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Editors

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Contents

Editorial

Aek Phakiti[1], Marie Stevenson, Phil Chappell and Margaret Kettle

This volume features several new and emerging scholars in TESOL and applied linguistics. It includes various topics such as peer corrective feedback, immigrant identities, teacher attitudes towards genre-based writing pedagogy, second language motivation, English Medium Instruction and intercultural communication. These diverse topics offer valuable insights for language educators and researchers alike.

OVERVIEW OF THIS VOLUME

Reports of original research

Shike Jian examines how Chinese learners' perceived proficiency levels and communication styles influence peer corrective feedback (PCF). The research, involving 27 Chinese international students at an Australian university, found no significant effect of proficiency on PCF frequency. However, hesitation linked to proficiency perceptions affected participants' positive attitudes towards PCF. The study underscores the importance of these factors in enhancing collaborative learning environments.

Yulin Zhang explores how three Chinese economic immigrants in Australia construct their identities through acculturation experiences and how this affects their investment in English learning and cross-cultural practices. Using multi-case study research and narrative enquiry, the study found that participants strongly identified with their Chinese heritage. Their perceptions of identity and capital interplay influenced their investment in English and cross-cultural activities.

Noriko Iwashita and colleagues explore how Chinese university students cope with and perceive peer corrective feedback (PCF) during peer interaction (PI) activities. Data from 24 ESL students at an Australian university revealed that students navigate dual roles as feedback receivers and providers. They generally had positive attitudes towards PCF but varied perceptions of PI. Politeness strategies, influenced by Chinese culture, were used to maintain harmony. The study suggests that teachers should carefully consider cultural orientations and group students to enhance PI and PCF while maintaining classroom harmony.

Hideo Watanabe employs a longitudinal case study to investigate a high school language teacher's experiences with genre-based writing pedagogy in Japan. Using theoretical input and classroom observations, the study found that year-long support positively changed the teacher's attitude towards this pedagogy. Despite challenges related to the teaching environment, the use of an AI tool proved beneficial for providing corrective feedback to students.

Discussion articles

Daniel Xuqi Ouyang critically examines the Second Language Motivational Self-System (L2MSS) model, highlighting its significance and recent criticisms. The discussion includes the theoretical background, critical issues, and future research directions. The article also explores the implications of the L2MSS for language teaching research and classroom practice, providing valuable insights for educators and researchers in the field.

Interview

Jack C. Richards discusses the rise of English Medium Instruction (EMI) in educational institutions globally. He explains the reasons behind its growing popularity and contrasts it with Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). Professor Richards also addresses the challenges and issues associated with EMI, providing a nuanced perspective on its impact on both educators and students. This discussion offers valuable insights for anyone interested in global education trends.

Book review

Yulia Kharchenko reviews *Teaching and Learning in English Medium Instruction* by Jack C. Richards and Jack Pun. The book covers key theories, research, and practical advice for EMI teachers, making it accessible to both secondary and

higher education settings. Its broad scope and focus on academic literacy and teaching challenges, as Kharchenko pointed out, make it a valuable resource for a wide audience, encouraging critical reflection on the impact of EMI on education.

Simon McDonald reviews Jane Jackson's third edition of *Introducing Language and Intercultural Communication*, highlighting the book's emphasis on cultural sensitivity in communication. The book argues that English fluency alone is insufficient without understanding cultural dimensions. McDonald finds the book accessible and engaging as it features vignettes and practical suggestions, making it a valuable resource for those new to intercultural communication.

Peer Corrective Feedback Practices and Perceptions among Chinese Learners of English

Shike Jian[1]

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ABSTRACT

Peer interaction and peer corrective feedback (PCF) have been continuing interest to both practitioners and researchers. Empirical studies in various contexts have shown that factors like proficiency levels and communication styles can impact peer interaction and the provision of PCF (e.g., Choi & Iwashita, 2016; Nguyen & Newton, 2020). However, existing studies on Chinese learners have largely focused on their attitudes toward PCF. To fill this gap, this study explores Chinese learners' practices and perceptions regarding how their perceived proficiency level and communication style affect PCF. Twenty-seven Chinese international students at an Australian university were assigned three proficiency groups based on the pre-task proficiency assessment. They completed group interaction tasks with participants of different and similar proficiency. Recorded and transcribed group interactions were coded for language-related episodes (LREs) and PCF. Quantitative analysis showed no significant effect of proficiency level on the number of LREs and PCF. Post-task interviews revealed that Chinese learners mostly had positive feelings about PCF. However, some hesitation was noted, which was linked to the learners' perceived proficiency levels. Learners used indirect and inclusive language to soften negative comments. This study highlights how proficiency levels, communication styles, and learner perceptions affect PCF.

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Understanding these factors can help educators improve teaching methods and create more effective collaborative learning environments for Chinese learners.

***Keywords*:** Chinese English learners, communication style, learner perception, peer corrective feedback, peer interaction, proficiency level

INTRODUCTION

Corrective feedback (CF) refers to the responses elicited by learners' erroneous production of their second language (L2) (Li, 2010). CF can be provided in written and oral forms. Oral CF may originate from various sources, including teachers, native speakers, and peers. When a peer with equivalent status as a learner delivers CF, it is commonly termed peer corrective feedback (PCF). PCF plays a crucial role in fostering language learning as reported in empirical studies: development in language acquisition, including grammar acquisition (Kim, 2013; Sippel & Jackson, 2015), vocabulary (Sippel, 2019), and pronunciation (Martin & Sippel, 2021).

While PCF has received continuing attention (Iwashita & Dao, 2021), it remains relatively less explored than teacher CF (Sato, 2017). A large volume of the CF research in the context of Chinese learners has concentrated on teacher feedback (e.g., Chu, 2011; Zhai & Gao, 2018), leaving a notable gap in understanding PCF in this context. Studies conducted in a non-Chinese context showed that factors such as proficiency level (Choi & Iwashita, 2016; Nguyen & Newton, 2020), learners' perceptions of their peers' proficiency levels (Kim, 2020; Watanabe & Swain, 2008), and communication style (Carson & Nelson, 1996; Yan, 2016) can influence the quality and quantity of peer interaction and PCF. There is limited research on how proficiency levels and communication styles affect peer corrective feedback (PCF) among Chinese learners. In Chinese cultural contexts, providing feedback can be seen as a face-threatening act (Ergül, 2021), leading to less frequent PCF in group settings. Chinese communication is often indirect, with a reluctance to criticise (Carson & Nelson, 1996), although learners can be more direct with friends (Yan, 2016). Additionally, collaborative learning activities are less common in China (e.g., Li et al., 2014), potentially making students less inclined to engage in PCF.

This study aimed to fill the current research gap by exploring how communication style, proficiency level, and learner perception influence PCF among Chinese learners. It provides insights into the characteristics of Chinese language learners'

PCF and their perceptions of PCF, revealing how communication style may affect group work dynamics, yielding useful information about implementing group work in teaching Chinese learners and designing effective PCF training for Chinese students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Peer Interaction and PCF

PCF occurs within interactions among L2-L2 speakers (peer interaction). Peer interaction provides a context that offers richer learning prospects than interactions involving first language (L1) and L2 speakers (Sato, 2017). The richer learning opportunities from peer interaction can be explained through sociocultural perspectives (Nassaji & Swain, 2000). The sociocultural perspective argues that knowledge is built through social interactions, such as collaboration and learner communication (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978). According to this perspective, learning is viewed as an embedded process during interaction and it happens within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which is the gap between what learners can do independently and what they can achieve with help from adults or more capable peers (Nassaji & Swain, 2000). Scaffolding, another concept proposed by sociocultural theories, refers to a situation where a knowledgeable person provides support that helps learners build their skills and knowledge to a higher level. During group work, L2 learners participate in collaborative dialogue, or the cooperative creation of language by two or more people (Swain, 1997) and mutually support each other's learning. They need scaffolding within their ZPD as they interact with the teacher or peers (Nassaji & Swain, 2000). Providing and receiving corrective feedback can be seen as scaffolding where learners engage and exchange meaningful information with their peers in their ZPD (Nassaji & Swain, 2000). Therefore, PCF serves as a mediating tool that guides learners in language learning, supporting them in understanding and constructing meaning within social learning environments. When examining the dynamics of peer interaction, PCF possesses distinctive characteristics wherein L2 learners assume dual roles as providers and receivers of PCF, as outlined in the dual model proposed by Sato (2017). Sato (2017) posits that social and affective factors among peers may impact peer interaction. Therefore, understanding the nuances of these interactions is crucial, as a collaboratively constructed relationship with peers may significantly influence learning outcomes more than other factors, such as proficiency level (Watanabe, 2008).

Empirical Studies on PCF

Empirical studies suggest that teacher feedback is more likely to be adopted in contexts where teachers hold greater authority (e.g., Miao et al., 2006; Zhao, 2010). When providing PCF, learners may be reluctant to correct their peers' errors due to their proficiency levels and social concerns, including the fear of being perceived as arrogant (Philp et al., 2010). The effectiveness of PCF can be enhanced when students receive proper training. The benefits of peer feedback are amplified when students are prepared for the skills and demonstrate a willingness to engage in PCF (e.g., Han & Xu, 2019; Pitt et al., 2019).

Researchers have examined the benefits of PCF after training for the development of linguistic forms (e.g., question formation in Kim (2013); accuracy and fluency in Sato and Lyster (2012); present perfect tense verbs in Sippel and Jackson (2015); vocabulary items in Sippel (2019) and pronunciation in Martin & Sippel (2021). For example, Kim (2013) found that L1 Korean EFL learners who viewed the instructional videos detailing correction strategies before language tasks improved their ability to formulate L2 questions compared to the control group participants. Similarly, Sato and Lyster (2012) found that, at a Japanese university, students trained in delivering prompts and recasts exhibited superior accuracy and fluency development compared to both the peer-interaction-only and the control group.

Sippel and colleagues conducted several studies investigating the effect of PCF on various aspects of performance in the German language. Sippel and Jackson (2015) compared the effectiveness of oral CF from teachers and peers in acquiring German present perfect tense. The study revealed that while both teacher and peer feedback groups were beneficial, the peer feedback group demonstrated superior long-term gains and engaged in more frequent self-correction and discussions concerning linguistic forms. Building on this, Sippel (2019) examined the efficacy of PCF in form-focused instruction (FFI), a style of teaching where students are guided to make connections between language forms and a meaning-focused context (Sippel, 2019). The study revealed that participants who received CF training showed a significant advantage in vocabulary development over the other experimental groups. Furthermore, Martin and Sippel (2021) found that providing PCF was more beneficial for pronunciation development than receiving it.

These studies highlight the benefits of incorporating PCF training into language teaching and learning. However, studies have also reported individual factors' influence on PCF (e.g., Philp et al., 2010). Therefore, it is important to understand

how individual factors such as proficiency level, communication style and learner perception can influence PCF.

Impact of Individual Factors on Peer Interaction

Studies have extensively examined peer interaction by analysing language-related episodes (LREs), defined as instances where learners reflect on or question their language usage (e.g., Swain & Lapkin, 1998). Various factors moderate types and amount of LREs during peer interaction, including learners' proficiency levels, perceptions of their peers' proficiency, and communication styles (Carson & Nelson, 1996; Choi & Iwashita, 2016; Kim, 2020; Nguyen & Newton, 2020; Tian & Li, 2018; Watanabe, 2008; Watanabe & Swain, 2008; Yan, 2016).

Proficiency Level

Both objectively assessed and perceived proficiency levels can shape the dynamics and outcomes of peer interaction during collaborative language tasks. For instance, Watanabe (2008) examined the impact of pairing three learners of varying proficiency levels, i.e., higher or lower, during collaborative tasks and found that proficiency differences did not decisively affect the frequency of LREs or the quality of collaborative work measured by each member's contribution and participation. Similarly, focusing on low-proficiency learners, Choi and Iwashita (2016) investigated whether the proficiency level of group members may impact the occurrence of LREs and reported on the impact of proficiency levels on the frequency of LREs. The findings revealed that low-proficiency learners were less inclined to engage in LREs when grouped with peers of similar (low) proficiency, leading to more unresolved and incorrectly resolved LREs. They were also less likely to receive beneficial assistance from peers of low proficiency. In contrast, Nguyen and Newton (2020) found that low-proficiency dyads in a Vietnamese EFL context generated a significantly greater number of LREs compared to their high-proficiency counterparts, possibly due to the nature of the oral open-ended tasks that potentially heightened participants' awareness of language deficiencies (Nguyen & Newton, 2020).

Subjectively perceived proficiency levels also influence peer interaction. Watanabe and Swain (2008) suggest that Japanese English as a second language (ESL) learners' perceptions of their peers' proficiency levels may wield a more substantial influence on the nature of peer assistance than objectively measured proficiency levels. Similarly, Kim (2020) found that Korean EFL learners' perceptions of their peers' abilities could affect their willingness to engage in

collaborative tasks. Some participants felt motivated when paired with peers with higher-perceived proficiency, while others experienced frustration and embarrassment. In addition to the perception of peers' proficiency level, Philp et al. (2010) found learners' reticence to correct peers' errors due to their proficiency level. However, there remains a dearth of research examining how learners' perceptions of their proficiency levels affect peer interaction.

Communication Style

Another significant factor potentially impacting peer interaction is participants' communication style, the way one communicates and interacts with others (Norton, 1978). Culture profoundly influences communication styles, as highlighted by Carson and Nelson (1996), who posit that individuals from collectivist cultures, like Chinese, typically prioritise group harmony and mutual face-saving in collaborative settings. In Carson and Nelson (1996), the interaction patterns of three Chinese ESL learners engaging with peers from diverse cultural backgrounds were analysed. The findings revealed a reluctance among the Chinese participants to express disagreement or claim authority, often employing strategies such as under-specification and indirection to mitigate criticism or negative feedback. Similarly, Tian and Li (2018) reported Chinese learners' tendency to use euphemistic language, indirectness, under-specification, and offering excuses for errors to mitigate the impact of negative feedback. This phenomenon of culturally impacted communication styles is not limited to Chinese culture. For example, Finnish and Japanese communication styles are described as quiet and introverted, contrasting with the extroverted and talkative Indian communication style (Nishimura et al., 2008). Social status also influences communication style. Yan (2016) found that Chinese students exhibit a heightened sensitivity to social power dynamics. Specifically, students use more polite, indirect strategies when disagreeing with higher-status individuals but are more direct with peers of equal status.

Learner Perceptions of PCF

Apart from learner proficiency and communication style, learner perception of PCF has been identified as a factor influencing the provision of PCF (Sato, 2017). While some studies report learners' positive attitudes toward PCF (Sippel, 2020), others indicate a preference for teacher CF (Mahvelati, 2021; Schulz, 2001). Regarding Chinese learners' perceptions of PCF, Zhu and Wang (2019) surveyed 2670 Chinese undergraduate students regarding their attitudes toward PCF through a

questionnaire. Their findings indicated generally positive attitudes toward PCF among Chinese learners. However, participants preferred less frequent PCF than teacher feedback. Furthermore, Xu et al. (2019) observed that more PCF was directed towards morphological and syntactical errors. PCF was found to be influenced by social dynamics; positive peer relationships could either encourage or deter the provision of PCF. Xu et al. (2019) noted that close friendships might mitigate concerns of face-threatening situations arising from correction, yet familiarity between peers could lead to overlooking errors.

The existing research has largely focused on non-Chinese learners, examining how communication styles and proficiency levels—both objectively measured and subjectively perceived—affect peer interaction. However, there is a limited exploration into how these factors influence peer interaction and PCF among Chinese learners of English. Considering the unique context where many Chinese ESL learners in Australia learn English, few group activities and PCF are seen as face-threatening, it is unclear how the findings of the studies conducted in a non-Chinese context could apply to Chinese learners. To fill these gaps, the current study aims to examine learners' practices and perceptions of peer interaction and PCF by addressing the following research questions (RQ):

1. What linguistic features characterise peer interaction in different proficiency groups of Chinese English learners?

2. To what extent does Chinese English learners' perceived proficiency level influence the provision and reception of PCF during peer interaction?

3. To what extent does Chinese English learners' communication style affect their PCF during peer interaction?

METHODOLOGY

This study is part of a large project investigating various factors that impact peer interaction among learners from various language backgrounds. This manuscript focused on Chinese students only, exploring their interaction patterns regarding the occurrence of LREs and PCF and the possible influence of proficiency and communication styles on their interaction. A mixed method design based on Choi and Iwashita (2016) and Spinelli (2024) was employed, including group activities with collaborative writing tasks followed by a semi-structured focused group interview. The overall design is shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1. Data collection procedure
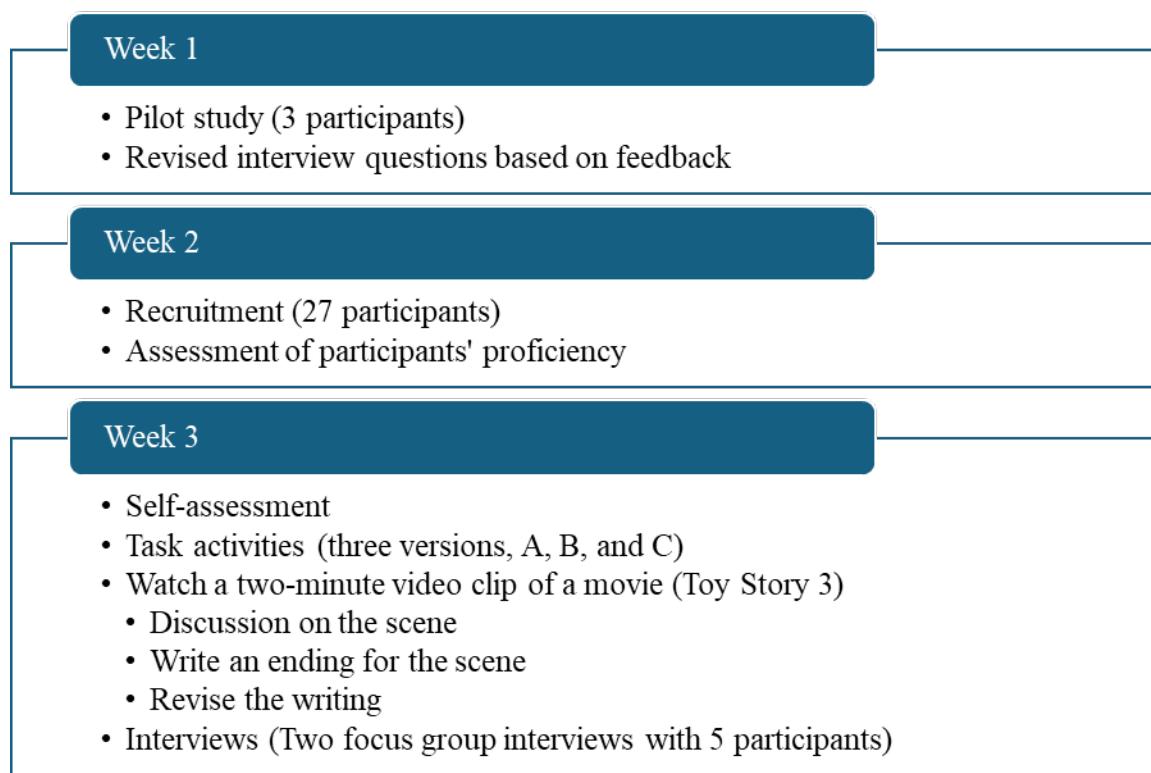
Participants

Twenty-seven Chinese international students (Female=22, Male=5) enrolled full-time at a large urban university in Australia participated in the study. They were pursuing various bachelor or postgraduate degrees (e.g., Bachelor of Commerce, Master of Business, etc.) at the time of data collection. All participants, aged 21-30, were from Mainland China, spoke Mandarin as their first language, and had lived in Australia for an average of 2.2 years. They had studied English for over 12 years and were at B1 to C1 proficiency levels according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Participants were recruited through WeChat (a social application) campus activity groups.

