3. China as a Non-Western Context

China has long been a multilingual and multidialectal nation. Interestingly, the definitions of "language" (in Chinese, 语言) and "dialect" (in Chinese, 方言) by Chinese scholars and policymakers significantly differ from the interpretations commonly held by scholars and policymakers in many Western settings. As detailed in the report by the State Council of the PRC (1956), the Han ethnic group forms about 92% of the country's population. People in this group predominantly speaks within seven major language groups, referred to as 方言区 (directly translated as "dialect groups"): (Northern) Mandarin, Wu, Gan, Xiang, Hakka (Kejia), Yue, and Min. Within these primary groups, there are uncountable dialect varieties under each. One the other hand, the remaining 8% of the population is made up of 55 ethnic minorities who speak over 70 minority languages from five language families: Sino-Tibetan, Altaic, South Island, South Asian, and Indo-European. Although in diverse regions and among various ethnic groups in China, residents might communicate in distinct languages, these languages fall under the overarching category of Chinese languages. Moreover, all the citizens must learn the official languages Mandarin (Ministry of National Defense of the PRC, 1982). In the context of my research, participants primarily utilized Mandarin and the Sichuan dialect. I categorize and refer to these languages under the umbrella term Chinese languages and specify particular languages or dialects as needed in my thesis.

In the subsequent sections, I first outline a prominent feature of Chinese citizens' language use. Then, I delve into EFL education in China, underscoring its historical evolution and salient features.

### 2.3.1. *A Dynamic Linguistic Landscape in China*

According to Liu & Tao (2012), "China has rarely faced, as it does today, under globalization and modernization, such a multitude of problems with regard to language choice and linguistic identity" (p. 203). Numerous studies by Chinese scholars have delved into the diverse languages people use daily. These studies indicate that the linguistic repertoires of Chinese citizens are profoundly shaped by their local dialects, minority languages, Mandarin, and foreign languages.

To begin with, Chinese citizens, are already multilingual because of their knowledge of different Chinese languages (Shen & Gao, 2019; Tang & Calafato, 2022). As a result of this linguistic diversity, many Chinese people naturally engage in translanguaging in their daily lives. For example, Liu (2015) explored the motivations of two-way code-switching between the Sichuan dialect and Mandarin by examining 690 code-switching items from 62 episodes of the TV show "Where is Happiness". She discovered that people tend to code switch from Mandarin to the Sichuan dialect when they express personal feelings and emotions, liven up the atmosphere, and show agreement and identification. Furthermore, other researchers who are from Chinese ethnic minority groups conducted research based on their contexts. In Sha's master's thesis (2022), the author conducted an in-depth investigation of the various types, functions, and causes of Yi-Mandarin code-switching. As a member of the [Yi] ethnic minority, he gathered and evaluated corpora from three Yi families to whom he had access. After analyzing the data, he discovered that the Yi people occasionally mix the two languages, including lexical and grammatical aspects. He further found that this code-switching had both social functions, such as sustaining ethical ties and

coordinating the interactions of family members, and pragmatic functions, such as interpreting and stressing. Besides Mandarin, ethnic minority languages also interact with the local dialects of the surrounding areas. Min & Xiao (2023) discussed how the word order of the Hezhou local dialect has been influenced and changed by adjacent ethnic minority languages. Mandarin and most other Han dialects have the same word order, SVO, whereas Hezhou dialects use SOV, which is the same as Altaic languages. Scholars believe this is due to long-term contact between the Hezhou dialect and surrounding ethnic languages of the Altaic language family (Mo, 2017; Min & Xiao, 2023).

In addition to Chinese languages at home, under the Reform and Opening policy in the 1980s, foreign languages, especially English, flooded into China and had a great influence on Chinese people's language use. Terms like China English (Kachru, 1992), Chinglish (Hwang, 2012), and New Chinglish (W. Li, 2016) are used to describe Chinese people's language use under the influence of English. Among them, the term "New Chinglish" is raised by Li (2016) from a translanguaging perspective, describing how English has been "reconstituted, re-appropriated, re-semiotized, and re-inscribed" (p. 12) by Chinese speakers via social media. An example of how Chinese people re-appropriate English to express Chinese meaning is the sentence "You ask me, I ask who?" might seem to be meaningless to native English speakers but to Chinese people, it means "Don't ask me. I have no idea.". This English-like sentence is actually a word-for-word translation of a Chinese sentence "你[you]问[ask]我[me]，我[I]问[ask]谁[who]". There are other forms of New Chinglish but a common characteristic among varieties is that they are mainly comprehensible to native Chinese speakers. These New Chinglish practices help to break the boundaries between English and Chinese, and create a space "where new identities, new subjectivities, and new ideologies are being constituted and reconstituted" (Li, 2016, p. 20). In

addition to English, by implementing an online survey to university students, Wu (2020) pointed out that memes as well as words from Japanese and Korean constitute a part of students' online language usage.

### *2.3.2. EFL (English as a Foreign Language) Education in China*

So far, EFL education has been of great importance to the national school system. In the following paragraphs, I would elaborate the historical overview and three features of EFL education— borrowed teaching approaches from the West, L1 use in the EFL classroom, and the shifting objectives of EFL education.

**Historical Overview.** Since the early 17th century, there has been extensive cultural and linguistic interaction with English in China (Bolton, 2006). The beginning of EFL as a significant subject in China's public education can date back to 1964 when the Ministry of Education designated English as "the first foreign language" (Chang, 2006). The Chinese government then began a national modernization effort after the Cultural Revolution in the 1970s, and EFL education flourished at the ideal time to absorb scientific and technological knowledge from English-speaking nations (Hu, 2005). EFL has been an obligatory course for all undergraduate students in China since the early 1980s (Ruan & Jacob, 2009). It has also been a compulsory subject in primary and secondary education since the beginning of the twenty-first century (Wang & Gao, 2008). While English education began to play an important role in the Chinese national education system, questions emerged about how to adapt English teaching within the Chinese context.

**Borrowed Teaching Approaches from the West.** Since the mid-to-late 19th century, language researchers and teachers in China have begun to introduce and borrow Western English teaching methods in line with the Western learning trends. Chinese scholars try to localize teaching

and learning theories from other countries and reconstruct them (Zhang, 1999). Teaching methods like The Grammar Translation Method (GTM), Direct Method, Audiolingual Approaches, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), and Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) have been appearing at various stages and levels of English teaching in China (Li, 2016).

Since the 1980s, an increasing amount of cross-border trade and tourism has necessitated an abundant need for English interpreters and translators (Bolton & Graddol, 2012). GTM was adopted in China at that time for the purpose of obtaining English information rather than communication, and the EFL tests in China also result in assessing students' grammatical translation performance (Ng & Tang, 1997). However, in recent decades, particularly since China's entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001, there is a growing tendency for EFL education to focus more on pragmatic societal demands (Wang & Gao, 2008). Some Chinese scholars and teachers attempted to introduce approaches like CLT (Yang, 2021; Zhou et al., 2021) and TBLL (Chen & Moses, 2011; Liu et al., 2021) which incorporate more sociocultural concepts.

Notably, although EFL scholars and teachers in China have introduced and reformed various foreign methods, there is still a long way to go for the successful localization of foreign pedagogy in China (Chen, 2015). Li & Jin (2012) also pointed out that to find a reasonable way to localize and adapt foreign pedagogical ideas, Chinese scholars and teachers should consider the integration of tradition and modernity, the differences and similarities between West and local contexts, as well as keeping up with the global context.

**L1 use in EFL classrooms.** In addition to people's daily translanguaging practices, teachers, and students in the language classroom frequently utilize Mandarin or their Chinese dialect to assist their study of English. Scholars in China conducted extensive research on the use of L1 in EFL classes, and they noticed that both EFL teachers and students believed that using

their native language was of great help to English learning, and that appropriate use of L1 can help students understand and memorize vocabulary and grammar to a certain extent, as well as promote communication between students and EFL teachers (Yang, 2002; Chen, 2004). When it comes to the reason for using L1, by interviewing secondary-school EFL teachers, Zhang (2016) found out it helped them to analyze and explain sentences more accurately, as well as allowing them to provide feedback to students with the languages they comprehend.

Additionally, some scholars also carried out studies from a plurilingual view with participants at higher education level (for example, Fang & Liu, 2020; Liu et al., 2020; Sun & Lan, 2021; Jiang et al., 2022; Liu & Fang, 2022). Jiang et al., (2022) conducted a study looking into how university Chinese students perceived translanguaging in EFL classes. Through a survey distributed to 292 students from a single university, the study investigated how participants' attitudes toward classroom translanguaging varied according to their L2 proficiency, how their attitudes then impacted on their translanguaging practice, and their teachers' translanguaging practice. They discovered that while participants in two distinct programs (non-English majors and English majors) had varied attitudes toward student translanguaging, over time, they gradually developed a positive attitude towards it. According to Jiang et al., (2022), their findings "reflected the students' belief that translanguaging is conducive to boosting communication efficiency, scaffolding less proficient students, relieving anxiety and increasing participation" (p. 383).

**The Shifting Objectives of the EFL Education.** As mentioned above, EFL education has increasingly focused on meeting practical societal demands, relatively, the goal of EFL education is gradually shifting from assessing students' grammatical and vocabulary performance to communicating effectively. It is hard to find when the reform of curricula began but at secondary school level, the latest edition of EFL Curriculum Standard for Compulsory Education and High

School English Curriculum Standards came out in 2022 and 2020 (Ministry of Education of the PRC, 2020, 2022). These new curricula, while continuing to draw on foreign theories and make some adjustments to meet the Chinese context, both raise four key competencies for students which mainly include language proficiency, cultural awareness, critical thinking ability and interdisciplinary learning skills. Language proficiency, according to the two curricula, refers to the ability to understand and express meaning in social contexts by listening, speaking, reading, viewing, and writing. The improvement of English language proficiency should also result in the enhancement of the rest key competencies, which helps students to develop global perspectives as well as ways of thinking and communicating across cultures.

It seems that curricular innovation is a good start to improving EFL education. However, in CKNI, one of China's largest databases, most discussions about curricular innovation remain conceptual or theoretical. They rarely focus on actual classroom practices, as noted by researchers like Shao (2020), Zhang (2020), Chen (2022), and Wei et al. (2022). Therefore, some academics have suggested that in the field of EFL research in China, policy interpretation has received greater focus than the implementation of such policy. In other words, "both curriculum developers and scholars have too often focused their attention and energy on the 'what' of desired curriculum innovation and neglected the 'how'" (Wang, 2018, p. II).

## 2.4. Summary

The first part of this literature traces the root of linguistic hegemony and highlights the contemporary emphasis on multilingualism and plurilingualism in language education. Monolingual ideology has an impact not only on citizen's language usage but also on countries' language education system. Many academics argue that the traditional reliance on monolingualism may not resonate with today's multilingual realities. Consequently, there is a call to reassess

language education strategies to effectively impart new languages and holistically evaluate language repertoire. Advocates for plurilingualism in SLE state that with the help of plurilingual approaches, language teachers' and students' understanding of language learning might be reshaped relatively, shifting from "mastering a language" to "having a plurilingual repertoire". Empirical studies about plurilingual approaches are exploring how to integrate students' other languages, cultures, and multimodal resources into SLE and most of their findings show positive results. However, there is a research deficit in that most empirical studies were conducted in Western contexts; therefore, further study conducted in non-Western contexts is necessary.

The second part of this literature review introduces the specific non-Western context of this study: the landscape of mainland China. China is a multilingual non-Western country where the use of different languages in daily life is common among Chinese citizens. Along with local dialects and minority languages, the influence of English has grown significantly after the Reform and Opening policy, and EFL education places a high value on the country's educational system.

EFL education in China has a long history, and current EFL education has three features— borrowed foreign teaching approaches, L1 use in the EFL classroom, and the shifting of objectives in EFL curricula. To begin with, traditional approaches like the Grammar Translation Method have been prevalent, but there is a growing emphasis on CLT and TBLT. Furthermore, Chinese language use in the EFL classroom is employed commonly by teachers and students at present. Scholars have explored the benefits of using L1 in facilitating understanding, vocabulary acquisition, and communication. Finally, recent reforms in the EFL education system at the secondary school level aim to shift the focus from grammar and vocabulary to developing key competencies such as language proficiency, cultural awareness, critical thinking, and

interdisciplinary learning skills. However, there is a need for further research and observation of actual classroom practices to effectively implement these curriculum changes.

**Chapter 3 Methodology**

Upon examining the contemporary landscape of EFL education in mainland China, I perceived potential alignments with plurilingual approaches, particularly given the observed translanguaging practices in L2 classrooms and the convergence of plurilingual approaches' emphasis with the new objectives designed in the reformed curriculum. Under such circumstances, the objective of this study is to explore how plurilingual approaches applied in China might offer insights for similar implementations in Western contexts.

Chapter 3 Methodology describes the procedures and methods employed in my study. This chapter gives a thorough description of the research gap and how the study was designed to address this gap, including the general research design, the process for recruiting participants, the data collection methods, and the data analysis methods. I endeavour to paint a clear picture of the research procedures in the hopes that it will help other researchers evaluate the study's reliability, replicate the findings, and build on them in future studies.

## 3.1. Research Gap

As mentioned in this literature review, although there are a few scholars analyzing teachers' and students' language practice from a plurilingual lens in China, all these references target students and teachers in higher education. Therefore, there is a lack of discussion on the language education in the context of China through the lens of plurilingualism, particularly at the secondary school level. My research serves to fill the void by providing valuable insights into how Chinese EFL teachers at secondary school implement and perceive the inclusion of Chinese languages and Chinese cultures which are shared by their students in their classrooms. Notably, while this study primarily explores the practices and perceptions related to these two aspects, it also recognizes that it does not fully cover the entire scope of plurilingualism.

**3.2. Research Questions**

This study was conducted in a secondary school in mainland China and investigated Chinese EFL teachers' practice and attitudes towards including Chinese languages and Chinese cultures in the classroom from a plurilingual perspective. My research questions are as follows:

RQ1. To what extent do EFL teachers in public secondary schools in China include all Chinese languages shared with the students in the EFL class?

RQ2. To what extent do EFL teachers in public secondary schools in China allow students to use their Chinese languages in the EFL class?

RQ3. To what extent do EFL teachers in public secondary schools in China include their students' Chinese cultures in the EFL class?

RQ4. How do EFL teachers in public secondary schools in China perceive the inclusion of Chinese languages and Chinese cultures?