Assessment of Participants' Proficiency

All participants completed the Structure and Written Expression section of an institutional TOEFL (TOEFL, 1994), with scores converted to CEFR levels. Additionally, they completed a CEFR self-assessment sheet to evaluate their perception of their language proficiency regarding listening, reading, spoken interaction, spoken production and writing. Based on their test scores and self-assessments, participants were divided into low-proficiency (*N*=16) and high-proficiency (*N*=11).

Tasks and Group Assignment

The task comprised four parts (Figure 1). First, a warm-up activity had participants recall group work experiences, followed by viewing a two-minute clip from *Toy Story 3*. Participants then engaged in a five-minute speaking activity, answering one fixed question about the scene and one open-ended question about potential subsequent events. Next, they spent 10 minutes crafting a creative conclusion, with three minutes for revision. Participants were encouraged to interact in English but could use their first language if needed.

To understand how proficiency level affects group dynamics, participants were assigned to three proficiency groups (high-dominant, low, and mixed) based on TOEFL and CEFR self-assessments. Participants worked with peers with different or similar proficiency levels. The high-dominant group had one low-proficiency participant with the rest being high-proficient. The low group comprised only low-proficiency learners, and the mixed group included both. This grouping followed Choi and Iwashita's (2016) study. Most participants engaged with two to three proficiency groups, with group sizes of three to five members.

Participants completed an opinion gap task with three versions (A, B and C). Opinion gap tasks require learners to articulate their preferences or attitudes as part of task completion (Prabhu, 1987), thus promoting negotiation (Ellis, 2003). The order of participation was counterbalanced, e.g., some participants did task A in a mixed proficiency group, others did A in a high-dominant group. Detailed group assignments are in Appendix A.

Interviews

After group activities, five low-proficiency B1 participants (three females, two males) participated in semi-structured focus group interviews. They were selected

to complete all three versions and interact with peers of varying proficiency levels. Divided into two groups, they discussed their perspectives on group activities, proficiency levels, communication styles, and PCF. Questions were asked in English and Chinese, allowing participants to express themselves comfortably, covering tasks, proficiency levels, communication styles, and PCF (Appendix B).

Data Collection

The data collection procedure lasted over three weeks (see Figure 1). In the first week, a pilot study with three Chinese international students (two high- and one low-proficiency learners) tested task timing and interview questions, leading to edits based on their feedback. Participant recruitment and proficiency assessment were undertaken in the second week. In the third week, participants' self-assessment, group interactions and interviews were administered on the same day.

Data Analysis

The audio-recorded group interactions and interviews were transcribed verbatim. Transcripts include 12 group interactions (288 minutes) and two interviews (96 minutes), covering all activities: video, discussion and writing. Only the discussion and writing portions were analysed. The analysis involved all participants to get a broad picture of group dynamics across the groups unlike previous studies (Choi & Iwashita, 2016; Spinelli, 2024) which focused only low proficiency learners.

Language-Related Episodes (LREs)

The transcripts of each group activity were coded with the grammatical and lexical LREs. The number was manually counted. Lexical LREs occur when learners discuss the meaning, spelling and/or pronunciation of vocabulary. Example 1 shows a lexical LRE from a low-proficiency group.

Example 1

1. LP1 (22:14): purchase怎么拼啊？P-O-R-S-H-E-S? *<How do you spell 'purchase'? P-O-R-S-H-E-S? >*

2. LP4 (22:17): 买。*<To buy.>* Purchase. P-U-R-C-H-A-S-E.

3. (Low proficiency group 2)

Grammatical LREs indicate learners discussing the syntactical and/or morphological aspects. In Example 2, participants discussed the past tense of "catch".

Example 2

1. *HP1 (09:40):* 好奇怪啊caught。 *<Caught is so weird.>*

2. *LP1 (09:43):* 是catched up吧。 Catched up。 *<It's catched up, right? Catched up.>*

3. HP1 (09:44): Caught.

(Mixed proficiency group 2)

Peer Corrective Feedback (PCF)

The transcripts of group tasks were also analysed for PCF, employing the coding categories used in Lyster and Ranta (1997). Example 3 shows a PCF episode of repetition and elicitation, where HP1 first repeated LP2's utterance and then elicit LP2 to self-correct.

Example 3

1. LP1 (21:16): Je-Jessie gra-grabbed their friends one by one use, use the their...

2. LP2 (21:32): Jessie grabs.

3. HP1 (21:33): Grabs? Grabs or grabbed?

4. *LP2 (21:36):* uh, 有ed的。 *<Uh, with an ed.>*

(Mixed proficiency group 2)

The intercoder reliability is ensured by having a second coder to code 20% of the data. In case of discrepancy, the coders discussed each discrepant item to understand the reason behind their different choices and reached a consensus on the correct coding. After the coding, the frequency of LREs and PCF was calculated to answer research question 1.

Interviews

The interview data was transcribed, translated, and analysed for themes related to proficiency level, communication style, and PCF. Responses on perceived proficiency and its impact on PCF were analysed to address research question 2. Data from sections three and four were examined to answer research question 3 regarding communication style. To maintain anonymity, each interviewee was referred to by a pseudonym in the subsequent analysis.

RESULTS

This study examined peer interactions among Chinese learners, analysing factors that influence PCF through a mixed-method approach. This section presents findings from both quantitative and qualitative analyses in relation to the research questions.

Linguistic Characteristics of Peer Interaction (RQ1)

Language-related Episodes (LREs)

Table 1 summarises the LREs produced by twelve groups (27 participants): five low-proficiency groups, four mixed-proficiency groups, and three high-dominant groups. Participants produced 87 grammatical LREs and 88 lexical LREs during group interaction tasks. The high-dominant groups generated most grammatical LREs, while low-proficiency groups led in lexical LREs. Notably, lexical LREs variation among groups was minimal, as shown in small SDs.

Table 1. LRE Occurrences by proficiency groups

	Low (*n*=5)	Mixed (*n*=4)	High-dominant (*n*=3)	Total (*n*=12)
Grammatical				
Total	36	24	27	87
M	7.2	6	9	7.25
SD	1.83	1.41	5.1	3.14
Lexical				
Total	40	28	20	88
M	8	7	6.67	7.33
SD	3.03	3.16	1.69	2.86

Notes: *n* denotes the number of groups.

Lexical LREs consistently appeared across tasks, mainly focusing on spelling and word choice, while grammatical LREs were more frequent during the final task phase when participants revised their work. Nearly all groups engaged in LREs concerning tense discussions, occurring most frequently within the low-proficiency groups, characterised by extended length, uncertainty, and incorrect resolution. In mixed-proficiency groups, high-dominant group participants provided brief corrections, while high-dominant groups offered detailed explanations, such as justifying past tense. Conversely, low- and mixed-proficiency groups rarely provided such explanations.

Peer Corrective Feedback (PCF)

Table 2 provides a summary of the PCF generated by 12 groups. 63 PCF were produced in total. Mixed-proficiency groups produced the highest average frequency of PCF production, while the lowest frequency of PCF was observed among the high-dominant group.

Table 2. PCF Occurrences by proficiency groups

	Low (*n=5*)	Mixed (*n=4*)	High-dominant (*n=3*)	Total (*n=12*)
Total	26	23	14	63
M	5.2	5.75	4.67	5.25
SD	3.06	3.11	1.24	2.77

Notes: *n* denotes the number of groups.

Table 3 displays the categories of PCF and their mean occurrences across three proficiency groups. Recast and explicit correction were the most common PCF types, whereas clarification requests and elicitation were the least used. Recast dominated within low-proficiency participants, while explicit correction was most frequent within mixed-proficiency groups. Figure 2 shows the distribution of PCF types and frequency by group. The low-proficiency groups used four types, mixed-proficiency groups five, and high-dominant groups three.

Table 3. *PCF types by proficiency groups*

	Low (*n=5*)	Mixed (*n=4*)	High-dominant (*n=3*)	Total (*n=12*)
Explicit correction	6	9	4	19
M	1.2	2.25	1.33	1.58
Recast	17	10	6	32
M	3.4	2.5	2	2.66
Clarification request	1	0	0	1
M	0.2	0	0	0.08

Notes: *n* denotes the number of groups.

Table 4. *PCF types by proficiency groups (continued)*

	Low (*n*=5)	Mixed (*n*=4)	High-dominant (*n*=3)	Total (*n*=12)
Metalinguistic feedback	0	2	2	4
M	0	0.5	0.67	0.33
Elicitation	0	2	0	2
M	0	0.5	0	0.16
Repetition	2	1	2	5
M	0.4	0.25	0.67	0.42

Examination of interaction data reveals how PCF was delivered. For example, recast was employed to address grammatical errors and inappropriate word choice, such as when a low-proficiency participant incorrectly utilised the present tense for a past event. It also addressed incorrect vocabulary choices and encompasses translations in response to the use of native language (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). Since L1 was not restricted, participants were found translating their peers' native language (Mandarin Chinese). Explicit correction involves providing the correct form (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). It was most commonly used during the final phase of the task, when participants reviewed their writings, to correct inaccurate use of grammatical and lexical items.

Proficiency Level and PCF (RQ2)

To answer the research question 2 regarding how perceived proficiency level influences PCF, two focus-group interviews were analysed. Four themes were identified: their low perceived proficiency level, preference for working with higher-proficiency peers, and how perceived proficiency level influences provision and reception of PCF.

Figure 2. PCF types and numbers in each group
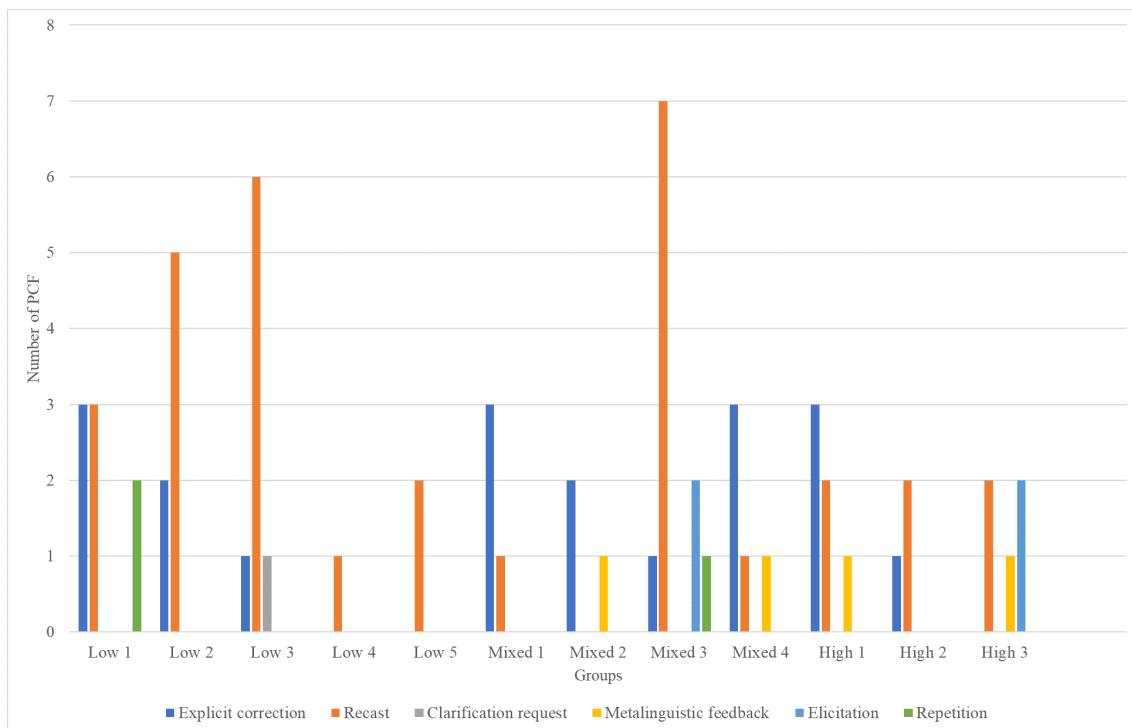
Notes: "High" refers to high-dominant groups.

Low Perceived Proficiency Level

As explained above, before task activities, participants completed a CEFR self-assessment sheet investigating their subjectively perceived proficiency level. According to the self-assessment sheets, all five participants interviewed perceived their proficiency levels to be within the B1 to B2 range. Participants perceived proficiency levels to be lower than their TOEFL-assessed levels. The post-task focus group interviews elicited participants' perspectives regarding their subjectively perceived proficiency and how they believed their proficiency level might influence their behaviour during group work.

When asked about their perception of their language proficiency level, the descriptor employed most frequently in the interviews was "average." Ling

expressed having "difficulty reading," while Jia thought that, despite considering herself average, it was more crucial that one "dare to speak."

Preference for working with higher proficiency peers

When queried about collaborating with peers, participants preferred study groups with mixed proficiencies, while some expressed concern regarding wide proficiency gaps. Most favoured working with higher-proficiency peers. Ling noted that she "might ask more questions" to learn from higher-proficiency peers and would take on a leadership role when working with lower-proficiency peers. Jia posited that high-proficiency peers motivated her to communicate in English and be mindful of her accent and language use. Ling also stated that she would "mimic" more proficient peers. However, Zhen noted that he would not modify his style when working with learners of varying proficiencies due to his proficiency limitations.

Provision and Reception of PCF

Participants articulated concerns about how proficiency level affects their provision of PCF, including difficulties identifying errors, comprehending others' PCF, and the potential to offend others. Jia indicated that she sometimes struggled to recognize mistakes, while Lan worried about offending when correcting them in English. Regarding the impact of peers' proficiency levels on PCF reception, interviewees generally exhibited a humble attitude, asserting that there would be "no big difference," as shown in Excerpt 1. Their practices evidenced this stance; they expressed no dissatisfaction with PCF, and their discussions were harmonious. Lan and Yun agreed that their language ability could hinder their understanding of PCF.

Excerpt 1

  RA: Do you feel the same corrected by people with higher and lower level than you?

  Zhen: Nothing different.

  Ling: No big difference. If I am wrong, I'm wrong. The level doesn't matter. I am wrong.

Communication Style and PCF (RQ3)

To answer the research question 3 regarding how Chinese learners' communication style influences their PCF, two focus-group interviews and interaction data were analysed. Three themes were identified: confidence in native language and concerns about miscommunication in English, communication style, and how communication style affected their PCF practices.

Confidence in Native Language and Concerns About Miscommunication in English

Participants felt more confident speaking Chinese than English, due to its natural fluency and lack of fear of mistakes. They thought they could be more "precise," "deep," and speak faster using Chinese (Excerpt 2). While in English, they often found their minds struggling to keep up with their speech, leading to mistakes and misunderstandings.

Excerpt 2

> Lan: One difference is limited English proficiency. In Chinese, I can delve deeper into topics, but in English, my points are simplistic due to language limitations.

> Yun: I think it's about detail. In Chinese, I can be more precise, but in English, there might be misunderstandings due to less precise word choice.

Chinese Communication Style

All five interviewees agreed that Chinese or Japanese people tend to be more indirect in communication than Westerners. Lan and Zhen attributed this to cultural factors, with Lan noting that direct disagreement in East Asian contexts could make others feel "uncomfortable." Most participants were reluctant or hesitant to voice disagreement, preferring to express it indirectly and "gently." The way they expressed disagreement depended on the interlocutors and the conversation goals (Excerpt 3).

Excerpt 3

> Lan: Then, I would consider whether we have a common goal that needs to be achieved. ... If it's relevant to me, I would remind them, but in a gentle way. If there's no particular goal, then I wouldn't really bother.

Ling: I think it depends on the person, if I meet that kind of foreign group member, then I can be very direct with him and say I think I don't quite agree with your point of view, and then what do I think. If it's a Chinese participant, I may have to be a bit more euphemistic.

Communication Style and PCF

When questioned about providing PCF in group tasks, the interviewees emphasised factors similar to those involved in handling disagreement, that their approach to delivering PCF would vary depending on the significance of the task and whether peers in the group use direct or indirect communication style (Excerpt 4).

Excerpt 4

Lan: Sometimes I tend to adapt to the environment first. For example, if everyone in the group tends to express their opinions directly and point out mistakes straightforwardly, then when I speak English, I'll definitely do the same. However, if I'm new to this environment, I might still follow the patterns of my native language, even when speaking English.

All interviewees were generally open to receiving PCF and concurred that they would only offer it frequently if it impacted the conversation outcome. They reported limited experiences of feeling hurt by or causing hurt through PCF but acknowledged that insults or unfriendly or commanding tone could be offensive. Most agreed that they would deliver PCF gently and indirectly. Despite using implicit corrections, participants applied several strategies to soften their PCF. They used strategies like rising tones or question forms to soften their feedback, as shown in Excerpts 5 and 6.

Excerpt 5

1   HP2: =应该是，对 *<Yeah, it maybe, right>* sorry, then he come come come came up, with the idea that he could make some noise and distract, Andy's mom, so he pull the sound ring **and talked**((Writing)), 可以吗？ *<Okay?>*=

2   HP4: **=talked to?=**

3   HP3: =就是talked((laugh)) *<Just talked is ok((laugh))>*

(High-dominant group 1)

Excerpt 6

1   LP1 (19:59): <u>这里是不是应该是</u>**thought**<u>过去</u>= < *Shouldn't this be the 'thought' past tense*>

(Low proficiency group 3)

When giving explicit correction, learners might use inclusive language, such as "It's better to say," framing the correction as a suggestion and making it more collaborative (Excerpt 7). Another strategy was to convey humility and reduce authority using tentative language such as "I may not be right" (Excerpt 8).

Excerpt 7

1   LP3: = **<u>Without Woody who want to be free, work together</u>**

2   HP1(22:22): <u>有一个是</u>**except Woody**<u>好一些，</u> **all the toys except Woody**<*It's better to say except Woody, all the toys except Woody*>=

3   LP3: =**<u>except</u>**=

(Mixed proficiency group 1)

Excerpt 8

1.   LP2 (20:21): <u>这里加</u>**ed，started**<u>吧，我也不一定是对的。</u>< Add ed here, 'started', I may not be right.>

(Mixed proficiency group 3)

DISCUSSION

The present study investigated how proficiency level and communication style affect Chinese English language learners' practices and perceptions of peer interaction and PCF. In this chapter, the findings are interpreted by referring to the previous research and organised according to the research questions.

Linguistic Features of Peer Interaction in Different Proficiency Groups (RQ1)

The results indicate varying characteristics in LREs and PCF across proficiency groups. Descriptive statistics indicate that high-dominant groups produced the most grammatical LREs, while low-proficiency groups generated the most lexical LREs. However, the disparity in LREs among groups was minimal, contrasting with Watanabe's (2008) findings where some participants generated significantly fewer LREs with lower-proficiency peers. In this study, all groups collaborated equally, with each member contributing ideas, writing parts of the composition and checking grammar. This collaboration reflects Swain's (1997) notion of collaborative dialogue, where learners co-construct knowledge and share linguistic problem-solving, regardless of individual proficiency differences.

In terms of PCF, mixed-proficiency groups exhibited the most frequent PCF episodes. From sociocultural perspectives, proficiency differences create opportunities for scaffolding, as higher-proficiency learners provide feedback and explanations, while lower-proficiency learners benefit from the PCF within their ZPD. Recast was the most frequently used strategy, consistent with Xu et al. (2019), who found that Chinese students preferred recast over other correction strategies. However, unlike Xu et al. (2019), where explicit correction was the least frequent, this study found it to be the second most common strategy, surpassing clarification request, metalinguistic feedback, elicitation and repetition. The difference may be due to the writing revision phase in this study, where participants were reminded to check their grammar and vocabulary, leading to a higher frequency of explicit corrections during the final review.

Influence of Perceived Proficiency Level on PCF (RQ2)

Interview findings suggest that learner perceptions of their proficiency levels can influence both the provision and reception of PCF during peer interaction. Generally, participants preferred working with higher-proficiency peers for more learning opportunities. With lower-proficiency peers, participants often assumed a leadership role, aligning with Kim (2020), who found that participants felt greater responsibility and positioned themselves as experts to support and guide their partners. Concerns about identifying others' mistakes due to low perceived proficiency correspond with Xu et al. (2019), where a lack of knowledge was the most cited discouraging factor in providing CF. Participants generally held a positive attitude toward receiving PCF, consistent with Zhu and Wang (2019). However, Zhu and Wang (2019) did not specify the proficiency level of peers

providing PCF. Participants showed a humble attitude towards PCF regardless of their peers' proficiency level but expressed concerns about their proficiency level when understanding PCF. These concerns highlight the variability in learners' ZPD, as PCF may not always align with their current linguistic capabilities. According to Nassaji and Swain (2000), effective scaffolding occurs when feedback is negotiated within the learner's ZPD, suggesting that students may benefit from training in collaborative negotiation to better scaffold each other's learning.

Impact of Communication Style on PCF (RQ3)

While the collectivist cultural background of Chinese learners (Carson & Nelson, 1996) may encourage the collaborative behaviours in group work in this study, as group harmony and mutual assistance are highly valued, peer interaction may also be further complicated by the indirect communication style of Chinese learners. Participants agreed that they have a more indirect communication style compared to Westerners, whom they considered blunter and more direct. Factors such as interlocutors' and peers' communication styles affected how they expressed opinions and gave PCF. Participants indicated that they would be direct with non-Chinese group members but indirect with Chinese peers, adjusting their style based on the group environment, stating they would "do the same" if everyone in the group expressed their opinions directly. This may explain the frequent use of explicit correction, as they interacted with people of equal status and similar cultural backgrounds, aligning with Yan's (2016) findings.

Interaction data reveal that participants used inclusive, tentative language or indirection by asking a question instead of direct statements to soften their PCF or negative comments (Excerpt 9). When giving explicit correction, they conveyed humility and uncertainty to reduce their authority and show politeness. This aligns with Carson and Nelson (1996), who found that Chinese learners were reluctant to claim authority, and Tian and Li (2018), who observed that they tried to avoid offending others when providing negative feedback.

Excerpt 9

1. P2 (11:35): **fight**的过去式好像是，**fight**的过去式不是加**-ed**吧？ <The past tense of fight seems to be, the past tense of fight isn't plus -ed, is it?>=

2. P3 (19:59): 这里是不是应该是**thought**过去= < Shouldn't this be the 'thought' past tense>

3. P1(22:22): <u>有一个是**except Woody**好一些，**all the toys except Woody**</u><It's better to say except Woody, all the toys except Woody>=

CONCLUSION

The current study has explored two factors influencing Chinese learners' peer interaction and peer corrective feedback (PCF): perceived proficiency level and communication style. The analyses of group interaction show that mixed-proficiency groups used PCF most frequently and recast was the most frequent strategy. The focus-group interview data show that Chinese learners generally held a positive attitude toward receiving PCF but were cautious when providing it. These findings might be attributed to two issues. Firstly, subjectively perceived proficiency level may affect the provision and reception of PCF, as learners sometimes have difficulty understanding PCF and identifying others' mistakes. Therefore, perceived proficiency may result in reduced PCF episodes and/or hinder the reception and acceptance of PCF. Secondly, communication style can also influence learners' PCF. Participants generally agreed that they have an indirect communication style, leading them to avoid direct corrections. This was evidenced by the predominant use of implicit correction strategies, such as recast and indirection or inclusive language when providing explicit correction.

However, there are several limitations. Firstly, the small sample size limits the generalisability of the findings. The sample may not fully capture the diversity of Chinese learners, such as those studying in other English-speaking countries or domestic Chinese contexts. Secondly, the high-dominant groups included only one low-proficiency participant, which would have reduced the opportunities for low-proficiency learners to contribute to the discussion. Furthermore, the very narrow proficiency gap between participants (B1 to C1) might not adequately capture the dynamics of more varied proficiency pairings. Future studies could explore wider proficiency gaps (e.g., A2 to C1) to better understand how proficiency differences influence peer interaction and PCF. Thirdly, while low-proficiency learners provided valuable insights in the interviews, the lack of high-proficiency participants' perception may lead to an insufficient knowledge of PCF dynamics. Future studies should involve interviews with high-proficiency learners to explore whether and how their perceptions and practices of PCF differ from those of less proficient learners. Additionally, stimulated recall methodologies could be used to better understand factors influencing PCF practices. Participants could review recordings of their interactions and reflect on their decision-making processes

(e.g., why they chose explicit corrections over other types). Lastly, the communication styles of some participants might have been influenced by their extended residence in Australia. Future research could address this limitation by conducting longitudinal studies to examine whether prolonged exposure to Western communication norms influences the indirect communication style typically associated with Chinese learners.

The findings of this study provide insights into the grouping of students with varying language proficiency levels. Drawing from statistical data and post-task interviews exploring students' perceptions, the research suggests that to promote the effective use of PCF, it is advisable to form mixed-proficiency groups comprising learners of different levels. This allows lower-proficiency learners to benefit from interactions with their higher-proficiency peers. However, participants did not regularly engage in providing PCF, and their perceptions reflected a sense of caution or hesitation when providing PCF. The findings highlight the need to directly address the advantages of PCF with students and provide them with guidance on effectively offering feedback to their peers (Sippel & Jackson, 2015).

AUTHOR

Shike Jian completed Master of Applied Linguistics (TESOL) at the University of Queensland. Her research interests include TESOL, EAL/D, CALL. Shike has taught English from primary to university levels and contributed to research on peer interaction and peer corrective feedback.

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APPENDIX A

Group	Members	Task
Low proficiency 1	Zhen, Lan, Jia, Emma	1A
Low proficiency 2	Yun, Lan, Emma, Zhen	1B
Low proficiency 3	Yilin, Zichen, Guang	1A
Low proficiency 4	Yunqian, Zichen, Guang	1B
Low proficiency 5	Shuai, Han, Hanyue	1A
Mixed proficiency 1	Zi (HP), Jia, Lan, Jie (HP), Zhen	1B
Mixed proficiency 2	Ling, Fei (HP), Emma, Yun, Yi (HP)	1C
Mixed proficiency 3	Yunqian, Xi, Chen (HP), Wan (HP)	1A
Mixed proficiency 4	Ting, Yin, Lorelei (HP), Yu (HP)	1A
High dominant 1	Jia, Yi (HP), Zi (HP), Fei (HP), Jie (HP)	1C
High dominant 2	Yun, Yi (HP), Zi (HP), Fei (HP), Jie (HP)	1A
High dominant 3	Ting, Meng (HP), Sam (HP), Yiyun (HP)	1B

Notes: HP – high proficiency participant.

APPENDIX B INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Task

1.   Do you have group activities when you are learning English?

2.   Do you like to work in a group with other students when learning English?

3.   Which factor(s) have contributed to your engagement in each of the activities?

Proficiency

1.   What do you think about your English level? What do you think of the people you worked with in the group activities?

   a.   Compared to your peers in your major?

   b.   Compared to your peers in China?

2.   How do you feel while working with higher/lower-level learners?

   a.   Do you believe that group work should be done with learners from the same or different levels? Why?

3.   Did you speak differently when you worked in a group with a higher level than you did when you worked in a group with a similar/lower level to yours? Why?

4.   Do you worry when you work with higher level group members?

Communication Style

1.   Could you please describe how different you feel between speaking Chinese and English?

2.   Do you think you speak English differently when you are in China compared to when you are here?

3.   Do you think Australian people talk differently from Chinese people?

4.   Do you feel that you have a different style when speaking English?

   a.   If you feel you talk differently speaking your first and second language, which style do you prefer? Why?

5.   In the group activity, when you encountered a point of view that you disagreed with, what would you do?

   a.   What factors do you think impact your actions?

   b.   If you would express your different views, how would you put it? Do you think you would do it the same way as when you speak your first language?

6.   I found Chinese/Japanese people more indirect than Westerners. What do you think? Do you agree?

Peer Corrective Feedback

1.   In the group activity, when you discover your peers' mistakes, what would you do?

   a.   Do you think there will be differences between when you speak your first language and when you speak English? Why?

2.   Do you think you are happy when your peers correct your mistakes during group activity? Or do you feel offended?

3.   Do you correct your peers? How do you do that?

4.   Do you think English level may affect you when you correct others or when others correct you? Can you give me examples?

5.   In your opinion, do Chinese students like to correct others? Do they like to be corrected?

6.   How do you feel when you are corrected by someone who has a higher level than you? What about someone who has a lower level?

7.   Do you understand when your peers correct you? Was there any time when you didn't understand your peers? How did you solve it?

8.   Do you have any experience when you hurt other people's feelings when you correct them? Or when you are hurt when they correct you? Why do you think this happened?

In Search of Identities: How Chinese Economic Immigrants Invest in their English Language Learning and Use

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates how three Chinese economic immigrants' identity construction is influenced by their acculturating experiences in Australia and how the process of their identity construction mediates their investment in English learning/use and cross-cultural practices. The study employs multi-case study research and narrative enquiry as merged methodologies drawing on a semi-structured interview with each participant. Thematic analysis reveals that while they exerted agency to strike a balance between the host culture and their heritage culture, they seemed to strongly identify with their heritage culture, namely as Chinese, rather than hyphenating or hybridising their identity. In addition, the Chinese immigrants' investment in English language and cross-cultural practices seemed to be mediated by their perceptions of the interplay between capital and their different identities, including their Chinese identity. The findings have significant theoretical, pedagogical, and policy implications.

Keywords: Chinese immigrants, identity, investment, second language learning, Australia

INTRODUCTION

Despite the Australian government's advocacy for multilingualism and support for the teaching and study of community languages, English remains the country's predominant language and the primary medium of communication, which seems necessary as its multicultural society is characterised by diverse languages and cultures partly due to immigration. English proficiency, therefore, plays an essential role in immigrants' ability to access education, employment, healthcare, and social services, as well as successful social integration. Immigrants' English ability is also in the best interest of the country to sustain social cohesion and economic development (McDonald et al., 2019).

Chinese-born residents are the third largest group of overseas-born living in Australia, accounting for 2.5% of the total population (ABS, 2023), yet according to the 2021 Census, people who spoke Chinese languages at home represented the largest proportion of the population with low English proficiency (ABS, 2022). Thus, it is of theoretical and practical importance to understand the extent to which Chinese immigrants are able to engage in and commit to English learning/use, Australian social interaction and community practices.

The current study aims to unravel the complex individual and social factors influencing Chinese economic immigrants' language and cultural learning as they integrate into their host society, by employing the notions of identity and investment constructed by Norton and her colleagues (Darvin & Norton, 2015; Norton, 2013; Norton & De Costa, 2018). The study's findings may provide insights for Australia's future language policy as well as Australia's settlement services, e.g., the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) (see DHA, 2024a).

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section presents theories related to identity and investment, and provides a comprehensive overview of existing research, identifying key themes, gaps, and methodological approaches that inform and justify the direction and significance of the current study.

Identity

From a poststructuralist perspective, identities are socioculturally constructed ongoing narratives, which develop and evolve across time and space (Block, 2015).

An individual's identity is dynamic, evolving and multilayered rather than stable, fixed and unitary (Norton, 1997), which is constructed and reconstructed through his or her engagement within specific communities of practice in the social world (Block, 2015). Besides, while the process of identity construction involves self-ascription and self-positioning by individuals, they are simultaneously positioned and recognised in particular ways by other participants in interactions (Block, 2015).

Norton (2013) defines identity as "the way a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future" (p. 4). For second language (L2) learners, language learning is a kind of identity work (DFG, 2016), and language and identity are inextricably interconnected since "identity constructs and is constructed by language" (Norton, 1997, p. 419). As regards international migrants, their identities do not simply involve adding the new to the old or a half-and-half combination (Block, 2007), which instead should be viewed as hybrid and being constantly produced and reproduced anew (Hall, 1994).

Investment

Investment can be defined as "the commitment to the goals, practices, and identities that constitute the learning process and that are continually negotiated in different relations of power" (Darvin, 2019, p. 245). The notion of investment views learners as having a complex identity that changes across time and space and is transformed through social interactions (Norton, 2013). Individuals' investment involves not only affirming their existing identities and empowering them to claim the right to speak, but also affording them the ability to imagine new identities and affiliations (Norton, 2013). Furthermore, learners invest in a language because they anticipate acquiring a wider range of symbolic and material resources, which will, in turn, enhance the value of their cultural capital and social power (Norton, 2013).

Research on acculturation and identity of Chinese immigrants

Several researchers interested in immigrants' acculturation and identity have targeted Chinese economic immigrants in a context where they navigate between their mother/heritage language and language of the host country and negotiate between their heritage culture and the host culture.

Primarily drawing on narrative data, this line of research has revealed that while integrating into mainstream society, many Chinese immigrants tend to develop a hyphenated, in-between identity (Fang & Huang, 2020; Liu, 2015) and that their identity construction is an ever-evolving, non-linear process (Amireault, 2020; Fang & Huang, 2020; Huang et al., 2021; Liu, 2015). Chinese immigrants are found to identify themselves differently from each other, and in terms of identity performance, they tend to enact their identities differently in different contexts through either their language use or behaviour (Fang & Huang, 2020; Huang et al., 2021; Liu, 2015; Paciocco, 2021), which points to the complexity and intricacy of their sense of self.

Another remarkable theme emerging from previous studies is that, while Chinese immigrants recognise the importance of enhancing proficiency in their host society's official/dominant language (Amireault, 2020; Han, 2012), they find that no matter how well they spoke that language and how closely they acted like Anglophones, they would still be categorised as the Other in a predominantly white country because of their physical appearance (Fang & Huang, 2020; Liu, 2015), which indicates that identity negotiation is embedded in a power hierarchy.

While these studies provide valuable angles to researching Chinese immigrants' identity construction, only Liu (2015) and Huang et al. (2021) were conducted in Australia. In addition, neither of these two studies purposefully explored how the participants' role as language learners interact with their identity construction. Nor was the impact of identity construction on the immigrants' language investment examined. Thus, the present study aims to address this gap in the literature.

Research on Chinese-background learners' language investment

Many studies investigating Chinese English as a second language (ESL) learners' identity and investment in language and culture learning have been centred on students in school or study-abroad (SA) university settings in societies where English is either the official or dominant language. For example, Lee (2008) and Arkoudis and Love (2008) investigated how imagined identities and imagined communities could influence Chinese-background students' investment in English learning, English oral participation and social interaction. Those two studies also indicate that, a language learner's motivation for learning English may not translate into investment in the language practices of a given context if, for example, they are positioned as "inadequate, incapable, or unworthy" (Darvin

2019, p. 245) or the practices do not engage the learner's hopes and desires for the future.

Scholars have adopted the construct of capital in Darvin and Norton's (2015) investment model in their inquiry by drawing on case study methods. It was found that Chinese ESL learners selectively invested in identities that were likely to transform their lives (Cao & Newton, 2019; Chang, 2016; Crowther, 2020; Shi & Guo, 2021; Sung, 2019). Together, these studies have deepened our understanding of Chinese ESL learners' investment by revealing the complex interrelationships between their investment in learning, their existing and imagined identities, cultural and social capital, and ideology, as well as how the interplay between identity, capital, and ideology mediates their desire and commitment to learning.

However, in this line of research, little is known about the language and cultural investment of Chinese immigrants, who, as they integrate with their receiving society, have different experiences from Chinese-background students who study at an English-medium educational institution. Thus, the current study aims to explore this under-researched area.

Research questions

This study aims to shed light on the complex, dynamic, and situated processes of identity construction of Chinese immigrants in Australia, and also how these processes are related with their investment in language learning/use and cultural practices. The following research questions have been formulated to guide the study:

1. What are Chinese economic immigrants' perceptions about the impacts of acculturating experiences in an Australian society on their identity construction?

2. How does their identity construction influence their level of investment in English language and cross-cultural practices?

RESEARCH METHODS

Case study and narrative enquiry

The current study employs a narrative enquiry methodology embedded in a multi-case research design (Sonday et al., 2020). It draws on the three participants' storytelling experiences to develop an in-depth description and analysis of them as three comparative cases.

A case study is suitable for the present study as it has been playing a burgeoning role in research focusing on learner subjectivity, identity, ideologies, and narratives of learner experience (Duff, 2020), having led to new understandings as regards "what it means to be a language learner, speaker, or transnational citizen in the 21st century" (Duff, 2014, p. 250). For example, case studies exploring the ideologies and identities of immigrants and transnational migrants have highlighted the indeterminacy of their language learning experiences and life pathways, and the constraints and affordances associated with their language learning and social engagement (Duff, 2014). The study employs a multiple-case approach because we can better understand a single-case finding by looking at a range of similar or contrasting cases (Miles et al., 2014). Besides, the inclusion of multiple cases can enhance the "precision, validity, stability, and trustworthiness" (Miles et al., 2014, p. 33) as well as the "external validity or generalisability" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 40) of our findings.

Also, narrative enquiry is well suited to the present study because narratives of migration are beneficial to understand how people cope with personal and social changes in the processes of "uprooting" and settlement (De Fina & Baynham, 2012, p. 3). In addition, oral narrative creates a space for immigrant voices and so is significant in the expression of identities. Another reason why narrative enquiry is suitable for the present study is that, as Barkhuizen et al. (2014) suggest, it can be a valuable tool to shed light on the inner mental worlds of language learners and how they organise their experiences and identities and represent them to themselves and to others.

Participants

The current study aims to shed light on the complexity, intricacies, and particularity of immigrants' perceptions of their identity and investment through "fine-grained analysis" (Baker & Edwards, 2012, p. 18), rather than for maximum generalisation and representativeness. An "idiographic" rather than "nomothetic

approach" (p. 30) was, accordingly, adopted in sampling. The study sought maximum diversity among the cases and selected participants who were likely to reveal different narratives (Duff, 2020). Eligible participants for the current study needed to be Chinese economic immigrants in Australia over 18 years of age. Three immigrants in total were selected and participated in a semi-structured one-to-one interview. Figure 1 shows the profile of these three participants, highlighting distinctive differences among them, and they are further described as follows.

Figure 1. *Profile of the participants*

Pseudonym	Yang	Li	Chen
Age group	35-40	50-55	20-25
Gender	F	F	F
Locality of origin	North China	East China	South China
Year first in Australia/Visa type	2007/Student	2007 or 2008/Travel	2007 or 2008/Travel
Year of immigration/Visa type	2016/Business	2010/Skilled	2013/Child
Educational background	Master's degree	Bachelor's degree	Undergraduate student
Occupation	Mandarin teacher	Small business owner	University student

Yang was a part-time Mandarin teacher and a mother of three. She first came to Australia in 2007 to study for her master's degree, after which she went back to China and lived there for several years. She moved back to Australia in 2016 on a business visa and obtained permanent residency two years later.

Li was a small business owner who immigrated to Australia on an employer-sponsored visa. She first came to Australia in 2007/2008 on holiday, by which time

some of her relatives had already settled there. She then sent her teenage son to Australia for education and decided to immigrate here in 2010.

Chen was a 1.25-generation immigrant (Rumbaut, 2004) who came to Australia with her parents in her adolescent years. After she arrived, she completed an English language course for young second language learners before going to secondary school. As a university student studying health sciences, she also worked part-time at a dental clinic.

Data collection

The current study gathered narrative stories from three participants through semi-structured interviews in which they talked about their perceptions and lived experiences of identity construction and investment in language and cultural practices. The interview guide (see Appendix A) consists of a list of mostly open-ended questions formulated by translating the research questions into colloquial language to generate spontaneous and rich descriptions from the interviewees (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018). The open-ended questions focused on the participants' subjective experiences (Seidman, 2013) and gave them an active role in narrating their stories about acculturating, identity construction, and investment. All interviews were conducted in Mandarin, the participants' native language, to facilitate naturally constructed narratives and conversations without linguistic barriers (Huang et al., 2021) and thus to augment the richness of information obtained.