**3.3. Research Design**

This study falls under a mixed methods design which, according to Creswell (2005), is a procedure "for collecting, analyzing, and 'mixing' both quantitative and qualitative data in a study" (p. 510). I used three methods to collect data: an online survey, semi-structured interviews, and class observations, all of which are described below.

***3.3.1. A Mixed Methods Paradigm***

**Surveys and Semi-Structured Interviews.** Surveys and interviews often work together in mixed method research. While surveys can reveal trends among sizable groups, Harris & Brown (2010) contend that qualitative interview data can produce more in-depth understandings of participants' views, thoughts, and behaviors regarding a particular subject. More specifically, data from surveys are frequently quantitative because respondents reply to questions by selecting one

or more options predetermined by the researcher. Participants in semi-structured interviews on the other hand, are given a list of open-ended questions and are encouraged to react based on their personal experiences. The outcomes, which are qualitative, may vary amongst participants (Fylan, 2005; Harris & Brown, 2010).

In this study, I designed an online survey to find out how frequently and how the Chinese EFL teachers perceive referring to Chinese languages and the Chinese culture in the classroom. Then, I conducted semi-structured interviews with participants to delve into more detailed information about practice in actual classes.

**Class Observations.** Setting the focus of the study is an essential preparatory step that precedes any class observation. This focus often dictates the observational approach, given that method can differ based on the specific objectives of the research (Wragg, 2011). Class observation was conducted at the end of my data collection method, which centered on capturing teachers' in-class behavior, particularly their use of verbal language. To maintain consistency in the study, the instructors observed were the same ones who had participated in the interviews. Thus, the data gathered in the class observations not only supplemented the narrative from the interviews but also provided an opportunity to cross-examine the responses. Such a method approach enabled me to discern nuances and any discrepancies that might have been inadvertently overlooked or glossed over during the interviews. A detailed description of how I adopted three methods is provided in the "Data Collection" section below.

### 3.3.2. School Context and Participant Recruitment

This study focuses on EFL education at the secondary school level in Mainland China. Secondary education in China is categorized into junior high school, covering grades 7 to 9, and high school, covering grades 10 to 12. Junior high serves as the concluding phase of China's

compulsory education, while high school aims at enhancing the nation's overall educational quality (Ministry of Education of the PRC, 2020).

Located in the southwestern China, the public secondary school that I refer to under the pseudonym "Rock School" is recognized by the Chinese government as a model institution within the province, signifying its superior education in comparisons to many other secondary schools. The school houses approximately 50 educators and serves around 2,500 Chinese students, offering both junior high and high school curricula. Students completing the junior high program are required to undertake an entrance examination for high school admission while most of the high school students sit for the Gaokao, the national college entrance examination, to gain admission into domestic universities. Additionally, an exception is made for roughly 100 students who aim to pursue higher education abroad.

Considering participant recruitment for this study, I initially recruited four principal participants from the Rock School. After receiving ethical approval from McGill University's Research Ethics Board and obtaining verbal consent from the target school, I approached the school in late November 2022 and obtained contact information for a few EFL teachers. It is pertinent to highlight that email communication is not prevalent in China; instead, the school administrator provided me with teachers' WeChat accounts. Upon reaching out to those EFL teachers and presenting them with the recruitment letter (found in the Appendix A), four agreed to partake in both the survey and interview. Of these, two also allowed me to undertake classroom observations. A profile of these four main participants is delineated below in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*Profile of Four Participants and Their Participation*

| Pseudonym | Teaching Grade | Years of Teaching | Preferred Pronouns | Willing to Participant in |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Huang | Grade 8 | More than 10 years | She/Her | Survey and interview |
| Lei | Grade 10 | 2 years | He/Him | Survey and interview |
| Shi | Grade 11 | About 10 years | She/Her | Survey, interview, and class observation |
| Zhong | Grade 12 | More than 10 years | He/Him | Survey, interview, and class observation |

*Note.* Four teacher participants and their students shared the same local dialects.

In addition to the four principal participants, other survey participants were recruited via snowball sampling and convenience sampling. According to Creswell (2005), snowball sampling involves current participants suggesting potential ones, whereas convenience sampling involves researchers enlisting readily available and willing participants. After getting consent from four principal participants, I asked them if they could refer additional EFL teachers. I reached out to these referred educators via WeChat and invited them to participate by completing the survey. This process resulted in the inclusion of six additional Chinese EFL teachers, who were affiliated not just with the target school but other institutions in China as well. Furthermore, I disseminated a recruitment letter on Chinese digital platforms—Weibo and WeChat Moments—resulting in nine more Chinese EFL educators expressing their interest in participating in the survey. Table 2 presents a summary of participant number for each method used.

**Table 2**

*The Number of Participants for Each Method*

| Methods | The Number of Participants |
|---|---|
| Survey | 17 |
| Interview | 4 |
| Class Observation | 2 |

*Note.* Although the original number of participants who completed the survey was 19, there were two participants who did not answer any questions. Thus, their participation is not included in following data presentation and analysis.

Notably, all the teacher participants teach EFL in a relatively homogeneous environment, instructing English to students who are Chinese citizens and primarily speak Mandarin or a local dialect as their first language.

### 3.3.3. Data Collection

The data was collected with the three methods from mid-November 2022 to early March 2023. The majority of participants completed the online survey in November and December. However, owing to the severe COVID-19 pandemic in mainland China from December to January, coupled with Chinese New Year vacation from mid-January to early February, interviews and class observations were strategically deferred to span from February until early March.

**Survey.** Upon expressing their willingness to participate via WeChat, teacher participants were provided with a survey link that firstly directed them to a consent form. Following a thorough review of this form, by selecting 'YES' on the final page, participants transitioned directly to the online survey. Titled as "What do Chinese EFL teachers think about using other languages in the EFL class", this English survey, developed through LimeSurvey, featured 15 questions divided into two distinct sections (Appendix B). Given that many educators in mainland China may not be intimately acquainted with the terms 'plurilingualism' and 'plurilingual approaches', clear

definitions of these concepts were presented on the survey's introductory page, phrased in an accessible manner. Additionally, concrete examples illustrating the use of Chinese languages in classroom settings were embedded within the survey for further clarity.

The first set of questions inquired about participants' use of Chinese languages and Chinese cultures in the EFL class. I presented participants with a series of yes-or-no questions regarding their involvement in the three practices listed below.

Practice 1: Teaching English with the help of Chinese languages.

Practice 2: Allowing students to use Chinese languages.

Practice 3: Comparing Western and Chinese cultures in the classroom.

If participants affirmed a particular practice (responded "yes"), they were then guided to a follow-up question addressing the frequency with which they employed this practice to improve students' competencies in reading, speaking, listening, and writing. In contrast, if participants negated the practice (answered "no") or abstained from answering, they transitioned directly to the subsequent yes-or-no question.

The second set of questions mainly inquired about participants' perceptions towards using Chinese languages in the EFL classroom, utilizing a 5-point Likert Scale. A Likert scale provides respondents with a range of options to articulate their opinions, attitudes, or emotions to a specific statement or topic (Joshi et al., 2015). This means facilitates the conversion of qualitative opinions into quantitative data. In this study, participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement towards eight statements, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The first two statements centered on participants' views regarding the prevalence of the inclusion of Chinese languages in EFL classrooms, while subsequent statements delved into the potential advantages of such pedagogical approaches.

Notably, all the questions in the survey were optional. Participants retained the right to abstain from responding to any items they found ambiguous or with which they were not at ease.

**Semi-Structured Interviews.** To obtain more detailed information about instructors' practice and perspectives on language and cultural integration in the EFL classroom, I conducted one-on-one semi-structured interviews with four principal participants at their convenience. Prior the interview, I prepared predefined open-ended questions (Appendix C), allowing them time for preparation. Additionally, we established a mutual understanding regarding the language medium for the interview. During the interview, while I navigated through the pre-set questions, participants spontaneously broached additional pertinent topics and recalled related experiences. Although the target duration for each interview was between 30 minutes to an hour, they varied in actual, ranging approximately from 20 minutes to an hour.

**Table 3**

*Summary of Participants' Language Usage and Recording Details*

| Pseudonym | Language use | Location | Record Methods | Duration |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Huang | Sichuan Dialect | Zoom | Video-recorded | Approximately 60 minutes |
| Lei | Mandarin | Zoom | Video-recorded | Approximately 20 minutes |
| Shi | Sichuan Dialect | In campus | Audio-recorded | Approximately 20 minutes |
| Zhong | Sichuan Dialect | In campus | Audio-recorded | Approximately 30 minutes |

**Class Observations.** To complement the semi-structured interviews, I had the opportunity to observe one 40-minute class taught by Shi and two classes taught by Zhong that totaled 80 minutes (cumulatively 120 minutes). My initial plan was to attend three classes from each four principal participants. However, due to the pandemic interruption in mainland China and my

departure time in early March, I was not able to collect this full amount of data from all four participants.

During the class, I sat at the end of the classroom without any recording devices, taking notes about their behaviors and took photos from time to time. During the observation, I mainly pinpointed the moment that my participants use Mandarin and the local dialect by taking notes about the exact sentences or words uttered, along with the contexts. Below is an example (Figure 1).

**Figure 1**

*Example of the Class Observation Field Notes*
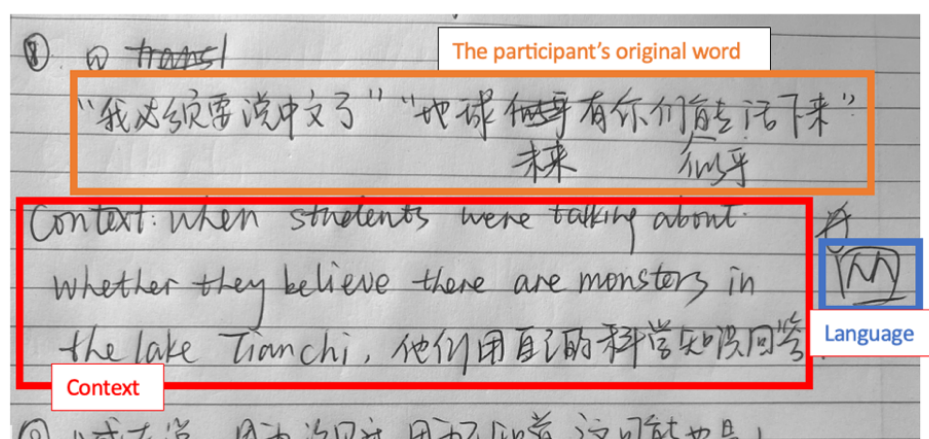


*Note.* I wrote Shi's original words as soon as I heard it. Then, I documented the associated contexts. Given the time constraints, I employed a combination of English and Chinese characters for these context records. Additionally, I annotated whether Shi was speaking Mandarin or the Sichuan dialect. As you can see, a "M" positioned to the right of the image indicated Shi's usage of Mandarin.

Following the class observations, I synthesized my notes and organized the data within a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. This allowed for systematic categorization of the participants'

utterances and their respective contexts. Presented below is a representative sampling detailing my collection for Shi's utterance (Figure 2).

**Figure 2**

*Snapshot of Excel Spreadsheet Capturing Shi's Statements and Associated Contexts*

| original word | Contexts |
|---|---|
| seemingly black 什么意思 | introducing "seemingly" |
| how to say "隔绝的" in English? It's isolated. 还有什么可以表示隔绝的? | introducing "isolated" |
| seems to be 是什么意思? Possibly, 这也是推断题的证据链哈 | introducing "seems to be" |
| disctant cousin, what does it mean? 远亲 | introducing "distant cousin" |
| 我必须要说中文了，地球未来有你们似乎能活下去 | after students' providing answers |
| 或者怎么说，因为没见多，因为不知道。这可能也是人类的渺小吧 | after students' providing answers |
| 濒危的，有哪些表达? | introducing "extinct" |
| 博眼球的，用英文怎么说 | introducing "stunt" |
| 越神秘才越有搞头 | after introducing stunts |
| 今天的作业。．．．． | talking about homework |

### *3.3.4. Data analysis*

**Survey Data.** As noted previously, LimeSurvey was employed to gather survey data. It provides a capability to produce descriptive statistics, aligning with the requirements of my analytical approach. Initially, all the submitted responses were exported, presented in a document where LimeSurvey systematically arranged individual bar charts and bar charts to delineate the outcomes for each question. Examples of the bar chart and the table can be found below.

**Figure 3**

*Results for Question A1 in LimeSurvey*
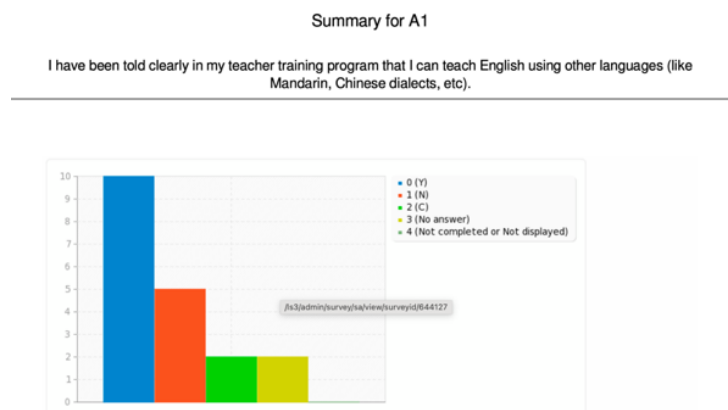
**Table 4**

*Results for Question A1 in the LimeSurvey*

Summary for A1

I have been told clearly in my teacher training program that I can teach English using other languages (like Mandarin, Chinese dialects, etc).

| Answer | Count | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Yes (Y) | 10 | 52.63% |
| No (N) | 5 | 26.32% |
| I can not remember. (C) | 2 | 10.53% |
| No answer | 2 | 10.53% |
| Not completed or Not displayed | 0 | 0.00% |

Upon reviewing the tables and charts, I found that, out of 19 participants, two of them had submitted their answers without providing any substantive answers. To address this discrepancy, I revisited LimeSurvey, omitted the contributions of these two respondents, and undertook a subsequent data export. To further analyze my data, I first thoroughly read through the results and identified the answers chosen by the largest proportion of participants in each question. In terms of data from the first set of questions, besides finding the largest proportion in each table, I compiled the percentages for all the yes-or-no questions into one table, and the statistics for the follow-up questions into another. This step allowed me to capture the variation in participant number across the three practices in the first set of questions.