Data analysis

Thematic analysis was employed to analyse interview transcriptions. Coding was conducted following a theoretical approach, the process driven more by the research questions than by the data themselves (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Twenty provisional, descriptive codes were established as suggested by the study's theoretical framework and research questions, previous research findings, and pilot interviews (Saldaña, 2016). The prefigured codes were then revised, fine-tuned, deleted, and expanded to include additional codes emerging during the analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018). During this process, an intercoder agreement assessment was conducted to enhance the reliability of the analysis (Saldaña, 2016).

After all data extracts had been coded, a list of 19 descriptive codes was finalised (see Appendix B), which were subsequently classified into three candidate themes.

After that, a thematic map was created to show the relationship between codes and individual themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The themes were then reviewed and refined by revisiting the coded data extracts and by considering the validity of individual themes and the thematic map in relation to the entire data set (Barkhuizen et al., 2014). Finally, a detailed, systematic analysis was conducted and written for each individual theme by organising related data extracts into a coherent and internally consistent account (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

FINDINGS

Research Question 1 (What are Chinese economic immigrants' perceptions about the impacts of acculturating experiences in an Australian society on their identity construction?)

To answer this question, the three participants' identity construction across time are delineated case by case, and similarities and differences among them are also discussed.

Yang's acculturation and identity construction

Overall, as Yang navigated between her native culture and Australian culture, her Chinese identity became increasingly stable, while her imagined identity as a "true Australian" was replaced by a mother of three bicultural, bilingual children. In addition, her identity performance included both her Chineseness and her status as an Australian resident. Yang's identity construction process is described in more detail below.

Despite the uneasiness when she first came to Australia in 2007, Yang actively tried to interact with the "locals" and devoted herself to "getting immersed in the Australian way of life". By so doing, she hoped not only to improve her English but also to integrate with "true Australians", a community in her imagination (Kanno & Norton, 2003).

However, in this process of integrating, she gradually felt like an outsider to the Australian culture. For instance, she could not understand people's jokes and Australian advertisements. Conversely, if she did not speak Chinese or keep in contact with her Chinese peers, her emotional needs wouldn't be satisfied. The prolonged contact with the English language and Australian culture seemed to cause the destabilisation of Yang's sense of self (Block, 2007), which made her

uncomfortable. Thus, "failing" to become a member of the Australian society, or "one of them" in her own words, she decided to return to China after completing her studies in 2009:

> But as I found it difficult to assimilate after trying, I chose to go back to China after graduation. At least I had a sense of belonging in China because it is my homeland. I found it difficult to regard Australia as my home country because there were too many things that I couldn't understand.

The left side of Figure 2 symbolises Yang's identity construction during the above-described period. The pink oval represents Yang's Chinese identity, and the green oval on the left stands for her imagined identity of a "true Australian." The dotted line connecting those two ovals represents Yang's ambivalence and struggle as she navigated two cultures and two identities, which she experienced again after she moved to Australia permanently in 2016.

Figure 2 *Yang's identity construction*
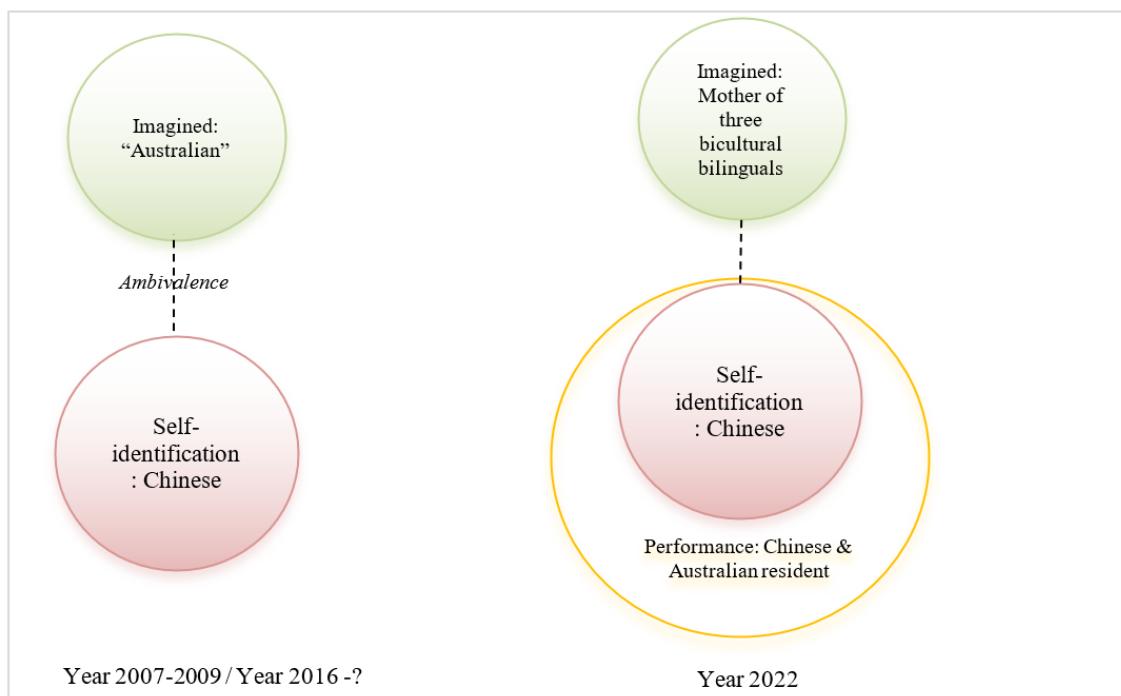
This time, as a new immigrant, Yang initially still attempted to assimilate into the "locals" so that they would accept her as a "true Australian". However, as she felt

"miserable and depressed" because of the problems associated with her English abilities and her identity ambivalence, she decided to reconcile herself to the fact that she could not and did not have to assimilate. The right side of Figure 2 depicts Yang's identity construction since this reconciliation.

The red oval still stands for her Chinese identity, and the larger overlapping orange oval portrays her dual embodied identity in social interactions. She identified herself as a Chinese living in a "foreign land" who represented China and embodied her identity as a strong, good-mannered Chinese woman who, as a "good citizen", obeyed the law and respected the culture of Australia. She reflected that she had a stronger sense of belonging to the "diverse and multicultural" Australian society than before, especially after obtaining her permanent residency.

Moreover, describing her three children, one 1.75-generation (Rumbaut, 2004) and two-second generations, as being both Australian and Chinese, and anticipating them to be more likely to speak English better than Mandarin in the future, Yang had begun to visualise her future role as a mother of three bicultural bilinguals. The dotted line between the green oval and the pink oval signifies the possible impact of her newly imagined identity on her self-identification and her acculturating process.

Li's acculturation and identity construction

While content with her life in Australia, Li had never been ambivalent about her Chinese identity and strongly identified herself as Chinese rather than Australian or Australian Chinese. Taking an eclectic approach to acculturation, she tended to perform her identity ethnically and culturally as a Chinese who was also an Australian citizen.

Figure 3 illustrates Li's identity construction. One of the main differences between Li and Yang was that, before Li permanently moved to Australia, the Australian society was already an imagined community (Kanno & Norton, 2003) for her, where some of her relatives had already settled and her son was attending high school. Thus, her acculturating process (represented by the dotted line connecting the red oval and the green oval in Figure 3) started before immigration through studying English, learning about Australian culture, and her visits to Australia.

Figure 3 *Li's identity construction*
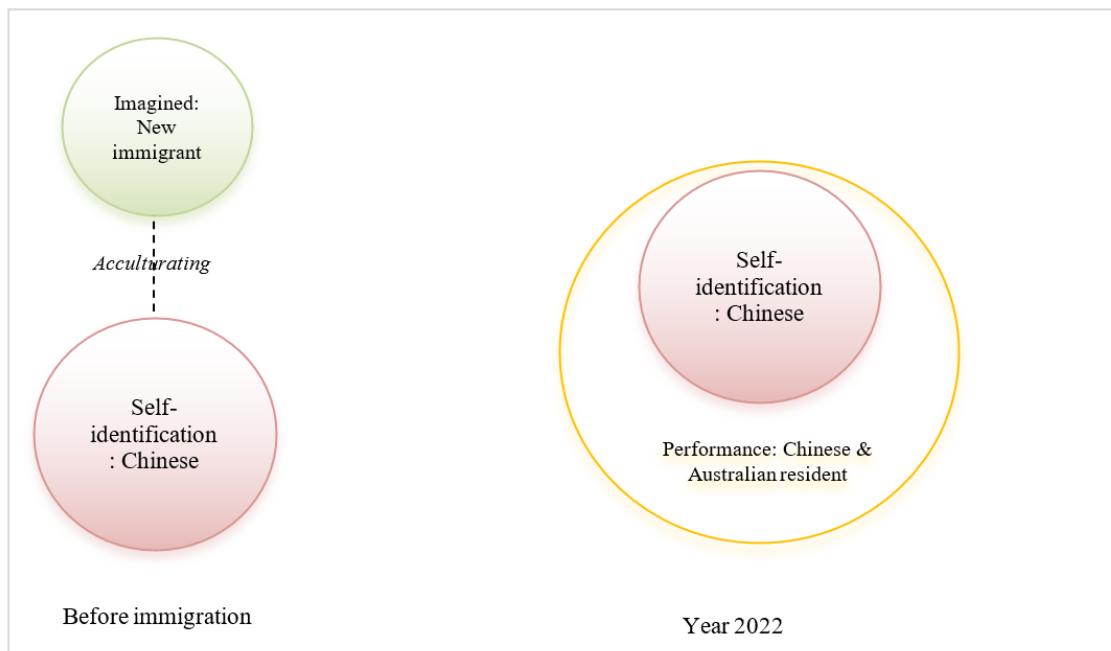
The right side of Figure 3 depicts Li's identity construction after immigration, as she gradually learned more about the culture of Australia while adjusting to her new life. Whereas she endorsed many aspects of the host culture, there were some institutions and norms that she could not understand or was unwilling to accept. As regards Chinese culture, she viewed it as a collective enterprise for "us", i.e., all Chinese people, to preserve the "beautiful" traditional customs and norms.

Similar to the other two participants, Li tended to use the personal pronouns "we" and "our" when talking about Chinese culture while using "they" and "their" when describing her perceptions of Australian culture. For Chinese speakers, these pronouns are "makers of collectivity that includes or excludes the speaker or the writer, respectively" (Huang et al., 2021, p. 4). By using these linguistic forms, she seemed to index Australians to the non-self-group and the Chinese to the self-group (Huang et al., 2021).

Accordingly, Li asserted that she had a stronger sense of belonging to Chinese than Australian culture. She explained that her cultural identity was reflected in every aspect of her life, including adhering to Chinese cuisine, making friends with fellow

Chinese immigrants, and maintaining ethnic traditions. Despite having resided in Australia for over 10 years, Li emphasised that she had lived in China for much longer, and thus Chinese culture had influenced the formulation of her values and beliefs more significantly.

Therefore, similar to Yang, Li firmly identified herself as Chinese (the red oval in Figure 3) who consistently enacted a well-mannered, well-bred, and respectful Chinese woman living in Australia (the larger orange oval). She added that she had never felt uncertain about her cultural identity: "I think it is unnecessary to think about this. I've never feared that my identity will tilt or change." In other words, different from Yang, while adapting herself to the host culture, Li did not experience a period of struggle due to the destabilisation of one's sense of self (Block, 2007).

Another difference between Li and Yang was that Li did not explicitly describe an imagined identity for her future in Australia. However, she did envisage her moving back and forth between China and Australia regularly, just like what she had been doing, once the travel restrictions due to COVID-19 were eased, which would enable her to continue both the maintenance of her heritage culture and the acquisition of the dominant culture. Such ability to traverse global spaces with speed and ease was likely to continue affording her great agency and creativity in negotiating her sense of self and enabling her to maintain her strong Chinese identity despite living in Australia (McEntee-Atalianis, 2019).

Chen's acculturation and identity construction

Although in her adolescent years, Chen experienced ambivalence between her Chinese identity and her imagined identity as Australian, as she grew up, she gradually felt comfortable solely being Chinese while enacting various identities in different contexts. In addition, as a young adult, she started imagining new possibilities for her future.

Figure 4 illustrates Chen's identity construction. Similar to Yang, Chen also experienced ambivalence and struggle surrounding her identity (represented by the dotted line on the left) as she integrated into Australian society. Having been used to focusing on language structures and linguistic details in English learning, Chen was relatively weak in English fluency and real-life communication when she first came to Australia in 2013 and thus dreaded talking with the "locals". The government-provided English course did not help much as she "kept talking in Chinese with other learners from China".

Figure 4 *Chen's identity construction*
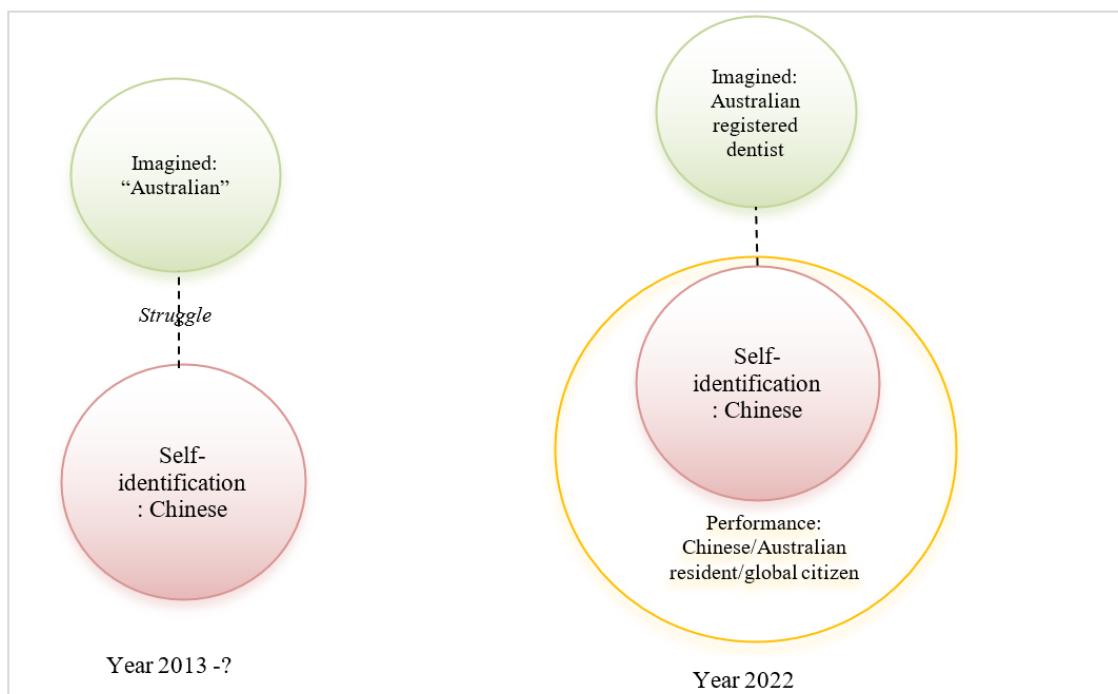
Chen's English problems and the differences between Chinese and Australian cultures made her secondary school years a "miserable experience". She found it difficult to be responsible for her studies as she had been used to being guided and pushed by teachers. As there were few international students in the secondary school, Chen "had to" mix with the "local" students. The cultural differences emerging from such experiences seemed to strengthen her attachment to and identification with her heritage culture (the pink oval in Figure 4) and weaken her desire for membership in her once-imagined community - the "Australian locals" (the green oval on the left):

> I found that there was little I could talk about with them. We watched different shows. We listened to different music… I was like: "I don't belong here at all", feeling that I don't belong to Australia but to China.

There were many elements in Australian culture that Chen endorsed and was willing to incorporate into her originally established cultural system, such as respect for multiculturalism and various religious beliefs. However, despite living in Australia for almost ten years, Chen thought she still had a stronger sense of

belonging to Chinese culture. She was proud that she could play a traditional Chinese instrument and was delighted to interact with Gweilo (a Cantonese slang term for Westerners), who showed interest in Chinese culture.

Chen preferred to define herself as Chinese rather than Australian, or Australian Chinese (represented by the pink oval), and she viewed her Chinese identity as a marker of her membership to a group of people of the same ancestry/ethnicity residing in this "foreign country", which she thought was important for her psychological wellbeing. To her, Australia was just where she lived and where her acculturating process was an ongoing one, partially driven by her desire to thrive in this "foreign country". With such a desire, Chen had imagined new possibilities for the future, aspiring to become a registered dentist after obtaining her bachelor's degree (the green oval on the right side).

Chen's identity performance (the orange oval in Figure 4) differed from that of Yang and Li. It seemed that Chen self-consciously presented different aspects of herself, and spoke and acted differently when being with people who were not Chinese:

> I can't just be myself when I am with people from other countries because they don't know or understand my culture. So, I need to behave more internationally… When interacting with foreigners, I feel like I am in a different mode.

While individuals may identify themselves with a specific social group, they might simultaneously project their selves differently across time and space through various semiotic means (Block, 2007). On a specific occasion, a person may linguistically and non-linguistically perform an identity that is "socially salient" (Paltridge, 2012, p. 24). Thus, in such contexts, Chen might wish to be recognised by her interlocutors as an Australian resident or a global citizen, thereby a member of the multicultural Australian society. Chen's context-dependent identity strategy was not favoured by Yang and Li, both of whom claimed to consistently enact a Chinese identity irrelevant of context:

> I want people to see that my characteristics coordinate with my cultural background. I don't want people to see me as a banana (yellow on the outside, white on the inside) who has Chinse physical characteristics but does things that Gweilo do. (Yang)

Research Question 2 (How does their identity construction influence their level of investment in English language and cross-cultural practices?)

The three participants' levels of investment were analysed through their existing and imagined identities across time, which emerge from their above-illustrated narratives about their past, present, and future. Four themes emerged from such analysis: (1) investment in erstwhile imagined identities, (2) investment in existing identities, (3) investment in newly-imagined identities, and (4) the role of capital. Each will be presented as follows.

Investment in erstwhile imagined identities

In the case of their past imagined identities, these visualised possibilities had a positive impact on the participants' investment in language learning and practice. For instance, before officially immigrating to Australia, Li had asked help from an English tutor with grammar rules, expecting that there would be linguistic challenges for her, a new immigrant, in her erstwhile imagined community - the Australian society. Similarly, as Yang had hoped to blend in with the "locals" and striven for membership in this imagined community, she had been highly invested in English learning and use and "getting immersed in the Australian way of life". For example, she did a part-time job to practise her English; she would go to a footie game; and she would go camping with her "local" friends and attend their parties to have conversations.

Investment in existing identities

The participants' strong Chinese identity clearly translated into their commitment to Chinese language use and cultural practice. At the same time, they all more or less understood the necessity of English learning and use due to their identity as Australian residents.

On the one hand, after their imagined identities had become existing identities, or their aspiration to the imagined communities had been relinquished (in Yang and Chen's case), the participants' ever-present, solid Chinese cultural identity played the most important role in their investment. For example, Chen mentioned that she preferred to speak Chinese and socialise with people of Chinese ethnicity and to work with Asian students for group assignments. In addition, while she celebrated Australian festivals just for fun, she celebrated Chinese festivals because she felt culturally connected to them. In a similar vein, Li lived in a neighbourhood where

there are many "Huaren" (people of Chinese ethnicity), and so spoke Chinese and mixed with "Huaren" most of the time.

On the other hand, however, as they were all cognizant of and valued their Australian resident/citizen identity, they never dismissed the importance of the investment in English learning/practice and Australian social practices. For example, as mentioned earlier, Yang had a stronger sense of belonging to Australian society after obtaining her permanent residency. Accordingly, despite that she preferred to mix with her Chinese peers rather than blend in with "foreigners", she was fairly invested in her identity as an Australian resident:

> I also tell my children that since we have immigrated to Australia and live in this society, we should get involved in it. We should make a contribution to the country and play a role in this society. (Yang)

As the only adult in the family who spoke English, she played the role of the liaison between her family and society, responsible for everything that kept the home running in this English-speaking country (e.g., calling the local council, communicating with Centrelink and Medicare, filling out forms for her children at different clubs, etc.), which she thought had strengthened her overall English communicative abilities.