Regarding the data for the second set of questions, during the initial review, I noticed that participants' answer towards most of the statements were distributed across on five levels of agreements. For enhanced clarity in comparative analysis, I combined the number of participants who "strongly disagree" with those who "disagree", and similarly, those who "agree" were combined with those who "strongly agree". This process rendered a more lucid differentiation among respondents who held negative, neutral, and positive stances on the provided statements.

**Interview Data.** All the interviews were recorded and then transcribed. Since all four participants chose to have the interviews conducted in Mandarin or the Sichuan dialect, I

transcribed all our conversations into Chinese texts manually and then translated them into English. Following this process, all transcribed conversation were imported into the computer software NVivo for qualitative coding. I adopted thematic analysis approach which aims to discover and interpret meaningful patterns, often referred to as "themes", as the data analysis approach (Clarke & Braun, 2017). I started with Structural Coding in three rounds and then conducted In-Vivo Coding.

*Structural Coding.* Structural Coding was adopted, for it is particularly appropriate for researchers to label data appearing to be relevant to a particular topic from a larger data set (Namey et al., 2008). Table 5 below delineates the process I undertook for Structural Coding. A comprehensive explanation of each step can be found following the table.

**Table 5**

*Three-Round Structural Coding Process*

| Step 1: Setting Parent Codes | Step 2: Setting Child Codes | Step 3: Setting Sub-codes under each Child Code |
|---|---|---|
| Parent Code 1: Teachers' Practice | Refer to other languages | Frequency |
| | | Examples |
| | Allow students to refer to other languages | Frequency |
| | | Examples |
| | Refer to Chinese cultures | Frequency |
| | | Examples |
| Parent Code 2: Teachers' Perception | Towards teachers' use of Chinese languages | Positive |
| | | Negative |
| | Towards the use of Chinese culture | Positive |
| | | Negative |

Before coding, researchers must acknowledge their views, biases, beliefs, or lens that may influence their analysis during the coding, ensuring that readers are informed of these considerations (Adu, 2019). My intention of this study is to investigate Chinese EFL teachers' views and their practice to plurilingual approaches, which I hope to present to scholars worldwide,

thus, leading to more discussion and research. Consequently, in the preliminary phase of my coding, I categorized participants' responses into two primary Parent Codes: one focused on their practices and the other on their perceptions. Then, I read through the transcript, allocating relevant segments to the appropriate Parent Code. This stratified step facilitated in-depth analysis within texts in each Parent Code.

Then, as my interview questions explored details into teachers' use of Chinese languages, their allowance for students to use these languages, and their use of Chinese culture, I organized content from the Parent Code 1 into 3 Child Codes. These codes concisely encapsulated the core themes of my research questions. A parallel classification was undertaken for Parent Code 2, wherein content was categorized based on teachers' perceptions towards the employment of Chinese languages and the integration of Chinese cultural elements.

Upon a more thorough review of excerpts within three Child Codes in Parent Code 1, I found that interviewees not only provided details regarding the frequency of their practice to other languages and cultures but also offered illustrative examples. Furthermore, when reviewing teachers' perceptions (as captured in Parent Code 2), a clear divergence of positive and negative perspectives emerged. Thus, a third round of Structural Coding was executed. In this round, discussions on frequency and practical examples were further divided into two sub-codes under each Child Code linked to Parent Code 1. Simultaneously, content about participants' opposing stances—both positive and negative—on the integration of Chinese languages and cultures was segregated into two distinct sub-codes under the Child Codes affiliated with Parent Code 2.

*In-Vivo Coding.* To allow for further in-depth coding, I used In-Vivo Coding, enabling thematic categorization by directly annotating terms or phrases derived from the participants' own words. This is particularly useful in presenting voices from marginalized groups because coding

their words might improve and deepen researchers' and readers' understanding of participants' cultures and worldviews (Saldaña, 2021). I derived all the code names from the actual words used by the participants. By identifying repeated and varied viewpoints from the four interviewees, I was able to present all of their similar and different opinions in the next chapter.

**Class-observation Data.** The data obtained from classroom observations, as previously noted, offered complementary insights to Research Question 1 (RQ1) — specifically, how teachers incorporated Chinese languages in the EFL classroom. I used Descriptive Coding which summarizes and labels the data into short phrases or nouns (Saldaña, 2021). My objective was to ascertain the specific contexts in which participants switch to Chinese languages. Thus, I read through my data, and created codes to summarize all the circumstances (Table 6). Given the manageable volume of the data, I opted for manual coding within Microsoft Excel. Then, I collated similar codes together and created a table to present instances that Chinese languages were used under different circumstances in two interviewees' classes. Upon juxtaposing the scenarios described by the two interviewees with those observed during their classroom, I identified both congruencies and discrepancies, which would be elaborated in the next chapter.

**Figure 4**

*Summary Snapshot: Contexts, Original Phrases, and Codes from Shi's Data*

| | A | B | C |
|---|---|---|---|
| | original word | Contexts | Code |
| 1 | seemingly black 什么意思 | introducing "seemingly" | introducing |
| 2 | how to say "隔绝的" in English？It's isolated. 还有什么可以表示隔绝的？ | introducing "isolated" | introducing |
| 3 | seems to be 是什么意思？Possibly，这也是推断题的证据链哈 | introducing "seems to be" | introducing |
| 4 | disctant cousin, what does it mean? 远亲 | introducing "distant cousin" | introducing |
| 5 | 我必须要说中文了，地球未来有你们似乎能活下去 | after students' providing answers | commenting |
| 6 | 或者怎么说，因为没见多，因为不知道。这可能也是人类的渺小吧 | after students' providing answers | commenting |
| 7 | 濒危的，有哪些表达？ | introducing "extinct" | introducing |
| 8 | 博眼球的，用英文怎么说 | introducing "stunt" | introducing |
| 9 | 越神秘才越有搞头 | after introducing stunts | Joking |
| 10 | 今天的作业。。。。。 | talking about homework | irrelevant topic |
| 11 | | | |

## 3.4. Summary

Chapter 3 describes the methodology employed in the study. The chapter begins with an overview of the research gap. It highlights there is little research about language education in China from the perspective of plurilingualism, especially at the secondary school level.

To address the research question, a mixed methods approach was adopted. An online survey served as the primary tool to quantitatively capture the experiences and viewpoints of 17 participants. An online survey was employed to gather participants' experiences and views quantitively with a sample size of 17 participants. Then, I conducted in-depth one-on-one interviews with four participants to gain more comprehensive understanding of participants' perspectives and experiences. Additionally, class observations were carried out to observe two interviewees' behavior in the classroom.

In terms of data analysis, descriptive statistics were used to analyze the survey data, while the interview data was transcribed and analyzed using NVivo software through Structural Coding and In-Vivo Coding. Furthermore, the data obtained from the class observations was analyzed manually in Microsoft Excel, using Descriptive Coding.

While this chapter offers readers a clear roadmap of the research process, the next chapter demonstrates the outcomes derived from the methods employed.

**Chapter 4 Results**

Chapter 3 highlights the research gap, which is the need to explore plurilingual approaches in the context of EFL education at secondary school level in mainland China. It presents the research questions that guided the study, which revolve around EFL teachers' practice of the inclusion of Chinese languages (RQ1), EFL teachers' allowance of students' inclusion of Chinese languages (RQ2), EFL teachers' practice of including Chinese culture (RQ3), as well as their perceptions regarding these inclusions (RQ4). Data was collected using a mixed methods design. An online survey (n=17) was used to gather quantitative data about the frequency and extent of language and culture inclusion, while interviews (n=4) provided in-depth more qualitative insights into teachers' practices and perspectives. Additionally, class observations were conducted to observe two interviewees' use of other languages in the actual classroom.

Given the foundational emphasis of my research on displaying participants' practices and perspectives concerning language and cultural integration in EFL classrooms, in this chapter, the findings are not delineated discretely for each method. Instead, in alignment with this objective, they are cohesively integrated: data from both the survey and interviews relating to participants' practices are presented in one section 4.1 to address RQ1, RQ2 and RQ3, while those relating to their perspectives are exhibited in a distinct section 4.2 to address RQ4. Notably, the data gathered in class observations serves as complementary evidence to present teachers' actual use of Chinese languages in classrooms and is presented along with the interview data regarding teachers' practices in incorporating Chinese languages (RQ1).

**4.1. Participants' Practice of Including Chinese Languages and Chinese Culture in EFL Classrooms**

In this section, I showcase data sourced from the first set of survey questions, interviews, and classroom observation, which capture teachers' practice of using Chinese languages and Chinese culture in the classroom.

*4.1.1. Participants' Practice of Including Chinese Languages in the EFL Classroom (RQ1)*

**Survey Responses.** The first question inquired about whether participants had been informed during their pre-service teacher training about the potential utility of Chinese languages in their EFL instruction. As depicted in Table 6, about 60% of participants (N=10) reported receiving training on integrating other languages into English instruction.

**Table 6**

*Participant Responses to Survey Question A1 (N=17)*

| Answer | Question A1: I have been clearly told in the teacher training program that I can teach English using other languages (Mandarin, Chinese dialects, etc.) | |
|---|---|---|
| | n | % |
| Yes | 10 | 58.82% |
| No | 5 | 29.41% |
| No Answer | 2 | 11.76% |

Regarding their actual implementation in EFL classrooms, as represented in Table 7 below, most participants (n=14) reported actively employing other languages in their teaching practices. Furthermore, as earlier noted, participants who responded affirmatively to yes-or-no questions were given subsequent follow-up questions. Table 8 below illustrates the frequency with which the participants (n=14) employ the Chinese language to enhance students' proficiency in the four language skills. Although participants' answers were diverse, there was a discernible trend: a relatively large portion of participants tended to implement this practice either infrequently or

occasionally when enhancing students' listening, reading, and speaking skills, whereas they adopted it with slightly greater frequency for the development of students' writing skills.

**Table 7**

*Participant Responses to Survey Question A2 (N=17)*

| Answer | Question A2: I teach English using other languages in the EFL classrooms. | |
|--------|---|---|
| | N | % |
| **Yes** | 14 | 82.35% |
| **No** | 3 | 17.64% |

**Table 8**

*Participant Responses to the Follow-up Question for Question A2 (n=14)*

| Frequency | Listening | | Reading | | Speaking | | Writing | |
|-----------|-----|-------|-----|-------|-----|-------|-----|-------|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Never | 2 | 14.29% | 2 | 14.29% | 2 | 14.29% | 1 | 7.14% |
| Infrequently | **5** | **35.71%** | **4** | **28.57%** | **6** | **42.86%** | 3 | 21.43% |
| Occasionally | **5** | **35.71%** | **5** | **35.71%** | **6** | **42.86%** | **6** | **42.86%** |
| Frequently | 2 | 14.29% | 3 | 21.43% | 0 | 0.00% | **4** | **28.57%** |

**Interview Responses.** All four interviewees confirmed their use of Chinese languages in their class. Huang, who was teaching grade 7 in middle school at the time of our interview, pointed out the necessity to refer to Chinese when other strategies proved ineffective.

他理解不了生词的意思，你（英语）paraphrase 也是相当是无效的，对不对？有的时候或者是图片或者其他的东西确实解释不到意思，我就真的只能使用中文来解释。但是现在多媒体的使用，我觉得他们对于我们现在这种辅助教学的帮助还是很大的 [when you are paraphrasing in English, students still cannot understand due to their limited vocabulary. Your paraphrase is quite inefficient right? If I cannot use photos or other

materials to explain, I must turn to Chinese. However, with the use of multimedia nowadays, I think it greatly aids our teaching.]

(Huang, teaching grade 7, interview)

Huang also mentioned that she would use Chinese instructional phrases: for example, "看一下这句话"[look at this sentence] and "听录音" [listening to the tape].

Lei, who was teaching in high school, pointed out that the frequency of using Chinese varied based on the class type. He noted that in a reading class, he sometimes spoke Chinese languages to explain obscure words. Particularly, he spoke local dialects when the reading was related to the local culture. For other types of classes, such as exercise and grammar classes, he recognized a greater reliance on Chinese use.

习题课，对，习题课这种课程的话，就是中文的比例要更多了。对，可能要占到80%~90%之间，对。然后还有一种课呢，就是语法类这些课程，基本上是 50% 50%，我在讲的过程中可能会告诉他们英语的思维逻辑是什么，然后再用中文进行阐述是这样。[In classes like exercise classes, the proportion will be larger, probably between 80%-90% and in the grammar class, probably about 50%. I will tell them about the English logic behind this grammar and then use Chinese to explain.]

(Lei, teaching grade 10, interview)

Lei further highlighted that the extent to which he utilized Chinese was contingent upon the students' needs and their proficiency in English.

我感觉可能有一些同学他会比如说从最开始的时候，他们可能没有办法完全接触全英文，然后我再说一部分中文的时候，他们可能觉得会更好理解。所以其实在对于他们来讲，我觉得基本上是所有学生他们都会认为课程之中有中文进行解释或者辅

助理解是可以接受的。[I feel that some students may not be able to fully accept all English at the beginning, so when I explain in Chinese, they may think it will be easier for them to understand. I think that basically all students agree that it is acceptable to have Chinese explanations to assist comprehending.]

(Lei, teaching grade 10, interview)

Shi, who was teaching grade 11 in high school at that time, did not perceive the use of Chinese as indispensable in her classroom. She emphasized, "只是说可能相较比较差的地方，比如语法，你会在基础理论的解释上会用" [Only when it comes to students' weakness in English learning, for example, grammar learning, I will use Chinese languages to explain the basic rules].

Zhong, who was teaching grade 12 in high school, posited that the use of Chinese served as a clarifying tool primarily when highlighting nuanced distinctions between comparable terms in English and Chinese. Specifically, he underlined the significance of students recognizing these subtleties, especially when addressing examination questions, such as those in the cloze test. The cloze test is a common question format in secondary exams, where words are intentionally omitted from a coherent text. Students are required to choose the correct or most suitable answers from a set of options to restore the text's completeness.

尤其是涉及两种语言差异的时候。比如说，你说学生为啥子完形填空选错了。因为完形填空常常通过中文思维，汉语思维去设置一个坑，一旦学生用汉语学思维去填空，他就会跳进去。因为涉及到中文介入外语教学的时候，更多的情况就是让学生感受两种语言的差异，从源头上明白英语哪些地方跟汉语不一样，而且鼓励学生调整思维。[When it comes to the difference between two languages, for example, do you

know why students make mistakes when they are doing cloze tests? Because the question makers know that students might choose the word with their Chinese thinking mode. But in English, it might be another word. Thus, when it comes to how Chinese languages can be used in EFL education, my aim is that students can experience the difference between two languages, thus changing their thinking mode when they are doing exams]

(Zhong, teaching grade 12, interview)

**Class Observation Results.** The preceding discussion presented four interviewees' description regarding their employment of Chinese languages in EFL classrooms. With respect to their actual use, I had the opportunity to observe one class from Shi (lasting 40 minutes) and two classes from Zhong (lasting 80 minutes in total).

Students in Shi's class were studying an English reading titled "The Monster in Lake Tianchi", a narrative akin to the Loch Ness Monster tale but set in China. Table 9 below delineated the various contexts in which Chinese languages were utilized during Shi's 40-minute instruction.

**Table 9**

*Occurrences of Shi's Use of Chinese Languages in Specific Situations*

| Circumstance(s) | Instance(s) | Language(s) |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Introducing essential vocabularies | 5 | Mandarin |
| Commenting on students' answers | 2 | Mandarin and the local dialect |
| Joking | 1 | The local dialect |
| Assigning homework | 1 | Mandarin |

Shi predominantly spoke in English in her class, and most of the time that she turned to Chinese, she introduced essential vocabulary of this reading. For example, when introducing the word "isolated", Shi first inquired, "how would you say '隔绝'in English?". Swiftly transitioning back to English, she stated, "It's 'isolated'". Subsequently, she posed another question to her students: "还有什么单词可以表示隔绝的？" [any similar word which means '隔绝'as well?].

Similar patterns took place when she introduced terms like "seemingly", "extinct", "eye-catching", and "stunts".

Besides explaining meanings, Table 9 illustrated that she also employed Chinese in other contexts. Regarding commenting on students' answers, for example, as students debated the possible existence of the alleged monster in Lake Tianchi, grounding their arguments in scientific reasoning, Shi praised them in Mandarin, remarking, "我必须要说中文了，地球未来有你们似乎能活下去" [I have to speak Chinese. It appears the Earth has a hopeful future with thinkers like you]. Moreover, after explaining the word "stunt", she humorously commented in the local dialect on the allure of mysterious acts to draw attention, posing the rhetorical question, "越神秘才越有搞头，对不对？" [The more mysterious it is, the more it will attract people, right?]. At the end of the class, she also used Mandarin to assign homework.

While my classroom observation primarily centered on teachers' verbal employment of Chinese languages, I also captured Shi' utilization of written Chinese. Below is the scenario that Shi integrated both written Chinese and English to accentuate the central theme of the reading.

**Figure 5**

*Picture of Shi's Final Slide*
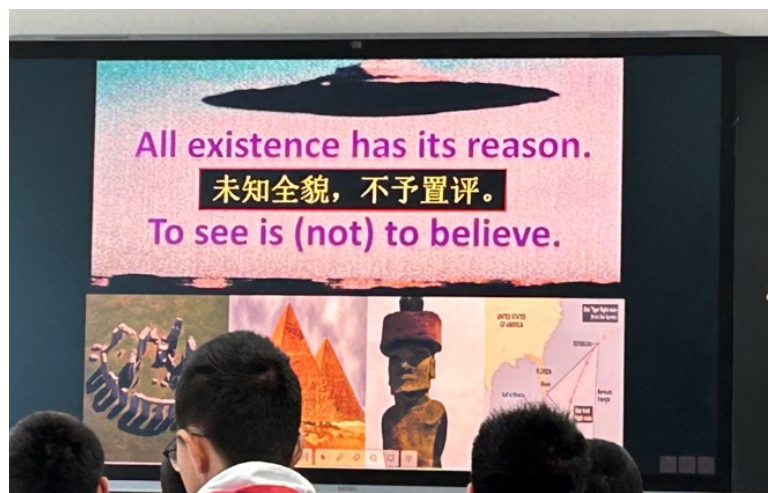
Regarding Zhong's classes, while I observed two separate classes, Zhong delivered identical content in two classrooms with two groups of students. During the first half of the class, Zhong reviewed students' homework— providing students with correct answers and offering explanations. During the second half of time, he was teaching a reading. Table 10 provided a summary of how Chinese languages were utilized in Zhong's 80-minute classes across different contexts.

**Table 10**

*Occurrences of Zhong's Use of Chinese Languages in Specific Situations*

| Circumstance(s) | Instances(s) | Language(s) |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Correcting students' answers | 10 | Mandarin and the local dialect |
| Giving instructions | 4 | The local dialect |
| Introducing essential vocabulary | 2 | The local dialect |

Similar to Shi, Zhong predominantly spoke in English. However, during the observation time when reviewing students' homework, he occasionally switched to Chinese. Instead of directly providing the correct answer, Zhong employed both Mandarin and the local dialect to guide students toward self-discovery of the correct responses. For example, rather than directly providing the answer to a summary completion question, he prompted in the local dialect, "第四题怎么选？找中心句撒!" [how to find answers for the fourth question? Find the key sentence!]. Additionally, he offered translation for contextual information. For a sentence completion exercise, namely "when she saw Tom's face, she was＿ by fear", he stressed the premise in Mandarin, "当她看见他的脸,然后怎么样?"[when she saw his face, then what happened?]. Furthermore, he also gave Chinese instructions during the class like "翻到 23 页"[turn to page 23], "谁给我们翻译一下呢?"[who can translate this sentence for us?], and "搞懂没得?" [do you get it?] in Mandarin and

the local dialect. When he was teaching the reading, his use of Mandarin was minimal, limited to explaining the term "get infected" in both classes.

### 4.1.2. Participants' Practice of Allowing Students to Include Chinese Languages in the EFL Class (RQ2)

**Survey Responses.** Analysis of the survey revealed that most participants (n=12) permitted students to use Chinese languages (see Table 11).

**Table 11**

*Participant Responses to Survey Question A3 (N=17)*

| Answer | Question A3: I allow students to use other languages in the EFL classrooms | |
|---|---|---|
| | n | % |
| Yes | 12 | 70.58% |
| No | 5 | 29.41% |

Regarding the frequency of such permission, while participants' responses were varied, a discernible pattern was observed, as indicated in Table 12.

**Table 12**

*Participant Responses to the Follow-up Question for Question A3 (n=12)*

| Frequency | Listening | | Reading | | Speaking | | Writing | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Never | 2 | 16.67% | 0 | 0.00% | 1 | 8.33% | 2 | 16.67% |
| Infrequently | **4** | **33.33%** | **5** | **41.67%** | 3 | 25.00% | 3 | 25.00% |
| Occasionally | **3** | **25.00%** | **5** | **41.67%** | **7** | **58.33%** | **5** | **41.67%** |
| Frequently | 3 | 25.00% | 2 | 16.67% | 1 | 8.33% | 2 | 16.67% |

One the one hand, teacher participants allowed students to use other languages infrequently or occasionally to enhance their listening and reading skills training. On the other hand, there

seemed to be a greater inclination for teachers to allow students occasional use of other languages to enhance their speaking and writing proficiencies.

**Interview Responses.** The four participants expressed varied perspectives on students' use of other languages. Huang highlighted that the middle-school EFL curriculum did not necessitate advanced proficiency in writing and listening from students. Consequently, there was no pressing requirement to incorporate Chinese languages as aids during writing and listening practice.

因为写的起点比较低，说白了就是套用，所以几乎用不到……听的时候目前的难度也比较少，说白了你知道吧，目前他们这种 task 情况都是比较简单的,基本上就是教会他听听 key words，只要他们在听的过程中找到 key words，找到 key sentence,这个部分的难度就基本上没得咯，我觉得是 never 的一个程度。[Because the starting point for writing is relatively low, to put it bluntly, is to copy a set writing pattern mechanically, so it is almost not used…When it comes to listening, the listening task is easy at middle school level. We teach students to listening to the key words in a conversation. Once they have found the key words and the key sentences, there is almost not difficulty in this part. I think they "never" need to use Chinese.]

(Huang, teaching grade 7, interview)

Simultaneously, Huang granted students the liberty to utilize Mandarin and the Sichuan dialect of their preference during oral exercises. She articulated, "不管你中文和英文，只要你能表达，敢于表达，我觉得就很好。" [Regardless of Chinese or English, if they can express, dare to express, I think it is very good.]. She further perceived the use of Chinese languages as a valuable scaffolding strategy to enhance students' oral proficiency.

因为娃娃说白了，你在那传授知识的时候，他最好接受的就是当他涉及到最近发展区这样的一个地方，他需要这个东西，你又递给他，对吧？他可以用中文来呈现，然后你用英文教给他，他就很快速的，能够把它给学到。[You know, when you are teaching knowledge, students will absorb most of the knowledge within their zone of proximal development (ZPD). They need it, and you have it. Right? If they ask for it in Chinese and you teach them in English, they learn it quickly.]

(Huang, teaching grade 7, interview)

Regarding Lei, while he noted what he described as an "执念" [obsession] with fostering an English-only learning environment, through interactions with his students, he realized that, whether he allowed it or not, both Chinese and English would concurrently manifest in the students' cognition during listening exercises.

我问他们以及下来跟他们去交流的过程中，发现他们可能一部分人可以很快的用英文和中文进行思维和思想的转化，所以他可能听见英文，他可以立刻理解他的意思，但有一些人他没有办法以英文来理解意思，所以他必须得要有转换的过程。[After communicating with students, I found that some of them could transfer meanings between English and Chinese in a short time. Maybe to some students, when they hear English, they can immediately understand the English meaning. But to other students, they have to transfer into Chinese to understand the meaning]

(Lei, teaching grade 10, interview)

Lei also encouraged students to utilize Chinese languages when discussing concepts related to China during their oral presentations.

中文的，不管是历史性的，或者说一些专业性的学术，或者说一些用语方面，用英文解释过后，即使就是中文母语者大家能够理解在说些什么，但是还是会更加倾向于，我希望听见你用中文来解释，对。[The concepts related to Chinese, no matter if it is historical or academic, after using English to interpret, I still hope that you can use Chinese to interpret again, even though Chinese speaker could understand the English interpretation.]

(Lei, teaching grade 10, interview)

When it comes to Shi, while she did not explicitly address whether she permitted students to use Chinese languages in her classroom, she pointed out that she adopted translation as an approach to help students "形成（两种语言）对比，建立（两种语言）关系" [form a contrast (between the two languages) and establish a relationship (between the two languages)]. Notably, during the class I observed, she assigned a translation task to students (see Figure 6).

**Figure 6**

*Picture of Shi's Translation Assignment*
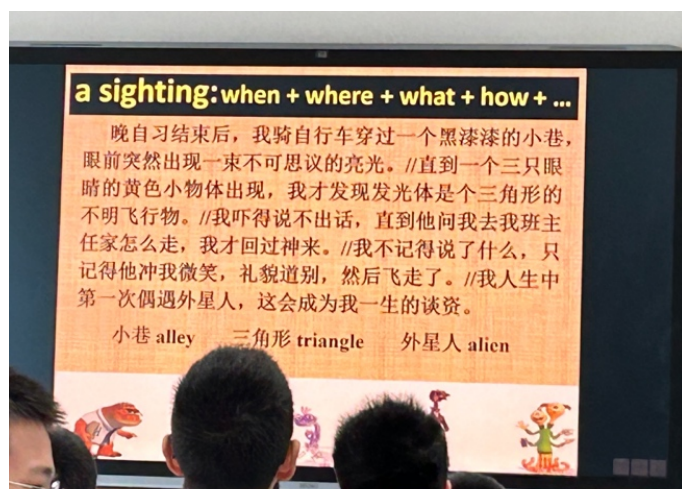


*Note.* Upon presenting the slide to the students, Shi distributed a handout containing the English translation of each sentence from the text, with certain words omitted. Students were tasked with

completing the sentences by filling in the missing words. Then, they were instructed to copy each sentence's Chinese translation from the slide and place it at the beginning of each English sentence.

Similarly, in my discussion with Zhong, he noted that the sole occasion he permitted students to employ Chinese languages was for translation exercises. His intention was for students to "认识两种语言的这样一种差异" [discover the difference between two languages]. For example, after presenting students with a passage from an English novel, he assigned them the task of translating the characters' dialogues into Chinese.

那么他必须要理解当时这个人他的情感，对吧？他的身份地位，那么你用汉语这句话该怎么表达？它两种语言不停一种切换，它是很有意思的这种。[To translate it accurately, students need to completely understand the characters' emotion and maybe their status or other contexts. Then, they need to think "how to use Chinese to say the similar expression?" They switch between two languages constantly. This is quite interesting.]

(Zhong, teaching grade 12, interview)

### 4.1.3. Participants' Practice of Including Chinese Culture in the EFL Class (RQ3)

**Survey Responses.** All the participants (N=17) acknowledged their use of Chinese cultural content in class (see Table 13), to make cultural comparisons between Western and Chinese cultures. Moreover, as illustrated in Table 14, most participants perceived themselves as occasionally making cultural comparisons to foster students' development in the four language competencies.

**Table 13**

*Participant Responses to Survey Question A4 (N=17)*

| Answer | Question A4: I make comparisons between Western and Chinese culture in the EFL classrooms | |
|--------|------|------|
| | N | % |
| **Yes** | 17 | 100.00% |
| **No** | 0 | 0.00% |

**Table 14**

*Participant Responses to the Follow-up Question for Question A4 (N=17)*

| Frequency | Listening | | Reading | | Speaking | | Writing | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Never | 1 | 5.88% | 0 | 0.00% | 0 | 0.00% | 1 | 5.88% |
| Infrequently | 2 | 11.76% | 3 | 17.65% | 1 | 5.88% | 4 | 23.53% |
| Occasionally | **10** | **58.82%** | **8** | **47.06%** | **12** | **70.59%** | **7** | **58.33%** |
| Frequently | 3 | 17.65% | 5 | 29.41% | 3 | 17.65% | 3 | 17.65% |
| No answer | 1 | 5.88% | 1 | 5.88% | 1 | 5.88% | 2 | 11.76% |

**Interview Responses.** Huang, Lei and Zhong all recognized their inclusion of Chinese culture in their classes, while Shi was unable to discuss cultural integration due to time limitations. Huang and Zhong also provided examples of how they integrated cultural comparisons in the classroom.

Huang expressed satisfaction with the textbook's inclusion of content on cultural comparisons. She mentioned that a unit in the ninth-grade textbook encompasses an introduction to both Western and Eastern holidays, including Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Halloween from the Western tradition, as well as the Qingming Festival, Chinese New Year, and the Mid-Autumn Festival from the Chinese tradition.