Investment in newly-imagined identities

As mentioned in the previous section, both Yang and Chen had formed new possibilities for their future. Accordingly, their investment was also influenced by their new imagined identities - an Australian registered dentist in Chen's case. This imagined identity motivated her to invest in her studies and in her part-time job at the dental clinic, which involved not only daily communication in English but also academic English writing and the learning of terminology related to medicine, dentistry, and health care. For Yang, her aforementioned imagined future self as a mother of three bicultural bilinguals had also made her put more investment in English learning/use and Australian cultural practices:

> I hope that by celebrating Australian holidays, my children can integrate into Australian culture... I talk with my son in English when he learns how to do the stuff (micro:bit)... I have to improve English if I want to keep up with them. And if I, as their mother, can't understand them when they want to talk to me about something important, they will be sad. (Yang)

The role of capital

The influences of the participants' identities on their investment in English learning/use and cultural practices can also be analysed with reference to the construct of capital (Darvin & Norton, 2015). As Norton (2013) argues, individuals invest in language learning and related cultural practices if they expect to acquire a wider range of symbolic resources and material resources, which will, in turn, increase the value of their cultural capital and social power. In the interviews, the three participants concurred that English proficiency was essential for academic success, career advancement, social interactions, and thus better quality of life in Australia:

> If you don't speak English, you won't be able to have a good quality of life. If your English is not good, you should learn and try to improve it. No one will hire you if you cannot communicate with customers. (Yang)

> English is definitely very important. It can make things more convenient for you and make people who you talk to more comfortable… You have to use the language on various occasions in all aspects of your life, including your work. (Li)

Thus, Li had invested in English learning before immigrating to Australia, hoping that English, as a form of symbolic resource, would strengthen her social power. Similarly, Yang was highly invested in English learning and use while doing her master's degree as, through this, she hoped to acquire a wider range of symbolic resources, including educational credentials and friendships. As regards Chen, her aforementioned investment in her imagined identity of an Australian registered dentist might be related to her expectation that the new identity would afford her a wider range of symbolic resources (social and professional networks) and material resources (income) which would, in turn, raise her social power.

Meanwhile, the three participants admitted they had not devoted enough time to English learning. Based on their answers, they seemed more invested in Chinese use and community practices. The reason might lie in their perception that engaging in English learning and social practices was not likely to enhance the value of their existing cultural capital and social power to a substantial degree, or in other words, to improve their quality of life significantly. In contrast, for example, Yang and Li seemed to anticipate higher returns on investment in their Chineseness, as both Li and Yang's family and most of their friends were Chinese and they both had business relations in China.

In conclusion, the participants' selective investment in language learning/use and cultural/social practices had been mediated by their identity, a site of struggle between existing and imagined identities (Darvin, 2019). Moreover, they seemed to either invest in their existing identities in the hope that they would acquire more symbolic and material resources or invest in accessing more symbolic and material resources, enabling them to claim more powerful identities than they imagined.

DISCUSSION

The current findings regarding the three Chinese immigrants' acculturation and identity construction support the poststructuralist perspective on identity, which states that an individual's identity is dynamic, evolving, and multilayered and is constructed and reconstructed through his/her participation in particular communities of practice.

Specifically, whereas the three Chinese immigrants all seemed to have constructed a form of biculturalism featuring coexistence and harmony, this biculturalism did not result in a hyphenated, blended, or hybrid cultural identity in them. Although they embraced their Australian residency or citizenship, they attached significant importance to their Chineseness for feelings of continuity and emotional well-being.

While the current study has not identified the in-between (Liu, 2015) or hybrid (Amireault, 2020; Fang & Huang, 2020) self-identification reported in previous studies, the two first-generation immigrant participants' solid Chinese identity is also evident among some first generations in Amireault (2020), Huang et al. (2021), and Liu (2015). As researchers have noted, first-generation immigrants tend to bring with them significant attachments to their home culture when they relocate to their receiving country (Liu, 2015), and their Chinese self-identification correlates highly with their personal affective ties and contributes significantly to their feelings of continuity (Huang et al., 2021). In comparison, 1.5- and second-generation immigrants are more likely to be immersed in the culture of the host society (Liu, 2015) and thus are more likely to develop a form of melange and flexibility (Fang & Huang, 2020) in their often bicultural identity. That could explain why the 1.5-generation immigrant participant (Chen) in this study tended to perform different identities according to different contexts even though she defined herself as Chinese, the same as the other two participants.

The study's findings regarding the three participants' investment in their English language ability and cross-cultural practices show that investment can be mediated by the interplay between the learner's complex, multifaceted, evolving identities, imagined possibilities for the future, and anticipated increase in cultural capital and social power.

The three economic immigrants seemed to show an ambivalent attitude, and the level of such investment seemed to fluctuate across time and space. On the one hand, their commitment to English learning/use and their Australian-associated identities reflected their perception that such identities were likely to enable them to acquire a broader range of symbolic and material resources, which would, in turn, increase the value of their cultural capital and social power. This mentality is shared by the student participants in a few previous studies, for example, Chang (2016), Shi and Guo (2021), and Sung (2019). On the other hand, the three participants seemed to be highly invested in their solid Chinese identity and Chinese cultural and community practices to affirm their identity or in the expectation of accessing greater material and symbolic resources.

The current study differs from previous studies focusing on Chinese background students in English-medium educational settings. Participants in those studies were usually student sojourners, who, as temporary migrants, might be more motivated to invest in their study than in acculturating and prefer to remain separated from the host culture for higher life satisfaction and better academic adjustment (Anderson & Guan, 2018). That is probably why acculturating-associated identity construction was infrequently explored in this line of empirical enquiry. As findings of the current study show, navigating different cultures and identities, Chinese immigrants might choose to selectively invest in both their native language and the dominant language and in both their heritage culture and the host culture, probably to earn the maximum return.

IMPLICATIONS

The findings of the study reveal that whilst Chinese economic immigrants may engage in striking a balance between their heritage culture and the host culture, they, as voluntary immigrants, might not necessarily develop an in-between or hybrid identity. Also, the current study has shown that the model of investment, in particular, the theorisations of investment, identity, and capital (Darvin & Norton, 2015), can be powerful tools to investigate Chinese immigrants' commitment to English learning/use and cross-cultural practices.

In regard to pedagogical implications, it seems important for teachers in English tuition programmes for immigrants, such as the Adult Migrant English Program (DHA, 2024a), to consider how to facilitate Chinese immigrant students' Australian identity construction and thereby, their sense of affective connections to and ownership of the English language. Activities such as "Drawing an Australian", for example, might serve to guide learners to take a critical view of the often taken-for-granted depictions of "Australians" (Sumithran, 2021, p. 70).

Meanwhile, considering some Chinese immigrants' high level of investment in Chinese language and cultural practices, it might be a good idea to try including their first language or discussing their heritage culture in teaching activities. However, caution must be taken to avoid the exoticisation of learners' cultural backgrounds (Norton, 2013) or accentuating cultural differences, which could create an environment of cultural otherness (Lee, 2015). Further, educators might also need to consider aligning their pedagogy with Chinese immigrant students' other identity categories and imagined identities, which could provide the impetus for their investment in English learning and speaking (Darvin, 2019).

Lastly, concerning language policy, given that English, or standard English, is represented as the national and de facto official language of Australia under different guises (Lo Bianco & Slaughter, 2017) and that only cultural diversity rather than linguistic diversity is recognised, respected and celebrated (Scarino, 2014), immigrants and migrants who are native speakers of the "outside", foreign, or community languages (Lo Bianco & Slaughter, 2017, p. 451) such as Mandarin Chinese are likely to suffer from linguistic subordination which could lead to linguistic inferiority complexes resulting in self-marginalisation, low sense of social belonging, and thus limited investment in English language and cultural practices in the dominant society.

In addition, as revealed in the findings, immigrants might feel unmotivated to invest in further English improvement after attaining their permanent legal status. Thus, it is worth considering whether the English-level requirements for visa applicants and the English-only citizenship test are beneficial or meaningful for immigrants in the long term (Kunnan, 2022) regarding, for example, employment and social participation.

LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Despite the significant findings of the study, a few limitations should be mentioned. One main limitation is that, due to the relatively short time frame of the investigation, the study has relied on only one data source, namely the participants' oral narratives. Including other sources would have provided thicker descriptions and enhanced the research validity. Another shortcoming is that the study has been unable to purposefully recruit more participants who might "represent the widest possible range of the characteristics of interest" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 98) and thus provide greater diversity. The small scale means that findings are not generalisable to all Chinese economic immigrants in Australia in light of their cultural, language, and social class differences.

Based on the above limitations of this study, possible avenues for future research are suggested as follows. One valuable area for subsequent investigations is giving sufficient consideration for intersectionality (Block & Corona, 2014), namely analysing the complex confluence of often overlapping and interdependent identity categories besides ethnicity, such as gender, religion, and class (Norton & De Costa, 2018). Greater diversity across study subjects could also be achieved by including Chinese immigrants with unique life trajectories and acculturating experiences in Australia, such as those who used to be holiday working makers (DHA, 2024b). Another direction for other scholars is expanding the time frame to utilise other research instruments and techniques, such as written reflections and observations, and to include interview data from participants' families and friends for triangulation (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In addition, a longitudinal study would be suitable for gaining a deeper and more nuanced understanding of immigrants' dynamic, ever-evolving identity construction process and their complex attitudes towards investment at different times.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Despite being preliminary and having limitations, it is hoped that the current study has helped advance our knowledge about the complexity and diversity of how people may construct their identities and invest in learning the official language in a new host country. Understanding this issue will help us understand the significant reasons and factors underlying people's attitudes, behaviours and acculturation processes in a new country they migrate to, thereby allowing us to support them when appropriate to promote social harmony and understanding.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Questions for RQ1 (What are Chinese economic immigrants' perceptions about the impacts of acculturating experiences in an Australian society on their identity construction?):

1. What were your perceptions of Australian culture before you came here?

2. What are your perceptions of Chinese culture?

3. Have your views on Australian culture and Chinese culture changed since you moved here? How?

4. Would you say you have a stronger sense of belonging to Chinese culture or to Australian culture? (Or would you say you feel belonging to both or neither?)

5.   How would you define yourself today? Would you say you are Chinese, Australian, Australian Chinese, or Chinese Australian?

6.   How important is your Chinese identity to the sense of who you are in Australia? (Can you elaborate?)

7.   Would you say your identity has changed since you came to Australia? (Looking back now, how has the process of integrating into the Australian society influenced your identity? Has the learning/usage of English and living in Australia affected your identities? How?)

8.   Has anyone around you or any of your family or friends back in China pointed out any difference in your identity? (What have they said? What do you think of the differences?)

9.   Do you think you show different aspects of yourself in different contexts? (Are they influenced by other people's expectations? How important are these different aspects in relation to each other? Which are more or less important?)

Questions for RQ2 (How does their identity construction influence their level of investment in English language and cross-cultural practices?):

1.   Have you taken any English courses since you came to Australia? Why? Have you learned/practised English in other ways? Why?

2.   In the language classroom and on other occasions, what makes you speak more when interacting with others in English? When do you feel reluctant to interact with others in English?

3.   On what occasions do you prefer/tend to speak/use Chinese and in what contexts do you prefer/tend to speak/use English? (Do you ever switch back and forth between the two languages? Why?) (In general, do you use English more or Chinese more in your daily life?)

4.   Have you made new friends in Australia? How did you meet them?

5.   In general, do you have more Chinese- or English-speaking friends in Australia? Why? What do you do with them?

6.   What holidays and festivals do you celebrate? Why?

APPENDIX B CODING SCHEME

Category				Code	Abbreviation	Definition
Acculturating	Perceptions of Australian/Western culture		1	Foreign, "they", "their"	AC-F	Participants view Australian/Western culture as foreign, "theirs".
			2	Endorse, willing to accept/incorporate	AC-WTA	Participants endorse and are willing to accept the institutions, norms, values, attitudes, etc. in Australian/Western culture.
			3	(Tried but) not willing to accept but respect	AC-R	Participants are not willing to accept but respect the institutions, norms, values, attitudes, etc. in Australian/Western culture.
	Perceptions of Chinese culture		4	Native, "we", "our"	CC-N	Participants view Chinese culture as native, "ours".
			5	Emotional bonds, attachment, pride	CC-E	Chinese culture is connected with participant's emotions, attachment, and pride.
			6	Embedded in identity, wishing to maintain	CC-I	Participants find Chinese culture embedded in their identity and wish to retain it.
	Cultural sense of belonging		7	Stronger sense of belonging to Chinese culture	CSB-CC	Participants have a stronger sense of belonging to Chinese culture.
			8	Stronger sense of belonging to Australian culture	CSB-AC	Participant has a stronger sense of belonging to Australian culture.
			9	Equal sense of belonging to both cultures (in-between)	CSB-CC&AC	Participants feel that they belong to both Chinese and Australian cultures simultaneously.

Identity construction	10	Self-ascribed identity	I-SA	Participants' definition of themself - Chinese, Australian or Chinese Australian/Australian Chinese.
	11	Other-recognised identity	I-OR	Participants' identity in others' eyes; how he/she is positioned by others.
	12	Identity performance	I-P	How the participant performs/embodies different identities in different contexts.
	13	Identity negotiation, ambivalence, struggle	I-N	How participants negotiate their identity while adapting to their life in Australia (and any experience of ambivalence and struggle along with the negotiation).
	14	Imagined identity/community	I-II	Participant's imagined identities/communities at different times.
Investment in language learning/use and cultural practices	15	Selective investment	IN-SI	How the participants choose to invest in English learning/use or cultural practices depends on the specific context.
	16	Investment in existing identity - Chineseness	IN-EI-C	A situation where participants invest in his/her existing identity (Chinese side).
	17	Investment in existing identity - Australianness	IN-EI-A	A situation where participants invest in their existing identity (Australian side).
	18	Investment in imagined identity	IN-II	A situation where participants invest in their imagined identity.
	19	Capital	IN-C	A situation where participants invest in English learning/use or cultural practices expecting to gain valuable material and symbolic resources.

Beneficial Yet Not Enough: Chinese Students' Coping Strategies and Perceptions toward Peer Interaction and Feedback

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ABSTRACT

This study examines Chinese university students' coping strategies and perceptions of peer corrective feedback (PCF) during peer interaction (PI) activities. Data were collected from 24 English as a second language (ESL) students at an Australian university through three group activities and semi-structured interviews and were analysed qualitatively. The findings showed that participants consciously or unconsciously navigate dual roles, shifting between feedback receivers and providers. They also expressed favourable attitudes towards PCF but observed varying perceptions toward PI. Further, politeness strategies, due to Chinese cultural influences, were prevalent among students to maintain interpersonal harmony. These findings offer valuable insights into classroom interactions and the implementation of PCF. Teachers are encouraged to consider students' cultural orientations concerning PI and PCF, carefully group students from diverse backgrounds, and employ strategies that enhance PI and PCF without creating awkwardness while maintaining classroom harmony.

INTRODUCTION

Peer interaction, defined as "any communicative activity carried out between learners with minimal or no teacher involvement" (Philp et al., 2014, p. 3), fosters students' engagement in classroom activities. Similar to teacher-student interactions, peer interaction plays a significant role in second language (L2) learning activities (Sato & Ballinger, 2016).

Over the past few decades, extensive research has highlighted the critical role of conversation in second language (L2) learning, emphasising its importance as a context for language acquisition (e.g., Long, 2007; Mackey, 2012). While much of this research has traditionally focused on learner-teacher and learner-native speaker interactions, there is growing interest in peer interaction (PI), its unique characteristics, and the benefits it offers for L2 development (Sato & Ballinger, 2016).

Despite its advantages, PI is often perceived as less effective in fostering linguistic accuracy compared to teacher-learner or learner-native speaker interactions, primarily due to the less frequent provision of corrective feedback (e.g., Fujii & Mackey, 2009; Philp et al., 2010; Sippel, 2020). To address this limitation, some scholars advocate for training learners to provide corrective feedback to each other during PI (e.g., Martin & Sippel, 2021; Sato &Lyster, 2012).

Additionally, numerous studies have examined learners' attitudes and perceptions of PI and corrective feedback (e.g., Ha & Nguyen, 2021; Jiang & Ironsi, 2024; Sippel, 2020; Schulz, 1996; Yoshida, 2008), offering valuable insights into how learners engage in feedback practices during peer interactions. These studies also explore the influence of learner backgrounds—such as proficiency level, first language (L1), and gender—on PI and peer corrective feedback (PCF), particularly about group and pair composition (e.g., Choi & Iwashita, 2016; Gass & Veronis, 1986; Zabini & Ghahramanzadeh, 2022).

Research on intercultural communication further indicates that learners often transfer their L1 communication styles to L2 interactions (e.g., Fitzgerald, 2003). Similarly, cross-cultural collaborative writing studies have examined how students from different cultural backgrounds navigate joint writing tasks and how cultural

norms influence their interactions and contributions (Chang et al., 2024; Van Rompay-Bartels & Geessink, 2023). However, it remains unclear how factors, such as L1 communication styles and prior learning experiences, shape learners' approaches to PI and PCF.

To address this gap, the present study investigates how L1 Chinese university students in Australia employ strategies and provide feedback during peer interaction activities and how their perceptions influence their performance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Peer corrective feedback (PCF) in L2 learning involves learners receiving corrective input from fellow students during interactions. Unlike teacher or expert feedback, peer feedback comes from learners of equal status, offering both advantages and limitations. While this equitable relationship can create a more comfortable communication environment, it often results in less frequent and lower quality feedback than that provided by teachers or native speakers (Pica et al., 1996; Davin & Donato, 2013).

Early peer interaction and feedback research were primarily grounded in cognitive interactionist perspectives, particularly Long's Interaction Hypothesis (Long, 1996, 2007). However, recent studies have increasingly drawn on sociocultural theory to understand better peer feedback dynamics (e.g., Kos, 2022; Pohner & Leontjev, 2022; Xi & Lantolf, 2020). Research has shown that peer feedback occurs less frequently and with varying effectiveness (Adams, 2007; Lambert et al., 2017; Toth, 2008). One contributing factor is that learners often struggle to give and interpret peer feedback due to limited confidence in their own and their peers' linguistic abilities (Baharudin & Razali, 2021). Additionally, scepticism regarding peer feedback—particularly doubts about its accuracy—can make learners hesitant to rely on their peers' corrections (Yoshida, 2008; Jiang & Ironsi, 2022; Katayama, 2007).

However, learners' attitudes toward peer feedback can shift in environments where they interact with more proficient peers. In such contexts, they may recognise the value of peer feedback (Sato & Lyster, 2012). Furthermore, learners generally find peer interactions more engaging than teacher feedback, and positive past experiences with proficient peers can enhance their willingness to accept peer feedback (Philp & Mackey, 2010). Studies suggest that raising awareness and

training in peer feedback strategies can significantly improve effectiveness (e.g., Fujii et al., 2016; Martin & Sippel, 2021; Sato, 2010; Sippel, 2020).

Beyond learner attitudes, cultural factors significantly shape peer interaction and feedback dynamics. Face-saving concerns, collectivist values, and the desire to maintain social harmony influence how feedback is given and received. Zhu and Bresnahan's (2006) study on collective face—the need to uphold an ingroup's public image—found that Chinese international students exhibited stronger collective face concerns than their American counterparts when responding to an ingroup member's failure. In feedback settings, this cultural orientation may discourage direct criticism and hinder peer feedback exchanges (Hyland, 2000).

For example, Chinese students often feel uncomfortable critiquing their peers' work, as teacher-centred education systems in East Asia emphasise authority and discourage open critique among students (Hyland & Hyland, 2001; Zhao, 2011). Learners from such backgrounds may struggle to adopt unfamiliar interactive learning styles, leading to hesitation and uncertainty when providing feedback.

Furthermore, research on cross-cultural collaboration in writing highlights additional complexities arising from cultural differences (e.g., Allaei & Connor, 1990; Albesher, 2024; Chang et al., 2024; Van Rompay-Bartels & Geessink, 2023). For instance, Van Rompay-Bartels and Geessink (2023) found that students from individualistic cultures tend to emphasise personal contributions, whereas those from collectivist cultures prioritise group harmony. These cultural differences can result in misunderstandings and conflicts during group work. Additionally, students may hesitate to provide direct criticism or assert their opinions due to cultural norms that value deference and face-saving.

In summary, while peer interaction and peer feedback hold significant potential for L2 development, their effectiveness is shaped by learners' attitudes, cultural influences, and task design. Addressing these factors can help maximise the benefits of peer interaction (PI) and corrective feedback (PCF) in language learning. The current study seeks to answer the following question: "What are Chinese ESL learners' strategies and perceptions of peer interaction and corrective feedback?"

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative approach to examine students' strategies for engaging in peer interactions (PI) and providing peer corrective feedback (PCF) in ESL contexts. Given the complexity and individual nature of beliefs and perceptions (Basturkmen, 2012), a qualitative approach was well-suited for gaining nuanced insights into students' perceived effectiveness of PI and PCF.

Participants

Twenty-four Chinese international students from various study majors from Australian universities participated (aged 18 to 30; 5 males and 19 females). Their proficiency ranged from B2 to C1, which are converted to CEFR equivalents from their recent standardised English Proficiency test scores (N = 4 for B1, 15 for B2 and 5 for C1)

Instruments and Data Collection Procedure

This study assessed learners' perceptions of PI after participating in a researcher-designed PCF session. Participants were informed about the study, completed a demographic questionnaire, and signed a consent form. They then engaged in a group writing task based on opinion-gap discussions (Choi & Iwashita, 2016; Spinelli, 2024), designed to foster interaction and enhance motivation (Dörnyei, 1994). Adapted from Sipple (2020), interview questions explored learners' feelings and beliefs about PI and PCF. Data was collected over three days with 24 participants (eight participants per day). Each day, a group of eight participants carried out three activities and participated in a semi-structured interview after the initial briefing and warm-up activity.

Group Discussion (Step 1) and Collaborative Writing (Step 2) Tasks

Participants completed two tasks: group discussions to share opinions and collaborative writing in pairs. The group was then divided into pairs, each participating in collaborative writing separately before regrouping for the next step. These tasks were adapted from previous studies (Spinelli, 2024).

Peer Corrective Feedback (PCF) Task (Steps 3 and 4)

Participants exchanged writing and watched a training video on how to provide feedback before giving corrective feedback, which was followed by two peer

feedback sessions without the writer (Step 3) and in the presence of the writer (Step 4). The training video provided practical experience in understanding the procedure of commenting on others' work.

Focus Group Interview (Step 5)

A focus group interview followed, designed to elicit deeper insights into participants' beliefs about peer interaction and feedback. As mentioned above, interview questions, adapted from Sipple (2020), covered perceptions of peer interaction and corrective feedback. Both English and Mandarin were used to facilitate comfort and clarity.

Data Analysis and Coding

The recorded sessions, primarily in Mandarin, were transcribed using voice recognition software with manual editing due to frequent code-mixing. To ensure accuracy, transcripts were manually translated into English, reviewed, and verified by native Mandarin speakers. Interaction data were coded in terms of corrective feedback episodes. Interview transcripts were re-evaluated, and participant identities were anonymised. Perceptions of peer interactions and corrective feedback were analysed through participants' actual behaviour during group tasks, offering more profound insights into their feedback practices.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study examines the interaction strategies employed by L1 Chinese ESL students in an L2 communication environment and their perceptions of peer interaction (PI) and peer corrective feedback (PCF). To address the research question, the study analysed both the communication strategies used by Chinese ESL students and their perceptions of PI and PCF, drawing on data from three task sessions and post-task interviews.

Interaction Strategies

The findings show that many students resort to strategies to maintain harmony during PI and PCI sessions regardless of whether they are required to provide feedback.

As explained in the methodology section, the group discussion task (Step 1) provided a scenario in which student participants played the role of a presentation team. All participants in six groups seemed to perform similarly, as shown in the two excerpts from three different groups below.

Excerpt 1

> 48 P7 (04:12): Um, so let me share my thoughts first. I'm more inclined towards the last option, Wang. It's because, you know, from my personal perspective, I prefer someone who's good at thinking……

> 53 P6(06:04): Ah, well, I'm leaning towards the middle one. I feel like, maybe it's because I haven't had much experience with that kind of group presentation thing, but I think slides could be pretty crucial in the speech……

Excerpt 2

> 50 P14: Well, I might go for the third one as well [RA3: Yeah]. Considering my own situation, my English proficiency is a bit lower [RA3: Yeah]…

> 58 P13: Yum, yeah, so, if I bring it into my field, he might have a lot of suggestions, like what instrument to use or the arrangement direction…

Group discussion task does not require participants to comment on others' views during the discussion, so the strategies that the participants employed to reach an agreement to choose one student were mainly to share their thoughts and views without insisting on their own preferred person forward, as shown in the use of phrases such as "from my perspective", "considering my situation", or "if I bring this into my field". For example, in Excerpt 1, where Participants 7 and 6 had different opinions on the member selections, Participant 6 neither agreed with nor rejected Participant 7's view as Participant 7 restrained the context by politely saying, "From my perspective…". As a result, Participant 6 continued to express his view by pointing to the relevant experience of not having many experiences in peer interactions. Therefore, it can be noticed that when conducting a peer interaction activity where there is no need for critiques or corrective feedback, participants still tend to apply the interactional strategies more conservatively by emphasising the subjectivity and specifically addressing contexts of the answers to avoid any potential conflicts or arguments with or without any disagreements.

In PCI activities (Steps 3 and 4), most student participants tended to use more cautious language in the presence of the feedback receivers (Step 4), regardless of how they expressed their opinions or provided peer corrective feedback before (Step 3) as shown in the example below (Excerpt 3).

Excerpt 3

(Step 3)

429 P5(18:14):Add "to" here.

430 P6:Huh?

431 P5:It needs to add "to" in the middle here

432 P6:Want to you((Writing))Nah. Is it there yet?

433 P5: Is she repeating this?

……

(Step 4)

492 RA3: Is there anything else you feel needs to be revised?

493 P5: Nothing else, but I think the word "everything" could be replaced with "all," it would sound more conversational. Everything sounds a bit awkward, and other than that, I think it's pretty, and perfect.

In Excerpt 3, Participants 5 and 6 provided comments on the imperative sentences and direct questioning or negations but used subjective markers (*"I think"*), modal verbs (*"could", "would"*) and affirmations (*"pretty, perfect"*) to soften their tones. Regardless of how direct and critical they performed during the peer corrective feedback process without the feedback receiver (Step 3), they all tended to apply politeness strategies within the presence of the author of the text (Step 4) to avoid any potential conflicts or arguments.

These applications of politeness strategies employed throughout activities (Step 1-4) align with Zhu and Bresnahan's (2018) findings on collective face dynamics between American domestic students and Chinese international students. Their study revealed that Chinese international students exhibited a greater sensitivity

to face-threatening scenarios and a higher tendency to employ avoidance strategies to mitigate potential face-threatening events within the group (Zhu & Bresnahan, 2018). Further, the findings align with studies on the Chinese stereotypical culture conducted before the emergence of the postmodernism paradigm (Allaei & Connor, 1990; Carson & Nelson, 1996). Specifically, Carson and Nelson's study revealed the mismatch in perceptions and behaviours of Chinese ESL students in their writing groups, where they would opt for pleasing their peers socially instead of exhibiting any negative criticising comments that could threaten their peers' faces. Similar to their results, participants in this study also tended to apply politeness strategies during PI and PCF.

Perceptions

Findings regarding student participants' perceptions of PI and PCF suggested that most participants held a cautious and neutral perception of PI and preferred a combination of teacher feedback and PCF.

Excerpt 4

> 572 13:It's better together((laugh))
>
> 573 15:Well, yeah, it's okay because sometimes the teacher's views aren't entirely comprehensive, and classmates might approach things from the latest events, making it easier to understand.

In the post-task interview, most participants preferred receiving corrective feedback from multiple sources—both peers and teachers—rather than relying solely on their own judgment. A systematic literature review on peer interactions and feedback among students (Baharudin & Razali, 2021) highlights the positive impact of peer interactions on improving ESL and EFL students' writing performance (Huisman et al., 2018; Fathi & Khodabakhsh, 2019).

However, despite these positive findings, Baharudin and Razali (2021) also cited studies suggesting that teacher feedback carried greater influence than peer feedback in Asian EFL contexts (Miao et al., 2006; Ruegg, 2018). This preference for teacher feedback may stem from the traditionally authoritative and hierarchical role of teachers in Asian cultures (Baharudin & Razali, 2021). In contrast, the present study offers an alternative perspective: rather than favouring either peer or teacher feedback exclusively, participants preferred a combination of both. This preference may be attributed to the fact that the participants in the

current study have spent a significant amount of time in Australia and have become accustomed to providing feedback proactively without feeling inhibited or perceiving it as impolite.

Apart from cultural background as a potential factor, an interesting trend emerged when peer corrective feedback (PCF) was mentioned during the interviews. Overall, students viewed PCF as a potentially useful resource when accompanied by teacher feedback, despite their scepticism regarding its reliability due to peers' varying proficiency levels. Additionally, all participants acknowledged the importance of incorporating PCF in ESL classrooms, aligning with the findings of Sato's (2013) study.

IMPLICATIONS

The findings showed that cultural differences are considered one of the primary factors that can impact students' strategies to employ PCF in PI and perceptions of PI and PCF during interactional activities. As Van Rompay-Bartels and Geessink (2023) emphasised, different cultural comprehensions on peer feedback directly impact international students' interactions with other peers in the classroom. Additionally, this study addresses the potential issues of cultural gaps in interactional activities in the classroom. In addition to cultural factors, this study also provides an alternative view on improving peer interaction and corrective feedback effectiveness. When student participants discussed peer interaction and peer corrective feedback in different contexts, they drew examples from their past experiences.

For effective classroom practice, teachers should consider students' cultural orientations when facilitating peer interaction and corrective feedback. Thoughtfully grouping students from diverse backgrounds can help foster a more inclusive and supportive learning environment. Moreover, implementing strategies that promote meaningful engagement while minimising discomfort is essential for maintaining classroom harmony.

Educators can provide structured training on giving and receiving feedback to help students navigate cultural differences in feedback practices. Such training should build confidence, reduce anxiety, and encourage constructive communication. Techniques like modelling effective feedback, using structured peer review guidelines, and incorporating anonymous or indirect feedback can help students

feel more at ease. Teachers can cultivate a more supportive and productive peer feedback culture by equipping learners with these skills.

CONCLUSION

This study examines how L1 Chinese ESL learners navigate peer interactions, highlighting their use of various interaction strategies and feedback approaches following brief training. The data reveal that participants were generally hesitant to provide direct feedback, instead relying on politeness strategies to maintain social harmony. These findings emphasise the importance of incorporating training in peer interaction (PI) and peer corrective feedback (PCF) at the outset of tertiary programs. Such training can enhance engagement and foster a more inclusive academic community for international and local students. Acknowledging learners' cultural backgrounds is crucial in encouraging active participation and promoting constructive feedback exchanges.

While this study provides valuable insights into learner strategies and perceptions of PI and PCF and its pedagogical implications, its small sample size and focus on Chinese students with relatively lower English proficiency may limit its generalisability. Other factors influencing perceptions of peer interaction (PI) and peer corrective feedback (PCF), such as prior learning experiences and educational backgrounds, remain underexplored. Although participants were provided with a training video, their understanding of PI and PCF remained limited, indicating the need for more comprehensive and interactive instructional approaches in future research.

Despite its small scale, this study highlights how cultural backgrounds shape learners' communication strategies and perceptions of PI and PCF, ultimately influencing their interactions in ESL contexts. To build on these findings, future research should incorporate more extensive and diverse participant groups to understand better how cultural differences affect peer interactions. Additionally, exploring more effective training methods, such as hands-on workshops or guided peer feedback sessions, could provide deeper insights into enhancing communication and feedback practices in multicultural learning environments.

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Adopting Genre-Based Writing Pedagogy in Japan: Challenges and Possibilities from a Teacher's Perspective

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ABSTRACT

This longitudinal case study explores a language teacher's experiences and perspectives towards adopting genre-based writing pedagogy. More specifically, the article examines how the teacher dealt with the pedagogy while attempting to improve his English writing teaching in a high school in Japan. The author was involved in the research by providing theoretical input and observing the teacher's practice in the classroom. Teacher interviews and teacher journals were collected. It was found that year-long support changed the teacher's attitude towards genre-based literacy pedagogy. It was also identified that there were difficulties in adopting the pedagogy in relation to the participant's teaching environment and the benefits of utilising an artificial intelligence (AI) tool. The AI tool was helpful for the teacher in providing corrective feedback to learners.

Keywords: interviews, genre-based writing pedagogy, systemic functional linguistics, teacher development

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INTRODUCTION

Over the past 20 years, research on genre-based writing pedagogy has developed significantly in the field of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). In their systematic literature review, Zhai and Razali (2023) concluded that genre-based writing pedagogy is now widely employed worldwide. Similarly, numerous studies have explored how this approach enhances learners' writing skills (e.g., Mauludin, 2020; Uzun & Topkaya, 2019; Zhang & Zhang, 2021). While previous research has primarily focused on the effectiveness of pedagogy in writing instruction, the accessibility of this approach for language teachers remains an under-researched area. In other words, existing studies on genre-based literacy pedagogy have not thoroughly investigated language teachers' experiences in adopting this approach. Genre-based writing pedagogy often requires a solid foundation in theoretical knowledge (e.g., de Oliveira & Lan, 2014; Emilia & Hamied, 2015). For example, pedagogy developed within systemic functional linguistics (see Martin & Rose, 2008) employs concepts such as register and metafunctions to examine language features and choices in writing. Nagao (2019) argues that it is not clear which aspect of the pedagogy is helpful for teachers.

Research on teachers' perspectives and experiences with genre-based writing pedagogy is warranted to assess its accessibility. A longitudinal study on teachers' experiences can reveal the possibilities and limitations of implementing genre-based writing pedagogy. By examining a teacher's perspective in an English as a foreign language (EFL) context, the study can shed light on this underexplored aspect of genre-based writing pedagogy.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Genre-based writing pedagogy

This study adopts the concept of genre developed by Martin (1984). The notion has been established in the framework of systemic functional linguistics (SFL) (see Halliday, 1994). Central to SFL is a focus on the meaning-making potential of texts, the choices available in language use, and the relationship between texts and their contexts. SFL researchers argue that language use is shaped by the social and cultural contexts in which it occurs (see e.g., Butt et al., 2012; Martin & Rose, 2008). Martin (1984) originally defined genre as "*a staged, goal-oriented, purposeful activity*" that is characteristic of specific communities (p. 25). This

definition remains the prevailing understanding of genre in SFL (see e.g., Martin, 2016; Gardner, 2017).

Genre-based writing pedagogy employs a teaching-learning cycle (see Hammond et al., 1992). The cycle consists of four stages designed to scaffold learners' writing development. In stage 1, *building knowledge of the field*, learners develop an understanding of a cultural or social context and lexical and grammatical patterns of the target genre. In stage 2, *modelling of text*, learners are presented with a model text, along with an explanation of its text structure and linguistic features. In the next stage, *joint construction of text*, teachers scaffold learners as they work together to complete a task related to the target genre. The final stage, *independent construction of text*, requires learners to construct a text autonomously.

Genre-based writing pedagogy and teacher development

Recent studies have explored teacher development with a focus on genre-based writing pedagogy. For example, Dinh and Nguyen (2023) examined how Vietnamese K-12 and university English language teachers resisted and adapted genre-based writing pedagogy following a five-week workshop on the approach. Although the workshop motivated teachers toward professional development, many participants perceived implementing the pedagogy in their teaching as impractical. This was attributed to limited preparation time for a new teaching approach and the necessity to focus on sentence-level grammatical knowledge assessed in national exams. Mulyono et al. (2023) conducted an online, five-session workshop on genre-based writing for language teachers in Indonesia. They evaluated the development of their academic writing skills using pre- and post-tests. The study found that short-term instruction did not significantly enhance the teachers' academic writing creativity. The researchers concluded that language teachers could benefit more from long-term support.

While genre-based writing pedagogy has demonstrated effectiveness in developing learners' writing proficiency, more research is needed to understand how educators can acquire the knowledge and skills required to implement this approach in their teaching settings. As Nagao (2019) argues (see the Introduction section), it is essential to determine which aspects of genre-based writing pedagogy are beneficial for teachers. Analysing teachers' perspectives offers valuable insights for advancing this pedagogical approach.

The research sets out to explore three research questions.

1.   What are a teacher's perspectives on adopting genre-based writing pedagogy?

2.   What are the valuable aspects of genre-based writing pedagogy for the teacher?

3.   What are the challenges in adopting genre-based writing pedagogy for the teacher?

METHODOLOGY

This longitudinal case study employed a qualitative approach to examine a language teacher's perspectives on and practices of genre-based writing pedagogy. A longitudinal case study approach was selected as it aligned with the study's objective of providing an in-depth portrayal of the teacher's implementation of genre-based pedagogy. Data were collected through the participant's journal and interviews with the participant.

Data collection

This study investigated the attitudes and practices of an English language teacher in Japan regarding genre-based writing pedagogy over one year. The teacher, who worked in a public high school (years 10 to 12) in central Japan, was selected as the participant. The study was conducted in Japan, exploring how genre-based writing pedagogy is employed in an EFL context. The participant was chosen since he was experienced and well-qualified as a language teacher with a Master of Education degree in TESOL. With such experience and qualification, he could adopt genre-based writing pedagogy and reflect on its usefulness and challenges. By exploring his practices and perspectives, the research aimed to generate insights into both the possibilities and challenges of implementing genre-based writing pedagogy in a Japanese context. The researcher provided the participant with three seminars on genre-based writing pedagogy and held additional meetings as needed to support material and lesson development. However, the participant was not required to adopt the seminar content and retained full autonomy over lesson planning. To analyse the participant's perspectives and practices, data were collected through his journal entries (see Table 1) and interviews (See Table 2).

Table 1. A list of journal entries

Journal entry number	Time of submission
Journal entry 1	June, 2022
Journal entry 2	September, 2022
Journal entry 3	December, 2022

Table 2. *A list of interviews*

Interview number	Time of interview
Interview 1	July, 2022
Interview 2	February, 2023

Data analysis

The journal and interview data were analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis framework. To ensure the reliability of the interview data, all interviews were transcribed. The journal and interview data were analysed twice, with intervals between the coding sessions. The analysis followed six stages: familiarising with the data, generating codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final report. The questions used in the journals and interviews are presented in the Appendix. Additional questions were incorporated during the interviews to clarify the interviewee's comments.

FINDINGS

Answers relevant to research question 1 (Teacher's perspectives on genre-based writing pedagogy)

Journals

The journal data reveal that the teacher's attitudes towards genre-based writing pedagogy evolved as he received theoretical input from the author and applied it

to his teaching. Initially, in the first journal entry submitted in June 2022, the participant did not recognise the significance of theoretical input for his teaching, as indicated by the comment: "*When practising writing instruction, the target audience and instructional context vary. Therefore, it is difficult to solve instructional challenges based solely on theory*" (translated by the author). However, by the third journal entry in December 2022, he acknowledged that understanding genres could be beneficial in designing writing tasks. He also perceived genre-based writing pedagogy as effective in developing learners' writing skills by stating, "*I think that the consistency of instruction has improved by setting the task content considering factors such as genre, linguistic features, and difficulty*" (translated by the author).