其实你会发现它每一种节日它（课文）都有梳理来历，他的 stories，symbols，activities，traditional foods，其实你在学习的过程中就会发现，也有很多不同的地方，中国人就是很喜欢热闹，但是外国他更趋向于这种分享，对吧？传递爱之类的对不对？中国就是团圆，主题就是团圆。[The origins, stories, symbols, activities, and traditional foods of each festival are sorted out in the textbook. During their study of each festival, students can discover the different themes between Chinese and Western festival.

For example, Chinese people prefer bustling vibe while Westerners focus on sharing, passing love and so on, right? Chinese theme is reunion.]

(Huang, teaching grade 7, interview)

Another example was found in the supplementary teaching material that Zhong selected for his students, which is a newspaper-like reading material called Global Reading (Guo, 2023). He showed me two pages within the latest issue which offered insights into Xi'an Guyue, a type of traditional Chinese music from Xi'an province, juxtaposed with an essay about Beethoven (see Figure 7).

**Figure 7**

*Picture of Two Articles in Global Reading*



In addition to leveraging English versions of Chinese stories for contrast, both Zhong and Huang pointed to a favored strategy they employ, described as "用外国话讲好中国故事"[using foreign languages to narrate Chinese stories]. Zhong personally identified this as one of the "重难点" [significant challenges] in EFL education at high-school level and offered me a practical example. He once presented students with an English translation of a renowned Chinese poem, prompting them to identify the original poem based on the translated version. Besides, he also

reported a marked preference for articles narrating elements of Chinese culture when choosing extracurricular reading materials for students. He noted, "（我的）英语课很多语料，很多教学资源，它都是用英语来介绍中国的" [In my classes, there are lots of materials, lots of teaching resources that use English to introduce China]. In the supplementary teaching material mentioned above, I did identity articles about traditional Chinese medicine, a traditional solar term called 立春 [The beginning of Spring], and a Chinese animated films within the same issue (see Figure 8).

**Figure 8**

Picture of Three Articles in Global Reading



**4.2. Participants' Views towards the Inclusion of Chinese Languages and Chinese Cultures in the EFL Class**

In this section, I provide findings and insights in response to RQ4: How do EFL teachers in public secondary schools in China perceive the inclusion of Chinese languages and Chinese cultures? To examine participants' perceptions regarding the integration of Chinese languages, I predominantly reference data from both the second set of surveys and the interviews. Subsequently,

to ascertain participants' perspectives on the incorporation of Chinese culture, I largely draw from the insights gained during the interviews.

### 4.2.1. Participants' Views towards the Inclusion of Chinese Languages (RQ4)

**Survey Responses.** The second group of questions, as mentioned above, sought to shed light on participants' perspectives regarding the use of other languages in the EFL class. Table 15 Below are their responses.

**Table 15**

*Participants' Attitudes towards the Use of Chinese Languages*

| Statements [a] | Total response [b] | Disagree | | Neutral | | Agree | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| B1. A common practice for teachers | 16 | 3 | 18.75% | 7 | 43.75% | 6 | 37.50% |
| B2. A common practice for students | 16 | 6 | 37.50% | 5 | 31.25% | 5 | 31.25% |
| B3. Teachers teach English better | 16 | 4 | 25.00% | 5 | 31.25% | 7 | 43.75% |
| B4. Students learn English better | 15 | 6 | 40.00% | 5 | 33.33% | 4 | 26.67% |
| B5. Respect home language backgrounds | 16 | 2 | 12.50% | 2 | 12.50% | 12 | 75.00% |
| B6. Respect the cultural background | 16 | 3 | 18.75% | 3 | 18.75% | 10 | 62.50% |
| B7. Strengthen students' Chinese identity | 16 | 6 | 37.50% | 4 | 25.00% | 6 | 37.50% |
| B8. Strengthen students' intercultural competence. | 15 | 2 | 13.33% | 5 | 33.33% | 8 | 53.33% |

[a] Full statements can be found in Appendix B.

[b] Not all the participants chose to answer all the questions in the second group of question. I have only presented the number of participants who provided answers.

Regarding B1 and B2, participants' responses towards these two statements reflected their opinion about whether the use of Chinese languages was common for EFL teachers and students. Most respondents exhibited a neutral stance (43.75%) and an affirmative viewpoint (37.5%) towards their own use of the Chinese languages while only a few disagreed (18.75%). In contrast, when it came to students' usage, participants' opinions were nearly evenly distributed across all three response categories.

Concerning statements B3 and B4, the participants' feedback on these items provided insights into their perceptions of the benefits of using additional languages to enhance both teachers' language instruction and students' language acquisition. From the 16 total responses, a notable 43.75% of participants expressed a favorable view towards incorporating Chinese languages in their instruction, with 31.25% remaining ambivalent, and 25% expressing reservations. In terms of students using Chinese languages, a significant 40% of the respondents harbored reservations, 33.33% remained neutral, and only 26.67% conveyed a positive stance.

In the subsequent statements from the second group, additional potential benefits beyond enhancing target language acquisition were presented. More than a half portion of participants concurred with most of these statements. Yet, opinions diverged regarding whether the use of other languages would strengthen students' Chinese identities. The data showed an even split, with 37.50% of participants in agreement and an equal percentage disagreeing.

**Interview Responses.** The perspectives of the four interviewees on the use of Chinese languages in EFL classrooms predominantly centered on its potential to enhance students' language acquisition. Although they acknowledged their occasional use of Chinese languages, they repeatedly expressed a preference and expectation for exclusive English usage during our discussions.

Huang and Lei both underscored a congruent rationale regarding the employment of familiar languages in enhancing their English teaching efficacy. Using the language that students are familiar with ensured all the students to comprehend the content successfully which, according to Huang, "实现了课堂的效率最大化" [maximizes the teaching efficiency] and according to Lei, "是最快捷以及高效的"[is the most expedient and efficient way] . Moreover, Huang and Shi specifically highlighted that using Chinese languages would be especially beneficial in assisting students who were lagging behind to keep pace with their peers.

有些娃娃真的是一张白纸，我发现教这种娃娃的时候，该用中文还是要用中文，不然的话真的听不懂，他课下可能需要花更多的时间来消化的知识，然后特别是一开始如果他就出现问题了，后来他又学不起走，他的信心一旦被打击到了的话，真的就很恼火，所以最主要的就是要把娃儿的兴趣培养好。你知道吧，哪怕他是个很聪明的学生，他有可能会出现英语学习不入门这种现象，毕竟是一种新的语系。

[Some students (at grade 7) completely did not know any English. I found out that when teaching these students, sometimes, it's a need to use Chinese. Or the students might completely lose it and they might spend much time to absorb knowledge after class. What's even worst, if students had this problem at the beginning of their English learning, they might not be able to catch up with others. Then, they might lost interest in learning English, and this is really a big problem. Thus, it's important to cultivate students' interest. You know, even if he is a very smart student, he might not fail to grasp the basics of English learning. After all, it is a new language.]

（Huang, teaching grade 7, interview）

勾引性，于我而言，其实也就是对小孩的一个勾引性。这个也打引号，他是让对方能够产生，特别最差的小孩，他能够迅速的理解这个东西。[Mandarin or dialects, it can be seen as a "temptation" for students, especially for students who left behind. They can immediately get meaning.]

(Shi, teaching grade 11. interview)

However, at the same time, all four participants articulated their aspiration for a classroom environment where only English is spoken. They unanimously believed that language acquisition was inherently tied to cognitive processes in that language. Essentially, the more one engaged in English, the more inclined they were to think in English. They aimed to minimize the potential for students to rely on their L1 when processing English.

因为说白了娃娃他更愿意用母语来听，来理解，说白了我们经常性要求的是对英语学习，是希望他能够跳过母语脑内的一个解释，对吧？[Students definitely prefer to study English with the help of Chinese right? But what we demand is that students can skip the transferring and can directly think and speak in English right?]

(Huang, teaching grade 7, interview)

我觉得对于英文课程来说，不管是在哪个年龄阶段，总是得要有一个就是需要让学生对有一个非常长时间的英语进入的环境是比较重要的，对。[I think no matter what grade they are in; it is always necessary for students to have an immersed English environment.]

(Lei, teaching grade 10, interview)

我们学校原则上是能不用中文的情况下肯定不用中文，对中文的采取度不高。因为你晓得英语教学这方面母语的使用度高了，也很麻烦, 虽然中文很撇托的。我们在

国内现在也经常强调语言环境。[In principle, our school does not allow using Chinese in the EFL class when it is possible to do so. Because you know, it might be troublesome if you use too much Chinese in English teaching, although using Chinese is easier (for them to learn English). Domestic EFL education emphasises a lot on language environment.]

(Shi, teaching grade 11, interview)

我刚开始我们讲所使用中文的情况，一定是某些特定的教学情景. 按理说是要求全英文。对他的英语思维更好一些。[The use of Chinese that we just talked about, it must have been in a specific teaching situation. The school requires all English which is good for developing their English thinking mode.]

(Zhong, teaching grade 12, interview)

While harboring such aspirations, both Shi and Lei underscored the challenges they encountered in establishing an English-only environment within their classrooms.

原因是在于会有一个成绩的评定，在这种情况之中就会产生一部分学生他学的确实很好，一部分学生学得不是很好，所以说在老师面对整个一个班在进行教学的过程之中，因为有成绩的要求，导致了老师不得不以最快捷以及高效的一个方式去进行讲授，那么可以选择的就是用他们全都能听懂的语言进行讲解，对……可能整个后面英语课就变成了中文课，对。[Because there was the English assessment, and there were always differences in academic performance among students. Thus, when teachers were teaching English to the whole class, because of the requirement of grades, they have to use the quickest and most efficient way to teach, so the choice is to use the language that they all can understand…… Maybe the English class would become the Chinese class.]

(Lei, teaching grade 10, interview)

我们会尽量创设（英文环境）已经让小孩去做，但是也看到了这个班型，那么多娃娃……大班型你会发现操作性没得那么好，也没得办法让大家更多的去把这个东西 involved。[We will try our best to create (an English environment) and let the children engage in this environment, but considering this class size, so many children... Due to a large number of students in the class, you'll find that the operability isn't as good, and it's not possible to get everyone involved in it.]

(Shi, teaching grade 11, interview)

After discussing the effects of referencing Chinese languages on students' English learning, I sought to investigate four interviews' opinion about the effects in dimensions beyond English learning. However, rather than offering direct responses, they emphasized the benefits of integrating Chinese culture into EFL classrooms. This topic will be further explored in the subsequent section.

### 4.2.2. Participants' Views towards the Inclusion of Chinese Cultural in the EFL Class

Of the three interviewees (Huang, Lei, and Zhong) who addressed topics related to cultural integration, all mentioned there were certain benefits of inviting Chinese cultures into EFL teaching. Zhong pointed out that referring Chinese language was essentially referring the Chinese culture. He noted, "汉语辅助，实际上主要是用我们文化辅助，把握就是这种思维差异或者增加更多兴趣" [Actually, employing Chinese languages as a tool to aid students in learning English inherently incorporates Chinese culture. It helps students to notice the cultural difference and attract their interests]. He further posited that this approach provides students an opportunity to deepen their understanding of their own cultural heritage.

通过我们英语课，实际上认识很多中国的文化。因为英语课很多语料，很多教学资源，它都是用英语来介绍中国的，对吧。[Students get to know a lot of Chinese culture

through our English classes. Because a lot of the reading material we offered…… a lot of the teaching materials, they introduce China in English, right?]

<div align="right">（Zhong, teaching grade 12, interview）</div>

Additionally, Zhong further underscored the idea that students' engagement in learning was closely tied to the relevance of the content to their personal experiences. Specifically, the greater the material's relevance to their lives, the higher the likelihood of increased student interest.

所以说目前很多教学资源它是英文讲中国故事，或者讲学生的自己的面临考试压力，对吧？他能够感同身受，没有共鸣的他就没得兴趣。[Thus, many teaching resources focus on talking about Chinese stories in English or discussing the pressure students face from exams, right? If they can empathize, they will be interested; without such a connection, their engagement decreases.]

<div align="right">(Zhong, teaching grade 12, interview)</div>

Huang suggested that such integration would bolster students' Chinese cultural identifications and, potentially enable them to present their native culture on a global stage.

最主要还是你能够现在用外国话讲好中国故事，然后让西方国家更多的了解中国。而且其实很多人他就是崇洋媚外，他就先去觉得国外的月亮圆。所以首先你要能够加深对中国文化这种理解和认同，建立这种文化的自信。[Personally speaking, students should learn to tell a good Chinese story in foreign languages, and then let the West know more about China. Many people in China worship all things foreign. He thinks that "the moon is rounder abroad" (a Chinese slang). You must be able to deepen their understanding of Chinese culture and a sense of identity, then you can build this cultural confidence.]

<div align="right">(Huang, teaching grade 7, interview)</div>

The perspectives of three participants on the influence of cultural integration in EFL classes extended beyond just Chinese culture. Zhong highlighted that the inclusion of cultures in general, not just the Chinese one, effectively enhanced students' engagement and interest in learning.

你如果整个英语课不谈文化，只谈语言教学，不涉及文化，不涉及语言背后的文化历史文学，它是枯燥乏味的。[An English class that solely concentrates on linguistic instruction, without delving into culture, history, or the literature intertwined with the language, is lackluster.]

(Zhong, teaching grade 12, interview)

Huang and Lei shared their idea on broader cultural integration as well. Huang emphasized that a primary goal of teaching English, both now and looking forward, was to enable her students to "了解不同国家的优秀的文化成果 [appreciate the cultural achievements of different nations]" and "建立平等的概念"[ recognize the equality of cultures]. In the conversation with Lei, he mentioned that helping students to respect different culture is "我最开始做老师想要去提升学生的某一个能力之一" [one of the skills he hoped to foster in his students when he first began teaching]. He highlighted his encouragement for students to articulate cultural concepts in the language native to that culture. He remarked, "用本来的语言去解释本来的文化是最好的" [It is best to use the original language to explain the original culture]. He developed this insight after observing students' oral presentations across two classes. In both classes, Lei prompted students to engage with the topic of Feminism. He observed that in one classroom, a student discussing "三寸金莲"[Foot binding] from the Qing dynasty initially introduced the concept in English but subsequently reiterated it in Mandarin. Conversely, a student presenting on Disney princesses conducted the entirety of his presentation in English.