Interviews

The interview data analysis showed a change in the participant's perspectives on genre-based writing pedagogy from the first to the second interview. In the first interview, conducted in July 2022, the participant emphasised writing topics and sentence-level grammar. By the second interview in February 2023, however, he prioritised different types of genres and the teaching-learning cycle central to genre-based writing pedagogy in his teaching. This is exemplified in his comment, "*By studying how different types of genres have different purposes and linguistic features, I think the clarity of setting goals for writing instruction have significantly improved*" (translated by the author).

Answers relevant to research question 2 (Useful aspects of genre-based writing pedagogy)

Journals

The journal data illustrated how the participant recognised the effective aspects of genre-based writing pedagogy. In the second and third journal entries, he reflected on using the concept of genre to design writing tasks, such as creating a descriptive genre task. In the third journal, he discussed the advantages of adopting the teaching-learning cycle central to genre-based writing pedagogy, positively evaluating all four stages of the cycle as he wrote, "*I thought that the effectiveness of instruction could be expected by carrying out all the stages of genre-based pedagogy*" (translated by the author).

Interviews

The interview data highlight how the participant benefited from genre-based writing pedagogy. He found the lexical and grammatical features specific to each genre valuable for his learners. He also commented on the usefulness of Stage 2, *modelling of text,* in the teaching-learning cycle, noting that it clarified his learners' expectations for each writing task. This can be observed in his statement in the second interview, "*Since I had never consciously taught the grammatical features of descriptive writing, the way I present input (linguistic features) to students has completely changed*" (translated and explanation added by the author).

Answers relevant to research question 3 (Challenges in adopting genre-based writing pedagogy)

Journals

The journal data revealed some challenges the participant faced when implementing genre-based writing pedagogy in his teaching context, with time being the most significant hindrance. In the second journal entry, he acknowledged that there was insufficient time to conduct a writing lesson and provide feedback during Stage 4 of the teaching-learning cycle, *independent construction of text*. He stated, "Since *it takes time to provide corrections, it is very difficult to carry them out in a detailed and thorough manner due to time constraints*" (translated by the author). To cope with this challenge, the participant used an AI feedback tool, EasyBib (Chegg Service, 2024), to assist in providing feedback. Since providing feedback to students was a challenge in his teaching context, the tool was helpful for the teacher in delivering corrective feedback to approximately 100 learners.

Interviews

The participant also discussed challenges in adopting genre-based writing pedagogy in the interviews. In the second interview, he noted the need to include a reflection activity in which learners reflect on their writing and writing process, as promoted by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology-Japan (MEXT) to foster learner autonomy. He expressed that finding time for this within the teaching-learning cycle of genre-based writing pedagogy was challenging. Additionally, class size was crucial in selecting a teaching approach, as he taught multiple classes of 40 learners each. The participant also indicated that considerable input and support were necessary to fully understand and implement the pedagogy in his teaching. This can be observed in the participant's comment in

the second interview, "*I was able to take on these new challenges because I had support from a university professor. It would likely be difficult without such support*" (translated by the author).

DISCUSSION

The study examined changes in the participant's perspectives on genre-based writing pedagogy. Initially, he was sceptical about its applicability within his teaching context. However, as he integrated his own ideas with those embedded in the pedagogy, he began perceiving its value. This shift is significant for teacher development, as identity transformation plays a crucial role in this process (see Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). These findings suggest that longitudinal and reflective research can facilitate and document teacher identity and professional development changes. The findings show that continuous support and consultation may be essential for effectively adopting genre-based writing pedagogy in a teaching context, as short-term support may not significantly contribute to teachers' development (Mulyono et al., 2023). The participant articulated the challenges in comprehending the pedagogy and its underlying theories. The online and in-person seminars and meetings held with the participant over a year facilitated the integration of this pedagogy into his teaching.

The findings merit discussion regarding the application of genre-based writing pedagogy in a Japanese context and its implications for teacher development. The variety of genres and the structured teaching-learning cycle benefited both the teacher participant and his learners. Notably, it took time for the participant to fully adopt genre-based writing pedagogy, implementing it only after carefully considering learners' needs and the instructional requirements set by MEXT. This aligns with findings from Dinh and Nguyen's (2023) research. MEXT, for example, promotes reflection activities within lessons, prompting the participant to incorporate a reflection activity into the teaching-learning cycle of genre-based writing pedagogy.

The findings indicate that genre-based writing pedagogy requires adaptation when implemented in a Japanese teaching context. Specifically, while the first three stages of the pedagogy were effective, modifications were necessary for the fourth stage, the independent construction of text. The participant found it challenging to provide corrective feedback at this stage due to the large class size of approximately 100 learners, despite feedback being a crucial component. To address this issue, he incorporated the AI-based corrective feedback tool EasyBib

(Chegg Service, 2024) into students' independent learning outside the classroom. This tool generates revised versions of texts focusing on sentence-level grammar and vocabulary (see Stevenson & Phakiti, 2019, for insights on automated feedback in writing). Using this tool, the participant could focus his feedback on content and text structure in students' writing.

Although only one teacher participated in this study, the findings may be relevant to other teaching contexts, particularly in EFL settings. Challenges related to class size and the educational activities required by local authorial institutions in implementing genre-based writing pedagogy may arise in various contexts. The study highlights the critical role of teachers in balancing pedagogical principles, such as genre-based writing pedagogy, with the specific needs and demands of their local teaching environments.

CONCLUSIONS

Both the genre types and the four stages of the teaching-learning cycle were applicable in this context, bringing new perspectives to English language writing instruction for the participant. However, the pedagogy required modifications to align with the specific teaching context and MEXT requirements. The issue of limited time for the *independent construction of text* stage was addressed using an AI text correction tool, and a reflection stage was added to meet MEXT's emphasis on learner autonomy. Regarding teacher development, long-term, continuous support proved essential for successfully implementing the pedagogy. A limitation of this research is the small sample size; further studies with a more significant number of participants are needed to deepen understanding of how genre-based writing pedagogy can be effectively applied in a Japanese context. This relates to the research method and case study employed in the article. As Casanave (2015) points out, case studies are not suitable for research on a population of people; therefore, the findings of the current study should inform future research involving a more representative group of teachers and their experiences and perspectives on genre-based pedagogy.

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THE APPENDIX

Questions asked in journals and interviews

1. What do you think is important in writing instruction?

2. What theoretical foundations do you think support the above-mentioned important aspects of instruction?

3. Do you think theoretical foundations are important in writing instruction? Why do you think so?

4. Is it easy or difficult for teachers currently working in schools to learn about theoretical foundations? Why do you think so?

5. What aspects of genre-based writing pedagogy (text types, characteristics of written language, grammatical and lexical features of persuasive writing) do you find useful in high school writing instruction?

6. What aspects of genre-based writing pedagogy do you find less useful in high school writing instruction?

7. If you have incorporated genre theory into writing instruction, how did you feel about it?

8. If you have incorporated genre theory into writing instruction, do you think it brought any changes to the learners?

A Critical Discussion of the Second Language Motivational Self-System Model

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to provide a critical discussion of the Second Language Motivational Self-System (L2MSS) model and the implications of this model for language teaching research and practice. While the L2MSS is considered one of the most influential models in L2 motivation research, its utility has recently been questioned. In this discussion, the background to the L2MSS and related concepts is provided. Current critical issues in relation to the model are then discussed, and avenues for future research are suggested. Implications for L2 classroom practice are also provided.

Keywords: L2 learning, L2 motivation, L2 Motivational Self-System

INTRODUCTION

Motivation is a broad construct which has been defined by numerous scholars. Although motivation plays a key role in the success of mastering a second language (Al-Hoorie & Szabó, 2022; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021), there is still no consensus about its definition (Alamer, 2024), because motivation interacts with many other

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factors, such as intellectual ability, learning and cognitive styles. In this critical discussion, motivation will be defined as:

> the dynamically changing cumulative arousal in a person that initiates, directs, coordinates, amplifies, terminates, and evaluates the cognitive and motor processes whereby initial wishes and desires are selected, prioritised, operationalised and acted out (Dörnyei and Ottó (1998, p. 65)

This definition emphasizes the fluctuating nature of motivation and learners' wishes and desires for both the present and the future, the priorities they give to these wishes and desires, and what they actually do (or avoid doing) to enact these wishes and desires.

Most theories and models of L2 motivation originate from social and cognitive psychology. Notable amongst these is Gardner's (1985) socio-educational model, which is associated with two well-known concepts: instrumental orientation (the benefits gained from learning a language) and integrative orientation (the desire to learn a language in order to be part of a group and identify with members of that group). An important approach to L2 motivation also comes from self-determination theory (Noels, 2001; Ryan & Deci, 2000), which explains the degree of internalization of motivation, from extrinsic motivation (an external goal for learning a language such as passing an exam or getting a job) to intrinsic motivation (an internal desire to learn a language) of a language learner's behaviour, and the extent of their engagement in learning (Hiver, 2022; Mercer, 2022; Oga-Baldwin & Hirosawa, 2022). In contrast, Dörnyei's (2009) L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS) is based on the notion of the self, that is, the beliefs a person holds about themselves and the responses of others to the person.

While the socio-educational model, self-determination theory and the L2MSS have all been influential in L2 motivation research, the latter has achieved the broadest recognition. The L2MSS has been successfully used in monolingual and multilingual contexts around the globe (Henry & Liu, 2023), in relation not only to L2, but also to L3 (third language) learning (Csizér, 2019; Huang et al., 2015; Wang & Liu, 2017). In terms of research, studies informed by the L2MSS have been numerous (Yousefi & Mahmoodi, 2022) and have become mainstream (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021). The model's utility (Al-Hoorie, 2018; Yousefi & Mahmoodi, 2022) and predictive capacity (Papi et al., 2019) have been statistically demonstrated. Moreover, and probably most importantly, the L2MSS has moved from mainly quantitatively-oriented approaches to qualitative inquiries into L2 motivation.

Although the L2MSS has received much attention, there have also been critical appraisals of this model. The key focal point of these appraisals has been whether the motivation for learning a second or other languages can be modelled as a self-system (Al-Hoorie et al., 2023; Henry & Liu, 2023, 2024)To address this question, the current critical discussion will first introduce the L2MSS and then engage in a critical evaluation of this model. Based on this evaluation, implications for future motivation research and pedagogy will be considered.

THE L2 MOTIVATIONAL SELF SYSTEM (L2MSS)

The L2MSS explores learners' reasons for learning a language in terms of their view of who they would like to become in the future through their use of the language; their perceptions of what other people think they should do to become that person; and how their learning experiences impact on their motivational behaviours. The concept of 'self' is central to the L2MSS. The concept of self refers to a person's mental images of themselves based on their thoughts and feelings. It is a repertoire of beliefs, evaluations and perceptions which form a person's identity in relation to the world around them (Mercer, 2011). In addition to personality traits and physical characteristics (Dörnyei, 2020), the self is also influenced by sociocultural, educational and personal contexts. The L2MSS is informed by two theories of self: possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986), and self-discrepancy (Higgins, 1987). Possible selves are defined as (Markus & Nurius, 1986) future selves:

> that are hoped for [that] might include the successful self, the creative self, the rich self, the thin self, or the loved and admired self, whereas the dreaded possible selves could be the alone self, the depressed self, the incompetent self, the alcoholic self, the unemployed self, or the bag lady self (p.954).

Possible selves can be understood as being future-oriented, multifaceted, and dynamic. In terms of being future-oriented, possible selves are the self-images that represent individuals' ideas of what they might become, what they would like to become, and what they are afraid of becoming. Thus, possible selves act as a future self-guide. With regard to multi-facetedness, possible selves involve visions (Dörnyei & Chan, 2013), such as thoughts, images, goals, aspirations and fears. Possible selves are also dynamic because they are "not well-anchored in social experience; (…) comprises the self-knowledge that is most vulnerable and responsive to changes in the environment" (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 956).

Understanding these characteristics of possible selves is necessary to follow critiques of the L2MSS, which will be discussed later in this article.

The concept of possible selves is linked with motivational behaviour in self-discrepancy theory (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). In self-discrepancy theory, the analysis of the self begins with three basic domains: the actual self, which is the current attributes that someone possesses; the ideal self, which is the attributes someone would ideally like to possess; and the ought-to self, which is the attributes that someone believes they ought to possess. Higgins (1998) emphasised that the ideal self has a promotion focus, which is related to positive emotional-motivational predispositions such as hopes, aspirations, advancement, growth and accomplishment, and the ought-to self has a prevention focus, which is concerned with protection, safety, responsibilities and obligations. Self-discrepancy theory (Higgins, 1987) posits that these selves have a motivational function because discrepancies between one's current self and these future selves lead to discomfort, and this discomfort motivates a person to increase the harmony between the two selves in order to reduce this feeling of discomfort.

Drawing on possible selves and self-discrepancy theory, the first two constructs of the L2MSS (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 29) are:

> The *Ideal L2 Self*, which is the L2-specific facet of one's 'ideal self': if the person we would like to become speaks an L2, the '*ideal L2 self*' is a powerful motivator to learn the L2 because of the desire to reduce the discrepancy between our actual and ideal selves.

> The *Ought-to L2 Self*, which concerns the attributes that one believes one *ought to* possess to meet expectations, and to *avoid* possible negative outcomes.

The third key construct of the L2MSS is related to the learning situation and is conceptualised as:

> The *L2 Learning Experience*, which concerns situated, 'executive' motives related to the immediate learning environment and experience (e.g. the impact of the teacher, the curriculum, the peer group, the experience of success) (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 29).

The L2MSS represents an attempt to comprehensively synthesise previous L2 motivational thinking by fully embracing the psychological notion of the self. It is

seen not only as a natural progression from the socio-educational model (Dörnyei, 2010) but also has become the most dominant theoretical framework in L2 motivation research (Boo et al., 2015). This dominance can be attributed to its adaptable and flexible nature, which supplies "fertile ground for innovation and reflection across various English language learning contexts" (Yousefi & Mahmoodi, 2022, p. 3).

Since the initial proposal of the L2MSS in 2005 and its full elaboration in 2009, numerous empirical studies have been carried out to test its validity in various learning contexts, which has enabled it to gain broad acceptance. For example, Yousefi and Mahmoodi (2022) conducted a meta-analysis based on 17 published L2 motivation studies. They found that approaching L2 motivation through the lens of L2 possible selves (ideal and/or ought-to) in the classroom contributed to L2 learners' learning development because students who have a 'future time orientation' tend to create longer-term goals and are motivated by precise, anticipated events (Dörnyei, 2020).

In relation to the L2MSS, the concept of 'visions', a synonym for L2 possible selves, began to find its way into discussions of L2 motivation and classroom teaching practices through practitioner-oriented publications (Al-Murtadha, 2019; Gregersen & MacIntyre, 2014; Hadfield & Dörnyei, 2013; Mackay, 2019; Vlaeva & Dörnyei, 2021). As Dörnyei and Kubanyiova (2014) pointed out, "vision is one of the single most important factors within the domain of language learning: where there is a vision, there is a way" (p. 2). They highlight the use of visions to explain long-term efforts to master an L2. Although this vision-based view of motivation is promising, a number of conditions need to be realized for it to achieve its potential, such as the L2 possible selves being accompanied by action plans and effective procedural strategies and being offset by counteracting feared possible selves.

Ongoing development of the conceptualization of L2 future possible selves has led to further refinements of the L2MSS, such as the "anti-ought-to self" (a language learner's desire to go against societal expectations and norms) (Thompson, 2017), the "rooted L2 self" (a heritage-oriented concept which is defined by a migrant's strong feelings of connection to speakers of heritage languages and which can be tied to specific individuals or more generally to a defined community) (MacIntyre et al., 2017); the "plurilingual future self" (a concept which fosters positive attitudes towards language diversity and plurilingual aspirations) (Busse, 2017); and the "ideal multilingual self" (a notion which encourages a move away from a monolingual mindset to a multilingual motivational framework) (Henry, 2017).

With these continuing refinements, the L2MSS has become one of the most successful motivational frameworks in terms of theoretical advancements and teaching practices in the area of L2 motivation.

A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE L2MSS

This critical discussion addresses the question of whether L2 motivation can be modelled as a self-system, given the increasing realisation that the self is a complex dynamic system (Mercer, 2012) and given the complexity of motivation (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021). A justification for modelling L2 motivation as a self-system seems to be absent from Dörnyei's scholarship (Henry & Liu, 2023).

The main criticism of the L2MSS is that it is hard to conceptualise the self as a stable concept. MacIntyre (2022) critiqued the L2MSS by arguing that "the self is one of the most notoriously nebulous concepts in the social sciences" (p. 90) due to its "multi-dimensional, multifaceted dynamic structure that is systematically implicated in all aspects of social information processing" (Markus & Wurf, 1987, p. 301). Although the L2MSS is based on a conceptualization of the self as active and dynamic and on motivational fluctuations taking place in students' learning (Dörnyei, 2020), in practice, many L2 motivation studies only focus on the utility and application of the model, viewing the L2MSS as a stable psychological construct (Yousefi & Mahmoodi, 2022). These studies have examined either the predictive validity of the L2MSS by exploring how the selves predict motivation and behaviour or the relationship between the selves and L2 proficiency achievement (Papi, 2022). Standardised instruments, such as surveys, have been used to measure learners' motivation. For example, Dörnyei and Ushioda (2021) presented patterns and relationships across a large data set for the L2 Learning Experience to explain learners' motivation. The practice of using standardised measures, however, is inconsistent with the view of motivation as being complex and fluid. Thus, some scholars (Al-Hoorie et al., 2023; Henry & Liu, 2023, 2024; MacIntyre & Serroul, 2015) have started questioning the validity of the L2MSS, or more specifically, the concept of self used as the theoretical base for the Ideal L2 Self and the Ought-to L2 Self. For example, MacIntyre (2022) has suggested the L2MSS should only be applied in situations where the self has become a prominent and salient concern of the conscious mind.

This criticism of the self-concept has been taken up by Henry and Liu (2023), who argue that the conceptualization of self at the core of the L2MSS "remains the elephant in the room" (p. 2). They discuss five problem areas associated with this

conceptualization: the fantasy problem (where there is no differentiation between desire and fantasy, desire being a wish that can be achieved, and fantasy being something that is not realistic); the ought-to L2 self problem (where there is no specificity about the relevant others whose views should be followed); the integrativeness problem (the difficulty of incorporating affiliation motives into the learner's goals and wishes, such as being a member of a particular target language community); the learning experience problem (failure to consider diverse experiences of L2 learning and acquisition); and the context problem (the difficulty of identifying interactions which impact on students' motivation in specific classroom environments).

In addition, the disproportionate research emphasis on L2 possible selves but not on the L2 learning experiences has been critiqued (Al-Hoorie, 2018). Although the imagined self predicts imagined efforts very well, the L2MSS needs to be more firmly grounded in learning experiences, learning behaviours and language outcomes (Al-Hoorie, 2018). This includes learners' in and out of class learning experiences, learners' interactions with peers and teachers, what is taught, materials that have been used, and how learning is assessed (Al-Hoorie, 2018). The L2 Learning Experience, thus, is an umbrella term that covers many aspects of the learning situation. The main reason behind the neglect of L2 learning experiences is that, unlike the first two constructs, which were built on well-established theories in social psychology, the L2 Learning Experience was theorised from immediate learning situations and was only described in a few lines in Dörnyei's (Dörnyei, 2009) original formulation without detailed elaboration. (See Dörnyei's definition of the L2 Learning Experience cited above).