所以其实在这种情况之下，我就有给他们也有下意识的告诉他们，他们需要去注意的点就是在于很多某个文化或者说某个国家文化或者某个民族文化，它特定的用语的过程之中，我都非常建议他们先用那个民族或者说国家的语言去说，然后再用正在进行交流的语言去解释。因为他们在各种各样解释的过程中肯定会进行[文化]比较，这个过程中，他们会意识到这些文化他们的不同点是在哪。[So, in fact, under such circumstances, I suggest they speak the term in the language of that nation or country first, and then explain it in the language they are communicating with. They definitely compare [cultures] when they are explaining. Then, they will notice the differences.]

(Lei, teaching grade 10, interview)

## 4.3. Summary

This chapter delineated the findings of this study, with respect to participants' practice and perceptions towards the inclusion of Chinese and Chinese culture in the ELF classrooms. The findings are structured based on the four research questions, which are reiterated below:

RQ1. To what extent do EFL teachers in public secondary schools in China include all Chinese languages shared with the students in the EFL class?

RQ2. To what extent do EFL teachers in public secondary schools in China allow students to use their Chinese languages in the EFL class?

RQ3. To what extent do EFL teachers in public secondary schools in China include Chinese culture of their students in the EFL class?

RQ4. How do EFL teachers in public secondary schools in China perceive the inclusion of Chinese languages and Chinese culture?

The findings revealed that regarding R1 and R2, most survey respondents admitted their practice of using Chinese languages and also allowed students to do so. The four interviewees

further emphasized their use of Chinese languages to bolster students' comprehension of the English materials. Classroom observations provided additional insight, revealing the use of Chinese languages by two interviewees extended beyond merely improving comprehension.

With respect to the participants' incorporation of Chinese culture (R3), all survey respondents recognized their incorporation of Chinese culture in the classroom. Additionally, the interviewees emphasized that these cultural components were not solely used as a juxtaposition to English cultural aspects. They also adopted an approach that involved directly narrating Chinese stories in English.

When examining participants' perspectives on incorporating Chinese languages and culture into classroom instruction (R4), different opinions emerged. Considering the impact of Chinese languages, most survey participants concurred that employing Chinese languages respected students' home language and culture, and enhanced students' intercultural competence. However, opinions diverged on whether the use of other languages would facilitate teachers' language instruction and students' language acquisition, as well as strengthen students' Chinese identities. Delving deeper into the interview data, it was evident that while all four interviewees affirmed their use of Chinese languages, they simultaneously expressed a preference for an English-only learning environment.

Three interviewees further elaborated on their perspectives concerning cultural integration. These educators emphasized that inviting Chinese culture helped students deepen their understanding of their cultural heritage, link their prior knowledge to EFL learning, and fortified their identification with Chinese cultural heritage. Besides, they pointed out that embracing a broader range of cultures, beyond just the Chinese context, equipped students to value the rich cultural contributions from various nations and respects cultural diversity.

Expanding upon the insights generated from the findings, the subsequent chapter Discussion, aims to interpret the results within a broader theoretical and empirical context. I intend to align my participants' practice with the theoretical notion of plurilingualism in SLE and explored the complexities underlying my participants' viewpoints regarding the inclusion of Chinese languages and Chinese culture.

**Chapter 5 Discussion**

This study seeks to address the notable absence of discourse on plurilingualism in the context of language education in China, especially at the secondary school level. It investigates how Chinese EFL teachers at secondary school implement and perceive the inclusion of other languages and other cultures in EFL classrooms. Chapter 4 presents the empirical outcomes of this study, grounded in survey responses (N=17), in-depth interviews (n=4), and classroom observations (n=2). The current chapter intends to critically interpret and discuss the findings, centering on two themes—teachers' inadvertent adoption of plurilingual approaches, and their complex attitudes towards the integration of Chinese languages and Chinese cultures.

**5.1. Teachers' Inadvertent Adoption of Plurilingual Approaches**

Based on the empirical data, most of the participants evidently incorporated both the Chinese languages and cultures into their EFL classrooms. This suggests an implicit adoption of plurilingual approaches to some extend, even though they might not overtly acknowledge or label it as such.

*5.1.2. Teachers' Adoption of Translanguaging*

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the use of Chinese languages within the EFL classroom in mainland China is not a newfound pedagogical approach but rather has historical roots in the grammar-translation method, a dominant approach decades ago (Ng & Tang, 1997). So far, it has undergone discussion by a researchers and educators across various paradigms, including L1 transfer (e.g. Chen, 2016; Fan, 2020) and CS (e.g. Wu & Wen, 2015; Lv, 2016). In this study, a plurilingual perspective was adopted, and data analyzed from the online survey, interviews, and classroom observations reveals that my participants were employing planned and unplanned translanguaging strategies (Corcoll López & González-Davies, 2016).

Planned translanguaging refers to language-switching activities deliberately designed by both teachers and students (Corcoll López & González-Davies, 2016). This description closely mirrors the majority form of translanguaging observed in this research. To begin with, approximately 60 % of the teacher participants reported in the survey that they had been encouraged to use Chinese languages in secondary EFL classrooms in their training programs, as reflected in Table 6. This number is encouraging, especially since explicit study or teaching of plurilingual approaches is not apparent in the language education research and teacher education program in mainland China. Furthermore, data from Table 7 showed that roughly 80% of those surveyed confirmed their actual use of Chinese languages in classrooms. This 20% difference between training teachers to use Chinese languages and their actual usage suggests that a significant portion of teachers included the use of Chinese languages despite not being told to explicitly. This trend possibly infers that these teachers may have identified the practical advantages of translanguaging, even without clear pedagogical mandates.

Insight into the teachers' translanguaging types can be derived from responses of four interviewees. Based on their description, although they were teaching different grades at the time that interview took place, they all acknowledged their use of Chinese languages in their classrooms. They predominantly alternate between Chinese languages and English in contexts such as vocabulary interpretation, highlighted by Huang; the explanation of English grammar, pointed out by Lei and Shi; and elucidating the subtle distinctions between English and corresponding Chinese expressions, as observed by Zhong. A recurring aspiration underpinning their translanguaging practice is enhancing of students' "理解"[comprehension] (Huang, interview; Lei, interview) of English content. This goal aligns with findings from various empirical studies examining

translanguaging as an approach (Vaish & Subhan, 2015; Tian & Lau, 2022; Gallego-Balsà & Cots, 2019; Carstens, 2016).

In the survey question addressing the allowance for students' use of Chinese languages, approximately 70% of respondents affirmed their permission, as reflected in Table 11. Detailed conversations with four teachers revealed a spectrum of perspectives. Huang advocated for language flexibility during oral practice, prioritizing cultivating students' communicative ability over language selection. Lei acknowledged the inevitable mingling of Chinese and English in students' cognitive processes during listening exercises. He also endorsed the use of Chinese for cultural themes in oral presentations. Shi and Zhong both underscored their use of translation to help students discover the difference between two languages and establish a bridge between the two languages. Notably, two participants' adoption of translation diverges from the traditional translation method that views translation as "a straightforward one-to-one transference between language"(González-Davies, 2014, p. 9). Instead, it resonates with González-Davies's Translation in Other Learning Contexts (TOLC) (2017) which leverages translation as a means to foster linguistic mediation skills.

Interestingly, Shi's and Zhong's class observations illustrated that translanguaging served not merely as a planned pedagogical tool to facilitate students' comprehension in their classrooms. As showed in Table 9 and Table 10, instances of spontaneous, unconscious use of translanguaging (Corcoll López & González-Davies, 2016) were discovered for diverse non-content-related purposes, including giving instructions, commenting, joking, and assigning homework. Remarkably, despite these observed occurrences in the classroom, two participants did not address them when queried during the interview with the question—"你什么时候会在课堂中使用普通话或者是方言呢？"[when will you use Mandarin or the local dialect in the classroom?]. This fact

that these spontaneous uses of translanguaging were observed but remained unmentioned by the interviewees indicates a potential lack of overt awareness or recognition of these spontaneous shifts between languages in their teaching practices, even when directly asked. This could imply that for them, using both Mandarin and local dialects might be regarded as a rooted and natural behavior, rather than being only a planned pedagogical choice, potentially reflecting their ease and flexibility with the two languages.

### 5.1.3. Teachers' Invitation of Chinese Cultures

Study participants underscored the importance of integrating culture in language education. Their perspective resonates with the Council of Europe's (2001) plurilingual approach to language education, which advocates that both a student's prior languages and cultural experiences should be integral to their language learning process. This inference is drawn from, firstly, as reflected in Table 13, all the respondents reported their incorporation of cultural comparisons in the classrooms. Interviews provided further insights into their practices. For example, Huang reported that she juxtaposed the content of Western and Chinese festivals to help students differ themes between them. Lei, on the other hand, encouraged students to give presentations on topics such as global feminism. Another novel tactic, highlighted by Huang and Zhong, involves weaving Chinese culture directly into lessons, for example, by assigning students readings that delve into Chinese cultural facets. The motivations behind such endeavors, as deduced from the interview data, is multifaceted. Zhong posited that these cultural integration practice would sustain students' interests in English learning since culture aspects is engaging and related to students' backgrounds. Huang and Lei expressed their hope to facilitate students' recognition of cultural difference and get a deeper understanding of cultural diversity and cultural equality. Furthermore, Huang and Zhong also highlighted their hope to foster students' Chinese cultural identities since their students

would "通过英语课，实际认识到很多中国的文化" [get to know a lot of Chinese culture through our English classes] (Zhong, interview).

To sum up, it is evident that most of the participants employed plurilingual approaches, using translanguaging as a teaching strategy as well as incorporating cultural elements. Additionally, Huang also identified her use of photographs and other multimedia materials to enhance her teaching, suggesting a potential incorporation of Multimodality (Kress, 2000b). Nevertheless, when evaluating their perspectives on incorporating Chinese languages and cultures, a distinct divergence in their attitudes concerning these two integrative methods surfaced. This distinction would be further elaborated in the next section.

**5.2. Teachers' Complex Attitudes towards the Inclusion of Chinese Languages and Chinese Culture**

Survey and interview data reveal distinct attitudes among participants regarding the integration of Chinese languages and culture. To begin with, upon comparing data from Table 7, Table 11, and Table 13, which showcase participants' responses regarding their practices of using Chinese languages, permitting students to use Chinese languages, and drawing cultural comparisons, a pattern emerges. While most participants acknowledge their use of Chinese languages (N=14) and permitted students to do the same (N=12), all participants (N=17) recognize their use of cultural comparisons. This divergence in responses implies that a subset of participants might exhibit some reluctance in incorporating Chinese languages in classrooms, yet they exhibit no such hesitance in embedding Chinese cultural content. Furthermore, in evaluating the responses to subsequent questions related to the frequency of each practice, it's evident that participants who refer to Chinese languages and/or permit students to, generally do so on an infrequent or occasional basis (as depicted in the Table 8 and Table 12). The infrequent or occasional reference to Chinese

languages by participants, even by those who permit its use, suggests that while there is an acknowledgment of the value of using other languages, it may not be a routine or central component of their teaching methodology. Conversely, data from Table 14 outlined that those who incorporate Chinese culture usually engage in this practice from an occasional to frequent basis. The more frequent incorporation of Chinese culture suggests that participants recognize the importance of cultural context in language learning.

While data of the first group of questions suggests a stronger willingness among participants to incorporate Chinese culture over Chinese languages, data of the second group of questions (as showed in Table 15), coupled with interview data, offer further clarity into participants' different inclinations regarding the inclusion of Chinese languages and Chinese culture.

### 5.2.1. Teachers' Dissonance between Translanguaging Practice and Deep-seated Monolingual Belief

The second groups of questions in the survey investigate teacher participants' perspective towards the potential benefits of integrating Chinese languages, including benefits for English education and students' linguistic repertoire. Begin with respondents' views towards the benefits for English education, when questioned about the prevalence of teachers employing other languages, over a third (37.5%) of the respondents agreed to the statement, while close to half (43.75%) of them were neutral to the statement and about one-fifth (18.75%) disagreed. Furthermore, in the following question regarding whether the use of other languages would facilitate teachers' teaching, the feedback was mixed. While 43.75% remained neutral, 37.50% agreed, and 25% disagreed. Interestingly, the elevated percentage of teachers either disagreeing or displaying indifference toward the commonality and efficacy of using Chinese languages contrasts

strongly with the significant portion who indeed implement it in their teaching. This is even more notably considering some engaging in translanguaging intuitively without being exposed in the teacher education program. Such data underscores that, although most participants integrate Chinese languages into their lessons, not all view it as a beneficial or efficient teaching strategy. This divergence between practice and belief suggests that teachers might be integrating Chinese languages due to external factors or necessities rather than a firm conviction about its pedagogical benefits.

Furthermore, when the emphasis turned to the prevalence of students using Chinese languages, over a third of the respondents (37.5%) disagree to the statement, while about a third of respondents (31.25%) were neutral and about a third (31.25%) agreed. Additionally, in the question regarding whether the use of other languages would facilitate students' English learning, 40% respondents disagreed, about a third (33.33%) report neutral and 26.67% agreed. Given that 37.5% and 40% of respondents respectively contested the commonality and the advantages of students using other languages for English learning, it suggests an underlying reservation or skepticism regarding the effectiveness of this practice for students' language learning, even among educators who themselves permit it.

Across the four survey items, a notable trend emerges: there is a roughly equal split between those who disagree, are neutral, and agree with the four statements. This indicates a lack of consensus among respondents about the extent to which themselves and their students utilize Chinese languages in EFL learning contexts. Moreover, the fact that teacher participants show complex attitudes towards the use of Chinese languages themselves and by students, also reveals that while translanguaging practices might be seen as necessary or useful in specific contexts, the ideal standard in their minds might still be an English-only environment.

Data in the interview further exposes that teachers were skeptical of the efficiency of translanguaging because of their monolingual belief. Four participants acknowledged the benefits of using Chinese languages, such as ensuring all the students to comprehend the content successfully which will "实现了课堂的效率最大化 [maximums the teaching efficiency]" (Huang, interview) and particularly help students who were left behind to catch up, as noted by Huang, Lei and Shi. Nevertheless, all participants voiced a preference and expectation for an English-exclusive instructional setting, and use terms like "不得不[have to]" (Lei, interview) to convey the inevitably inclusion of Chinese languages. Furthermore, participants also worried the overuse of Chinese languages in EFL class. For example, Shi described an excessive integration of Chinese as "麻烦[troublesome]", and Lei humorously insinuated that over-reliance on Chinese could transform an English lesson into a Chinese one. Their concern implies that these educators may view the integration of Chinese languages as a deviation from the ideal or standard method of English instruction. Tian and Lau (2022) find a similar dissonance from a teacher in a Mandarin-English dual language bilingual education classroom. Although this teacher, Ms. Li, is adopting "allowing but not announcing" translanguaging pedagogy in the class, her "internalisation of monolingual standards continued to fuel her lingering fear that TL could incite students' 'on-standard' and 'impure' use of Mandarin." (Tian and Lau, 2022, p. 11)

The reasons behind this dissonance may be my participants' struggles in mind between helping students to get higher scores in EFL exam and helping students to learning English. In the context of mainland China, students' future educational opportunities are mainly dependent on the scores of several high-stake exams, such as high school entrance exams, the national university entrance exam (also known as Gaokao), and post-graduate entrance exams. All these tests involve the assessment of students' English skills. A washback of such high-stake exams is teachers' and

students' high expectations regarding exam preparation (Saif et al., 2021). As a result, EFL instructors may "以最快捷以及高效的一个方式去进行讲授，那么就是用他们全都能听懂的语言进行讲解" [use the quickest and most efficient way to teach—use the language that they can all understand] (Lei, interview). What's even worse, some educators might concentrate more on how to help students complete test questions correctly than language learning, leading English to be a testable subject rather than a language for everyday use (F. Li, 2022). However, it seems that my participants also are aware that performing well in EFL assessment should not be the ultimate goal for students' language learning. Influenced by monolingual-oriented approaches still dominant globally (Piccardo, 2019; Piccardo et al., 2021; Galante et al., 2022), they doubt that while incorporating Chinese language would help them teach the subject better, such a method might not improve students' language learning. Thus, they are currently torn between helping students learn the language and focusing on their exam achievement, which puts them in a difficult position.

The concerns expressed by the participants about the use of Chinese languages in EFL classrooms appear to primarily focus on its potential around language acquisition, with less emphasis on its broader role in facilitating students' overall language repertoire. Survey data exploring their views on benefits beyond mere language acquisition lends credence to this inference (as illustrated in Table 15). The potential benefits listed in the survey include whether integrating Chinese languages acknowledges and values students' linguistic and cultural heritage, fortifies their Chinese identities, and develop their intercultural competence. A significant 75% of respondents concurred that incorporating Chinese languages honors students' linguistic heritage, and 62.50% felt it recognized their cultural backgrounds. This indicates that they might have an awareness of the broader implications of language education beyond mere linguistic competence.

However, regarding a question about the role of Chinese languages in reinforcing students' Chinese identities, the feedback was divided: 37.5% of respondents disagreed, 25% remained neutral, and 37.5% agreed. Similarly, when asked if using Chinese languages could bolster students' intercultural skills, just over half (53.33%) agreed, while a third (33.33%) remained ambivalent, and 13.33% disagreed. The data reveals that while participants might appreciate the cultural and linguistic assets students bring, they remain divided on the broader identity and intercultural implications of integrating Chinese languages in EFL classrooms, indicating their limited perception towards the broader benefits of translanguaging.

It is also noteworthy that during subsequent interviews, when I asked four participants about the advantages of integrating Chinese languages beyond target language acquisition, they redirected the conversation, transitioning from the benefits of using Chinese languages to those of integrating Chinese culture. Such a redirection to the topic might reveal their perception that the advantages of introducing Chinese languages and Chinese culture are intertwined, as reflected by an interviewee's statement:"汉语辅助，实际上主要是用我们文化辅助 [Actually, employing Chinese languages as a tool to aid students in learning English inherently incorporates Chinese culture]" (Zhong, interview). Or, given the ambivalence expressed about the inclusion of Chinese languages in the interview, the shift in focus might also suggest that they feel more confident or see clearer advantages in discussing cultural integration rather than language integration. This speculation becomes more plausible when reflecting on the earlier survey data, which highlighted a stronger tendency among participants to integrate Chinese cultural aspects rather than linguistic elements. If this interpretation holds, the shift raises questions about participants' initial survey responses. It's uncertain if, perhaps subconsciously, they replaced the benefits of cultural

integration with those of language integration during the survey, which might have influenced their responses.

Despite this uncertainty, it is apparent that a significant consideration for these educators is whether the use of Chinese in the classroom directly benefits English language education. Broader advantages influencing students' linguistic repertoire appear to receive less concerns. As a result, one significant implication is that teachers need to re-evaluate their use of Chinese languages as means of enhancing students' general language repertoire rather than as an inevitable method in EFL classrooms. More professional training on the integration of other languages in English education is needed.

### 5.2.2. Teachers' Support of the Inclusion of Chinese Culture

As mentioned above, all my participants in the survey recognized their adoption of cultural integration in the EFL classrooms. Zhong even used the phrase "重难点" [major challenge] to describe its importance at high-school EFL education in our interview. Not only my participants but other EFL teachers at secondary schools in China are actively seeking ways to incorporate Chinese culture into the classroom, in response to the updated objectives of EFL education at secondary school level, as delineated in two pivotal national documents (Z. Li, 2022). Entitled *EFL Curriculum Standard for Compulsory Education* and *High School English Curriculum Standards*, both texts explicitly emphasize the role of English education in enabling students to compare and evaluate Chinese and foreign cultures, to identify with national culture based on an understanding of cultural differences, and to build cultural confidence. Thus, students can be encouraged to actively use English language to promote Chinese culture in cross-cultural communication contexts (Ministry of Education of the PRC, 2020, 2022).

The rationale behind the shifting objectives can be seen as Chinese EFL educators' efforts to confront the imperialism brought along with English. Given the profound technological, scientific, military, political, economic, academic, and cultural contributions of English-speaking countries, the English language has been recognized undoubtedly as the most important language to learn (Jenkins, 2006). Yet, in regions where English is not the primary language, linguistic imbalances emerge between English and the local languages due to the global prevalence of the former. This linguistic imbalances subsequently lead to cultural, social, economic, and political inequities within those societies, giving English speakers power and prestige (Phillipson, 1992). The consequences of such linguistic imperialism also influenced EFL education in China. Huang referred to the phrase "国外的月亮比较圆 [the moon is rounder overseas]" which is similar to the English saying "the grass is always greener on the other side of the fence." This Chinese phrase is used to express the notion that people often romanticize or idealize things that are foreign, believing them to be superior to what they have at home.

Due to the profound influence of linguistic imperialism, there is extensive debate about whether the national education system in China should reduce the importance of English or not. Some argue that "the push for English endorses Western hegemony or emigration" (Liu & Tao, 2012, p. 127) while others maintain that students must learn English in order to read Western publications and participate in international activities (Wang & Li, 2014). EFL teachers in China are facing a similar problem to other English teachers in colonized nations—how to help students access the right form of English while maintaining a critical eye towards the legacy of hegemony in which the profession is embedded (Motha, 2014). While in Europe and North American, the introduction of plurilingual and pluricultural descriptors provide language educators new lens to examine students' language repertoire and decolonized and/or de-imperialized English (López-

Gopar et al., 2020; Suraweera, 2022), Chinese educators updated their EFL education objectives, emphasising the importance of incorporating students' home culture.

However, despite the clear instructions in the two national documents, much of the discussion and critique towards these objectives and related culture integration approaches remain theoretical, with minimal empirical insights into real classroom observations (Chen, 2022; Wei et al., 2022). Furthermore, concerns have been expressed regarding potential obstacles of these approaches, for example, EFL teachers' lack of ability to express Chinese culture in English and proper design curriculum in practice (Wang, 2020; Li, 2022; Wang & Wang, 2022).

Given this backdrop, the practices and reflections shared by participants during the interview become invaluable. The data could offer empirical evidence of how Chinese EFL teachers are responding to the new curricula, contributing valuable insights for curriculum designers and researchers.

## 5.3. Summary

This chapter interprets and discusses the findings overarching two themes: 1) teachers' inadvertent adoption of plurilingual approaches, and 2) their complex attitudes towards the integration of Chinese languages and Chinese cultures. Although not consciously labeled as plurilingual approaches, participants' evident utilization of translanguaging strategies and the incorporation of Chinese cultural elements into EFL classes suggest an implicit adoption of plurilingual approaches. However, while the majority of participants seamlessly embraced plurilingual approaches in their teaching, their reflective attitudes towards integrating Chinese languages and cultures differed. On the one hand, participants expressed reservations about the efficiency of translanguaging, viewing it more as an inevitable measure stemming from the pressure of high-stake exams. Their skeptical perspective indicates their limited recognition

towards the broader benefits of translanguaging. One the other hand, there was a pronounced inclination among participants to integrate Chinese culture. This was largely motivated by the national imperative within the EFL context to address the cultural hegemony accompanying the English language.

In this chapter, we have engaged in a comprehensive and critical analysis of the findings. Subsequently, the forthcoming is the conclusion chapter in which I restate my research gap and questions, summarize my findings, and delineate both the limitations of the current study and suggestions for prospective research.

**Chapter 6 Conclusion**

While the previous chapters provide detailed information about the methodology, findings and discussion about this study, in concluding my research, I begin by concisely reviewing the main findings of my research,   highlighting the most important discoveries. Then, I discuss the theoretical and practical contributions, acknowledge the study's limitations, and suggest future orientations.

**6.1. Key Findings**

Consistent with Chapter 4's framework, which presents data based on participants' practices and perceptions, I have maintained this framework in this section.

Key findings on participants' practice include:

- Most participants included Chinese languages in their classes. Interviewees further noted its role as a bridge between English and Chinese, facilitating students' understanding of English content. Classroom observations of actual classrooms revealed the use of Chinese languages by two interviewees extended beyond merely improving comprehension.

- Most participants permitted their students to include Chinese languages in their classes. Detailed discussions with four participants uncovered varied viewpoints on this permission, with two emphasizing their preference towards translation exercises.

- All participants incorporated Chinese culture in their classes. Interviewees further noted their practice can be divided into juxtaposing Chinese culture with Western ones and offering reading materials presenting Chinese narratives in English.

Central perspectives regarding the incorporation of Chinese languages and culture include:

- Most survey participants believed the inclusion of Chinese languages respected students' home language and culture, and enhanced students' intercultural competence. Nonetheless, there was a disparity in views concerning its enhancement in teachers' language teaching and students' language acquisition, as well as students' Chinese identities. Detailed interviews revealed that while four interviewees affirmed their use of Chinese languages, they simultaneously expressed a preference for an English-only learning environment.

- In terms of the inclusion of Chinese culture, three interviewees highlighted its role in deepening students' cultural comprehension, bridging prior knowledge to EFL learning, and reinforcing their identification with Chinese culture. Moreover, they advocated for the embrace of a broader range of cultures in classes, underscoring the significance of assisting students in respecting cultural diversity.

Moving towards my analytical discussion of the findings in Chapter 5 Discussion. Key interpretive takeaways include:

- Most participants evidently incorporated both Chinese languages and cultures into their EFL classrooms, suggesting an implicit adoption of some elements of plurilingual approaches, even though they might not overtly acknowledge or label it as such.

- While they acknowledged the efficiency of Chinese languages in their teaching work and some of the broader benefits beyond language acquisition, they still see this method as inevitably for students' English acquisition. This focus is, in part, attributable to the academic pressures of national examinations and their limited knowledge to the broader value beyond language acquisition.

- Compared with the use of Chinese languages, Chinese cultural integration emerges as a conscious effort, reflecting both contemporary EFL educational goals and a resistance against the hegemony accompanying English instruction.

## 6.2. Contributions

My research offers a valuable insight into the existing literature by adding empirical evidence concerning plurilingual approaches across contexts and presenting innovative perspectives for EFL education in China.

Firstly, as highlighted in Chapter 2 Literature Review, even as plurilingual approaches resonate with the contemporary multilingual global landscape, it remains paramount for researchers and educators to thoroughly investigate both the benefits and restrictions of these approaches across contexts. The practices demonstrated by the participants in this study furnish empirical support for the application of plurilingual approaches across varied contexts. One the one hand, their implementation aligns with the perspective of several scholars who contend that plurilingual approaches have been historically present in certain language education scenarios, without explicitly recognized as such. One the other hand, the consistent application of plurilingual approaches, despite their absence in teacher professional training, indicates that benefits of these methods might indeed surpass their limitations regarding the test-oriented EFL education at secondary schools in mainland China. My research can provide inspiration and serve as a valuable reference for subsequent scholars exploring plurilingual approaches, particularly in high-stakes language education contexts.

Moreover, my study holds potential significance for the development and improvement of language education in China. Through data analysis, it became evident that while participants employed plurilingual approaches, gaps remained in their comprehension of these approaches. By

uncovering their perspectives, this study could offer critical insights for EFL teacher educators on enhancing teachers' recognition of nurturing a holistic linguistic repertoire in students rather than exclusively concentrating on English acquisition. More importantly, the findings of this research might serve as a valuable reference for EFL curriculum designers and other Chinese EFL scholars. Observing that participants have already adopted plurilingual approaches could motivate them to weave plurilingualism more effectively into mainstream curricula and educational strategies, thereby preparing students for the demands of a multilingual and multicultural global community.

## 6.3. Limitations

While my study offers noteworthy findings, it is crucial to acknowledge certain limitations when interpreting the results.

Firstly, while this study embarked on an exploration of how Chinese EFL teachers incorporate Chinese languages and cultures in teaching EFL from a plurilingual perspective, it is important to recognize that, while the research provides valuable insights into the application of plurilingual approaches within this specific context, it does not capture the entirety of plurilingualism as a complex and multifaceted concept. This acknowledgment does not diminish the significance of the work, but rather positions it as a critical initial step towards a more comprehensive understanding of plurilingual practices in language education. As such, this study serves as a foundational contribution, paving the way for future research to further examine and expand upon the nuances of plurilingualism in teaching and learning environments.

Secondly, another concern is the unrepresentativeness of the date collected through quantitative and qualitative methods. The limited number of participants, combined with their selection through snowball and convenience sampling, restricts the generalizability of the findings. Notably, the four principal participants were recruited from the same secondary school, possibly

leading to homogeneous viewpoints or shared backgrounds that may not capture the varied experiences and views found among Chinese EFL teachers. Hence, it is uncertain whether these participants genuinely mirror the broader EFL teacher population in China.

Thirdly, the timelines of my academic program restricted my ability to gather exhaustive observational data from the four primary respondents, particularly concerning their practices of cultural integration. This may result in a failure to capture their firsthand translanguaging and pluricultural practices implemented by these educators.

Finally, as with many qualitative studies, the researchers' subjectivity can impact their data collection and interpretation bias (J. W. Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Given my background as a former EFL teacher who incorporated Chinese languages into English teaching, the design of my survey and initial interview questions heavily emphasized exploring participants' translanguaging practice. In contrast, there was lesser emphasis on their integration of Chinese culture, leading the present study merely initiating an exploration into the practices regarding the integration of Chinese culture in the classrooms.

## 6.4. Future Study

This exploratory study has generated a few important findings about plurilingual approaches in EFL education in China. Nevertheless, the dearth of research in this area points to the need to carry out other qualitative and quantitative research.

### 6.4.1. More In-depth Research on EFL Education at Chinese Secondary Schools

Firstly, the sample size in this study is limited. As such, a more extensive participant pool from various secondary schools across different regions in China would be beneficial to comprehensively capture the dynamics of plurilingual approaches adoption in secondary EFL education nationwide. Moreover, given my bias on translanguaging, this study provides a

preliminary exploration of teachers' integration of cultural elements. Subsequent research might delve deeper into this in a critical manner while being cautious of falling into the advocacy of Chinese culture's superior uniqueness or epistemological nationalism. It would also be beneficial to investigate areas not thoroughly examined in this study, such as the significant aspect of plurilingual approaches wherein teachers leverage semiotic resources to enhance their instruction and students' language learning. Additionally, while this study centers on teachers' plurilingual practices and perspectives, further research considering the views of other stakeholders, including schools, students, and parents, is essential for a more holistic understanding of the potential for integrating plurilingual approaches into EFL instruction at secondary schools.

Beyond merely mapping stakeholder' perspectives, I aspire for this study to serve as a catalyst, encouraging scholars and practitioners alike to devise interventions that tailor plurilingual approaches more effectively to enhance students' linguistic repertoire.

### 6.4.2. More Research on EFL Education across National Education Level

While existing research has shed light on the implementation of plurilingual approaches in higher education, and the present study has explored its application in secondary education, the body of work in this area remains limited. Comprehensive explorations on students' entire education trajectories—from primary to higher education—are critically needed. This will provide a holistic view of whether plurilingual approaches are adopted at different educational stages and their efficiency in these stages.

Moreover, one notable omission in the current study is the exploration of potential correlations between the extent of plurilingual approach usage in the classroom and students' English proficiency. But I think this is an interesting tangent for subsequent research. By investigating the correlation between a student's educational level and the frequency or intensity

of plurilingual approaches utilized by their instructors, we might find whether educators naturally adapt their teaching strategies, incorporating more or fewer plurilingual approaches, based on students' English level or needs at various educational stages.

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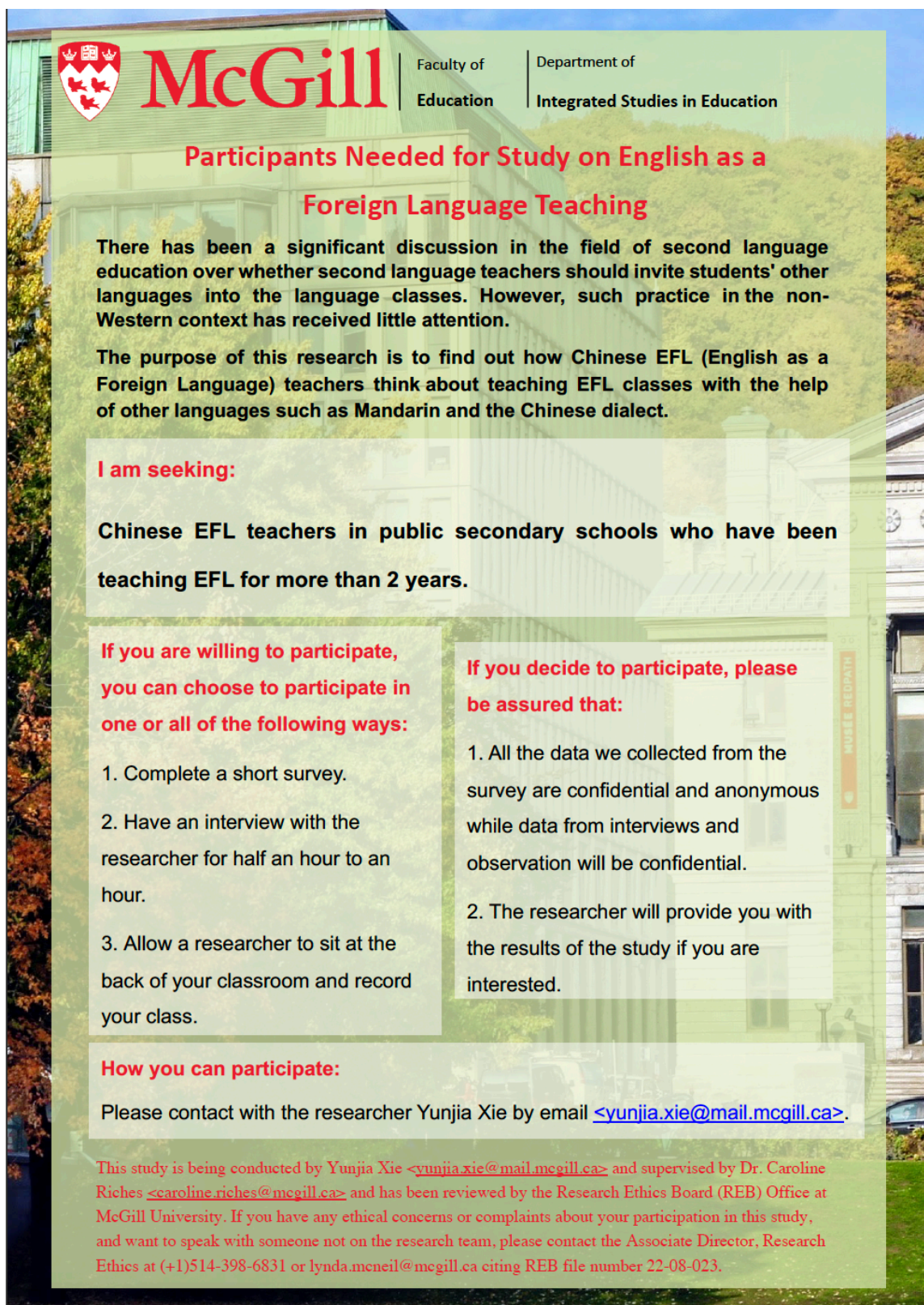Aronin & E. Vetter (Eds.), *Dominant language constellations approach in education and*

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**Appendix A Recruitment Letter**

# McGill

Faculty of **Education** | Department of **Integrated Studies in Education**

## Participants Needed for Study on English as a Foreign Language Teaching

There has been a significant discussion in the field of second language education over whether second language teachers should invite students' other languages into the language classes. However, such practice in the non-Western context has received little attention.

The purpose of this research is to find out how Chinese EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teachers think about teaching EFL classes with the help of other languages such as Mandarin and the Chinese dialect.

### I am seeking:

Chinese EFL teachers in public secondary schools who have been teaching EFL for more than 2 years.

**If you are willing to participate, you can choose to participate in one or all of the following ways:**

1. Complete a short survey.

2. Have an interview with the researcher for half an hour to an hour.

3. Allow a researcher to sit at the back of your classroom and record your class.

**If you decide to participate, please be assured that:**

1. All the data we collected from the survey are confidential and anonymous while data from interviews and observation will be confidential.

2. The researcher will provide you with the results of the study if you are interested.

### How you can participate:

Please contact with the researcher Yunjia Xie by email <yunjia.xie@mail.mcgill.ca>.

**Appendix B Survey Questions**

**Survey Title**

What do English teachers think about using other languages in the English class?

**Welcome Message**

Hi, thanks for your participation. Please read the following paragraphs before answering the survey.

Plurilingualism suggests that an individual's lifelong language practice is linked with personal experience in his or her social contexts. And plurilingual approaches in second language classrooms focus on developing students' language competence in which all the languages and cultures they acquire can play a role. In addition, through language learning, students can gain profound insight into language and cultural diversity.

One feature of plurilingual approaches is to teach a language with the help of other languages that students know. You will find explicit examples of plurilingual approaches in the survey below.

This survey aims at investigating Chinese EFL (English as a foreign language) teachers' usage of plurilingual approaches in EFL classrooms in public secondary schools. Your participation in this study will contribute to our understanding of how frequently Chinese EFL teachers utilize and how they feel about utilizing other languages in the classrooms.

Submitting your survey responses indicates that you consent to participate in this study. You may withdraw from the study at any time before submission, for any reason. Whether you choose to participate or not will not result in any impact on you. Once you have decided to withdraw it, you can simply close the website and your answer will not be recorded. However, as the participation is anonymous, withdrawal is not possible after you submit the survey.

**Survey Questions**

A. The following questions ask about how often you use other languages in the EFL class.

A1. I have been told clearly in the teacher training program that I can teach English in other languages (such as Mandarin, dialects, etc).

- Yes

- No

- I do not remember.

- Prefer not to answer

A2. I teach English using other languages in the English class.

- Yes

- No

- I do not remember.

- Prefer not to answer

Examples of teaching English using other languages: **explaining English definitions in Mandarin and/or Chinese dialects; giving instructions in Mandarin and/or dialects; making connections between English and Chinese, etc.**

Follow-up question for A2. I teach the following English skills using other languages in the English class.

|  | Never | Infrequently | Occasionally | Frequently | Prefer not to answer |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Listening |  |  |  |  |  |
| Reading |  |  |  |  |  |
| Speaking |  |  |  |  |  |
| Writing |  |  |  |  |  |

A3. I allow students to use other languages in the EFL class.

- Yes

- No

- I do not remember.

- Prefer not to answer

Examples of allowing students to use other languages: **completing writing outlines in Chinese, raising a question in Mandarin and/or Chinese dialects, making notes in Chinese, negotiating group tasks with classmates in Mandarin and/or Chinese dialects, etc.**

Follow-up question for A3: I allow students to use other languages when I teach the following English skills in the EFL class.

|  | Never | Infrequently | Occasionally | Frequently | Prefer not to answer |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Listening |  |  |  |  |  |
| Reading |  |  |  |  |  |
| Speaking |  |  |  |  |  |
| Writing |  |  |  |  |  |

A4. I make comparisons between Western cultures and Chinese cultures in the EFL class.

- Yes

- No

- I do not remember.

- Prefer not to answer

Follow-up question for A4: I make comparisons between Western cultures and Chinese cultures when I teach the following English skills in the EFL class.

| | Never | Infrequently | Occasionally | Frequently | Prefer not to answer |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Listening | | | | | |
| Reading | | | | | |
| Speaking | | | | | |
| Writing | | | | | |

B. The following questions ask about your opinion about using other languages in the EFL class.

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the statements below.

B1. I think it is common practice to teach English using other languages in the EFL class.

- Strongly Disagree

- Disagree

- Neutral

- Agree

- Strongly Agree

- Prefer not to answer

B2. I think it is common practice for students to use languages other than English in the EFL class.

- Strongly Disagree

- Disagree

- Neutral

- Agree

- Strongly Agree

- Prefer not to answer

B3. When I teach English using languages other than English, it helps me to teach English better.

- Strongly Disagree

- Disagree

- Neutral

- Agree

- Strongly Agree

- Prefer not to answer

B4. When students use languages other than English in the EFL class, it helps them to learn

English better.

- Strongly Disagree

- Disagree

- Neutral

- Agree

- Strongly Agree

- Prefer not to answer

B5. The use of other languages respects the home language background of the teachers and

students.

- Strongly Disagree

- Disagree

- Neutral

- Agree

- Strongly Agree

- Prefer not to answer

B6. The use of other languages in the EFL classroom respects the cultural background of teachers and students.

- Strongly Disagree

- Disagree

- Neutral

- Agree

- Strongly Agree

- Prefer not to answer

B7. The use of other languages in the EFL classroom helps to strengthen students' Chinese identities.

- Strongly Disagree

- Disagree

- Neutral

- Agree

- Strongly Agree

- Prefer not to answer

B8. The use of other languages in the EFL classroom helps students to strengthen their intercultural competence.

- Strongly Disagree

- Disagree

- Neutral

- Agree

- Strongly Agree

- Prefer not to answer

Intercultural competence (跨文化交际的能力) can be seen as a set of attitudes, knowledge and skills that enable students to communicate and interact smoothly with others from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. (Chiu, C. Y., Lonner, W. J., Matsumoto, D., & Ward, C. (2013). Cross-cultural competence: Theory, research, and application. *Journal of cross-cultural psychology, 44*(6), 843-848.  https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022113493716)

**End Message**

Thank you again for taking the time to complete this survey. We truly value the information you have provided.

Many thanks,

Yunjia Xie

## Appendix C Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

**Step 1: Warming up.**

1. The interviewer and interviewee exchange greeting

2. The interviewer states the interviewee's rights orally.

**Step 2: Requesting interviewee's identifying information.**

Example questions:

--What is your last name?

--what grade are you teaching?

--How long have you been teaching EFL?

**Step 3: Introducing and discussing the definition of "plurilingualism" and relevant terms.**

Example questions:

--Have you heard terms like "plurilingualism" or "translanguaging"? (If not, introduce it to the interviewee.)

**Step 4: Exploring the interviewee's practice .**

Example questions:

-- Do you use Mandarin or dialects in the EFL class?

    Follow up questions can be:

A. How often do you use Mandarin or the dialect in the EFL class?

B. When do you prefer to use Mandarin or the dialect and why?

-- Do you do cultural comparison in the classrooms?

Follow up question can be:

A. How often do you use cultural comparison?

**Step 5: Exploring the interviewee's opinion about plurilingual approaches.**

Example questions:

--What do you think of EFL teachers using other languages in the EFL classroom?

--What do you think of EFL teachers including other cultures?

Follow-up questions can be:

A. Under what circumstances?

Follow-up questions can be:

Do you think students will improve their English proficiency/ self-recognition/ intercultural awareness more if they learn English with the help of their first language and the home culture?

**Step 6: Summarizing.**

1. The interviewer makes a conclusion about their conversation and asks the interviewee to supplement. (briefly sum up/ if understand correctly or not)

2. The interviewer reiterates the interviewee's rights.