In response to criticism of the lack of attention to L2 learning experiences, Dörnyei (2019) borrowed the notion of engagement in educational psychology. He used this to redefine the L2 Learning Experience as "the perceived quality of the learners' engagement with various aspects of the language learning process" (p. 26) and demonstrated how this engagement-centred approach, drawing on relevant measurement resources developed in educational psychology, could be applied in L2 motivation studies. Other researchers, such as Hiver (2022), and Oga-Baldwin and Hirosawa (2022), have taken up this initiative and have further discussed the potential of engagement as a construct in L2 motivation research. For example, Mercer (2022) outlines three possible focuses: the teaching/learning context, process and temporality, and task-level motivation. These focuses, which represent a more complex and dynamic view of motivation, are not always considered in discussions of the L2MSS.

In a similar vein, drawing on a positive psychology lens, a holistic and domain-specific scale for measuring the L2 Learning Experience that focuses on six dimensions (e.g. positive emotions, negative emotions, engagement, relationship, meaning and accomplishment) has been proposed by Li (2023). In addition to this development, other studies have looked at the influence of the L2 Learning Experience to further explore this component on learners' L2 motivation, such as the effects of online L2 learning experiences (Wang, 2022), learning approaches (Irgatoğlu, 2021), and teaching approaches (Yang & Liang-Itsara, 2024).

The criticisms discussed above, in essence, suggest that a general framework like the L2MSS, may lack flexibility and specificity to accommodate the complexities of L2 motivation of particular individuals in particular contexts. In order to accommodate these complexities, more personal and context-oriented research approaches, such as a small lens perspective and a person-in-context perspective, are necessary. For example, Ushioda (2022) argues that future research needs to take into account local classroom realities and wider institutional and societal discourses which impact learners' motivation to engage with L2 learning at any particular moment in time, instead of simply translating theory and research into generalizable and decontextualized principles. Doing so would enable the investigation of dynamic processes of motivational change to be placed within an individual person's learning experience or within a person-in-context relational view of motivation (Ushioda, 2009). This would place a focus on the agency of the individual student as a thinking, feeling human being, rather than a static construct; a focus on the interaction between learners and their learning contexts, rather than independent categories and a focus on a relational, instead of a linear, perspective on motivation. This would do justice to L2 motivation as an organic process that emerges through a complex system of interrelations. This person-in-context relational view echoes perspectives on L2 motivation in relation to learners' environments or social worlds.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Research into the L2MSS needs to take account of the issues raised in the previous section of this paper. An example of research that does take these issues into account is the current wave of research into L2 motivation from a complex dynamic systems perspective (see, for example, Papi & Hiver, 2020; Hiver et al., 2023). However, the complex dynamic systems perspective faces challenges as to how the L2 self as a psychological concept, with its multi-faceted nature, complex

connections with learning environments, and unpredictability during the learning process, can be conceptualised to be methodologically researchable. Dörnyei (2020), in considering the possible application of the dynamic systems perspective to the study of motivation, characterizes these challenges in terms of the conceptualisation of motivation and motivational dynamics. The key issue has been how to define L2 motivation, which was traditionally considered a stable personal trait, then a situation-specific state that is transitory and temporary, and now, currently, an ever-evolving process with constant ebbs and flows. Further, when L2 motivation is conceptualised in a process-oriented manner, there is unease about relating motivation to time, as traditional psychological theories treat time as a general construct rather than something that is subject to change. To add to the complexity of these challenges, the influence of society, the impacts of situational learning, emotions and affect, and conscious and unconscious motivation, all contribute to motivational dynamics.

These complex motivational dynamics present new research frontiers, but these frontiers have also deterred many scholars, resulting in a generally slow response in L2 motivation research to address them (Dörnyei, 2020). In order to move out of this impasse, several scholars (Hiver & Al-Hoorie, 2020; Papi & Hiver, 2020) have suggested how L2 motivation research can further draw on complex dynamic systems theory (CDST) principles. In a nutshell, a CDST perspective takes a holistic approach that assumes "the combined and interactive operation of a number of different factors relevant to a specific situation rather than following the traditional practice of examining cause-effect relations between isolated variables" (Dörnyei, 2020, p. 42), and recognises "the individuality of learning trajectories" and re-assigns "responsibility for development from cognition alone to an agentive socio-cognitive process" (Hiver et al., 2023, p. 3). Research which draws on the constructs making up the L2MSS (the Ideal L2 Self, the Ought-to L2 Self and the L2 Learning Experience), thus, needs to avoid treating these constructs as being fixed, stable and independent of each other and instead focus on multiplicity, dynamism, change and relations between each construct. This more dynamic approach would enable the L2MSS to be conceptualized less as a static model and more as a dynamic system.

Methodological innovations also need to keep pace with this CDST perspective to ensure that when conducting L2 motivation research, "everything counts, everything is counted and everything changes" (Li et al., 2023, p. 553). In this respect, longitudinal designs with dense observations of a learner's performance

are desirable, so the process of individual learners' development can be understood (Hiver et al., 2023).

Longitudinal and ethnographic research designs have been taken up in a number of L2 learner motivation studies (Consoli, 2024; Doiz & Lasagabaster, 2018; Fryer & Roger, 2018; Gundarina, 2023; Kikuchi, 2019; Tajabadi & Consoli, 2024). These studies illustrate that longitudinal designs can accommodate qualitatively oriented research tools, such as case studies, narratives, individual interviews, focus groups, and deep observations, enabling researchers to add a human dimension to impersonal data, such as statistics. These research approaches allow participants to talk freely about their beliefs, contradictions, individual differences and personal experiences in various learning contexts over a period of time. These approaches enable L2 motivation to be regarded not only as an individual attribute (Kikuchi, 2019), but also as a social construction (Lamb, 2016): That is, "we come to strive for certain things in life as a result of our socialization in a particular community or society, and the extent to which we can act on our desires is also constrained by our social environment" (Lamb, 2016, p. 324). This perspective resonates with the current view of L2 motivation as a social practice (García, 2022; Poehner, 2022; Ushioda, 2022), and could also be applied to L2MSS studies.

Such studies are also expanding the research frontier in terms of research contexts, research participants, and data elicitation techniques. For example, they are examining students' development and trajectories of their L2 selves using a small-lens perspective (Ushioda, 2016) to examine language learning settings, such as English medium instruction (EMI) programs (Doiz & Lasagabaster, 2018), study abroad programs (Fryer & Roger, 2018) and migrant English immersion programs (Gundarina, 2023). Based on detailed observations of these research settings, the findings reveal that students' formation of their L2 selves and trajectories of L2 motivation are highly context-dependent. For example, Gundarina's (2023) study explores migrant children's ideal selves and learning motivation. Applying a drawing-based elicitation technique, the study challenges earlier claims that children are not mature enough to have a clear future possible self. The study shows how middle-school children in an English immersion program express diverse, at times pragmatic and practical, but remarkably clear ideal selves. Although these studies do not utilize the L2MSS, these qualitative approaches to understanding L2 selves and student motivation could also be drawn on in L2MSS research.

However, it should be stressed that, as Al-Hoorie and Hiver (2022) point out, "qualitative research designs do not by themselves guarantee a more complex and dynamic perspective for research, particularly if the research design is not inherently connected to or informed by the conceptual framework of complexity" (p. 183). Both qualitative and quantitative designs have an important role to play in L2MSS research. Importantly, quantitative methods in L2MSS research need to move beyond generalisation, comparisons of groups and measurements of linear relationships, and be more diversified, for example, by analysing variation at different levels and timescales, paying attention to temporal processes, applying spatial analysis and studying networked phenomena nested in contexts (Hiver & Al-Hoorie, 2020). Thus, selecting research methods for L2MSS research should not be an either/or choice: quantitative and qualitative designs can be chosen and, in some cases, combined in mixed methods approaches.

In recent years, there has been a call for an ethical agenda for L2 motivation research to align the field with more socially engaged and critically oriented approaches to research in applied linguistics (Ushioda, 2020). Ushioda (2020) argues that current L2 motivation research confines itself to individual psychological and associated pedagogical perspectives. Even studies that include social, political, and ideological dimensions are given superficial attention and are limited to descriptive characterizations of the context or setting in which the study took place or to specific external factors included as independent variables in the study, such as parental influence or cultural background. These drawbacks and the need to overcome them also apply specifically to L2MSS research.

Ushioda (2020) encourages future L2 motivation research to extend its primary focus to a macro-sociological perspective, taking on "the political and ideological structures affecting the motivations of individuals or communities to engage with other languages and cultures, or exposing social inequalities, barriers, or discriminatory practices where motivations to learn and use particular languages are critical issues" (p. 4). This new orientation of L2 motivation research is coined as the "Global South" perspective (Yousefi & Mahmoodi, 2022) and can also be taken up in L2MSS research. The Global South perspective focuses on struggles for transformation in a world that is unequal (Pennycook & Makoni, 2020). In this way, L2MSS research can become more diversified and shed new light on issues such as inequality, race, class, sexuality, poverty, gender, colonialism, immigration, and artificial intelligence, all of which impact learners' motivation and daily lives.

IMPLICATIONS FOR LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING

In his concluding remarks, Kikuchi (2019) points out that "without continuing rich L2 experiences and a personal goal to use English, learners in EFL situations have a hard time finding reasons to study" (p. 173). This conclusion highlights the importance of the L2MSS's constructs, the future goal-oriented self and the L2 learning experience for L2 teaching and learning, particularly in EFL contexts.

For the future goal-oriented self, it is essential to help students envision themselves as competent future L2 users and understand the potential value of using a second/foreign language. These visions can guide their actions in engaging actively with their learning. In relation to classroom practice, Dörnyei and Kubanyiova (2014) outline a six-phase vision-centred teaching framework which includes: "creating the language learner's vision, strengthening the vision through imagery enhancement, substantiating the vision by making it plausible, transforming the vision into action, keeping the vision alive and counterbalancing the vision by considering failure" (p. 32). Several empirical studies (Hessel, 2015; Safdari, 2021; Sato, 2021; Sato & Lara, 2019; Vlaeva & Dörnyei, 2021; You et al., 2016) have supported the pedagogical benefits of focussing on learners' visions. For example, in Gundarina's (2023) In this study, drawing was successfully utilized as a classroom activity for migrant children to imagine their ideal selves, such as dreams about speaking English and future occupations. Such vision-enhancing classroom activities may be of particular value in EFL settings where L2 learners do not have as many opportunities to experience genuine interactions with L2 communities.

The second L2MSS construct, L2 Learning Experience, also has ramifications for language teaching and learning. While the future L2 self uses learners' vision and imagination to motivate them to learn, the L2 Learning Experience focuses on the immediate learning environment, which can be complex and dynamic. Classrooms, particularly in EFL settings, are important for language learning. The important influence of classroom contexts on students' motivation has been discussed in Dörnyei (1994), and later, Dörnyei (2001) highlighted motivational strategies that teachers could use in the classroom. Teachers need to understand the dynamic and temporal nature of students' motivation. In Mercer's (2022) words, "the motivation to begin studying a language is qualitatively and conceptually not the same as the motivation to engage in a specific classroom task" (p. 42). Also, in order to engage students in authentic and meaningful learning, teachers need to understand the motivational function of learning tasks in class. For example, task-

based learning (Ahmadian, 2016; Ellis, 2017; Van den Branden, 2016), which focuses on bringing real-world language activities into the classroom, and project-based learning (Gibbes & Carson, 2014; Kurt & Beck, 2023; Musa et al., 2011), which involves students designing solution real-world problems, both focus on meaningful interactions. Approaches such as these can be important strategies for fostering student engagement.

Mercer and Dörnyei (2020) provide a tripartite model of classroom engagement that integrates three interconnected components: willingness to engage, triggering engagement, and maintaining engagement. This model intends to support teachers in maximizing student engagement. Willingness to engage is a prerequisite for the other two components of this model. For willingness to engage, a teacher can pay attention to setting up learning environments that encourage positive learner mindsets, teacher-student relationships and group dynamics. An accepting and cooperative environment is essential for students to feel part of a group. As group relations (e.g., accepting, knowing one another, cooperating, competing, respecting individual space) emerge through interactions between students (with the teacher's guidance), a supportive and cooperative classroom can be established. This learning environment can enhance students' willingness to engage. For example, students should not feel threatened or embarrassed by making mistakes. Rather, they need to learn that making mistakes is a natural part of the L2 learning process. Willingness does not, however, necessarily guarantee engagement. It is also important for teachers to understand how to trigger engagement. Thus, the design and set-up of learning activities play a role in capturing learners' situational interest, attention and curiosity. In order to maintain engagement, these activities also need to be interactive and relevant to the learners and need to aim to develop learners' autonomy.

The above implications for teaching, however, are only suggestions, not fixed guidelines for language teachers to follow, as there is no one-size-fits-all solution. There are always limitations faced by teachers, such as, to name a few, social and cultural values in certain learning contexts and practical and logistical issues. These suggestions, however, can raise awareness among teachers of the inherent complexity and dynamic nature of students' L2 selves and L2 motivation in instructional L2 learning environments and can provide possible motivational teaching strategies to apply in these environments.

CONCLUSION

This article has critically discussed the L2MSS. This discussion has identified both the innovative contributions of the L2MSS to L2 motivation research and key issues associated with this theoretical model. This discussion has also highlighted directions for future research and implications for teaching practice. It is not the intention of this discussion to discredit the L2MSS. Rather, the discussion highlights the potential of the L2MSS to forge valuable links with the complex systems perspective that is currently breaking ground in L2 research (Chong et al., 2023). The L2MSS can potentially reflect the complexity of L2 motivation, as "any state of being or becoming is always in relation or seen as nodes in larger interconnected webs of human and social functioning" (Hiver & Larsen-Freeman, 2020, p. 298). The L2MSS can provide a rich, in-depth conceptualization of motivation that teachers can draw on in their pedagogical practices.

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Conversation with Professor Jack C. Richards about English Medium Instruction (EMI)

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ABSTRACT

In this insightful conversation, we sat down with Professor Jack C. Richards from the University of Sydney to explore the growing trend of English Medium Instruction (EMI). Professor Richards explains EMI, why it is becoming increasingly popular in educational institutions worldwide, and how it differs from Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). Professor Richards also delves into the challenges and issues EMI presents, offering a nuanced look at its impact on educators and students. Whether you are an educator, student, or simply curious about global education trends, this discussion provides valuable insights.

Keywords: English medium instruction (EMI), content and language integrated learning (CLIL), TESOL

THE CONVERSATION

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Book Review: Richards, J. C. with J. Pun. (2022). *Teaching and learning in English medium instruction: An introduction*. Routledge.

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Teaching and Learning in English Medium Instruction (2022) by Jack C. Richards with Jack Pun seeks to introduce the concepts and approaches to English medium instruction (EMI) to a new generation of EMI teachers and language teaching professionals. In under 300 pages of this accessible volume, the authors review key theories and research in EMI, discuss implications for teaching practice, and offer a variety of practical advice for EMI teachers. The wide appeal of this book is its advantage. Unlike other literature on EMI that focuses on specific education sectors, such as higher education (McKinley & Galloway, 2022) or specific geographical regions (Fenton-Smith et al., 2017; Henriksen et al., 2019), the volume applies broadly to secondary and higher education settings regardless of location. It provides a comprehensive overview of the issues of academic literacy and the challenges of teaching academic content through English, and it serves as a basis for critical reflection on the impact and consequences of EMI. The broad scope of the book means it is suitable for a variety of audiences, and the readers are invited to choose sections relevant to them.

The eleven chapters in the volume are organised into four parts, centred around key themes in EMI. Part 1, *Foundations of EMI*, includes three chapters that introduce the nature and the background of EMI. Part 2 focuses on the nature of academic literacy in EMI contexts and examines the linguistic dimensions of academic discourse that EMI educators need to be aware of. Part 3 is devoted to the impact of EMI on both teachers and students, the social capital students hope

to derive from EMI and the challenges they face in doing so. Part 4 concludes the book with recommendations for professional development of EMI educators and suggests ways to evaluate EMI programs, using case studies of program evaluations.

The volume engages with the readers throughout. Each chapter finishes with a set of discussion questions, which help the readers review the ideas from the chapter and prime for the ideas in the coming sections. The discussion questions are followed by two or three practical follow-up activities designed to illustrate the points made in the chapter. For example, the readers are asked to write a country profile according to EMI typology presented in Chapter 3 or to analyse a textbook chapter to identify potential language difficulties for EMI students. Current and future EMI teachers, especially those without a language teaching background or knowledge, will benefit from these bite-sized tasks, which are illustrative of the challenges and specifics of teaching through the medium of English.

Chapter 1 presents a useful overview of the concept and history of English-medium instruction and discusses justifications used to support its implementation. Here, EMI as a format more common in tertiary level, is contrasted with other teaching approaches such as Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and English for Academic Purposes (EAP). Chapter 2 distils the many contexts and features of EMI into a typology of EMI forms, adapted from the authors' previous work (Richards & Pun, 2021), which is helpful in comparing EMI across various settings. Chapter 3 presents key issues of EMI implementation in different contexts, including program design, student and teacher support, EMI program goals and implementation. Together, the first three chapters effectively set the overall scene of English-medium education and prepare the reader for the subsequent detailed and practical sections.

Discussing the nature of academic literacy in EMI, chapters 4 and 5 argue that it includes not merely the knowledge of concepts, ideas and theories. Academic literacy, which in this book is equated with discipline literacy, also involves the ability to participate in communicative practices of the discipline, using the appropriate genres and text types and being aware of its linguistic dimensions. Examples of disciplinary text types and their linguistic features, provided in Chapter 5, are especially practical for EMI teachers willing to apprentice their students into the academic discourse of the discipline. This part of the book also raises an important question about whose responsibility it is to teach the language while developing academic literacy. Various schools of thought on this are

reviewed. The authors conclude with an argument – one they return to throughout the book – that the distinction between teaching content and language is not achievable in practice. It is crucial for EMI teachers to develop an understanding of how language is used in their disciplines. The authors' own position is that EAP and subject teachers are jointly responsible for developing academic literacy in EMI settings.

Part 3 is arguably the most practical section of the book. It begins with the overview of EMI teacher characteristics in Chapter 6, and the subsequent chapters offer a wealth of practical strategies that EMI teachers can use to support their students. Chapter 7, Teaching in EMI, makes a convincing argument that teaching through the medium of English poses unique challenges and is distinct from teaching in one's first language (L1). The chapter draws on research to offer specific instructional strategies in EMI, including before, during and after teaching. This is complemented by a list of teacher-reported strategies in the appendix, which is a real-life snapshot of how EMI teachers support their students in learning both language and content. Chapter 8 discusses the nature of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) instruction and how it can be implemented to support EMI students. Chapter 9, Learning in EMI, is a counterpart to Chapter 7, written from the student perspective. It is of particular interest as it systematically outlines the challenges students may experience in EMI classrooms and then presents research-based options for EMI educators to support their students in developing discipline literacy. The suggested techniques could serve equally well as a foundation for EMI teacher development as well as a basis for personal reflection on one's teaching and teacher identity.

If there is one criticism of Chapters 7 and 9, it is the manner in which the authors position teachers' and students' use of L1 and translanguaging as "coping strategies". While acknowledging that teachers and students may see value in using L1 to deal with the demands of EMI teaching and learning, the suggested teaching strategies do not include using EMI learners' existing language repertoires. This is at odds with other EMI literature that emphasises planned multilingual approaches to teaching and learning (Lasagabaster, 2022; Sahan et al., 2022) and argues that the 'E' in EMI does not stand for English-only (Sahan & Rose, 2021).

The final part of the book covers the professional development of EMI educators and the evaluation of EMI programs. Chapter 10 examines two core domains of knowledge and practice: the teacher's use of English and their pedagogical

knowledge and practices. Once again, strategies for improving teachers' use of English are illustrated, and the authors return to their argument that collaboration between subjects and English teachers is beneficial in EMI professional development. Chapter 11 provides an overview of approaches to evaluating EMI programs, and Chapter 12 concludes the volume with a concise summary and recommendations for best practices in EMI.

Overall, the book provides an accessible introduction to EMI and a wealth of practical advice to EMI educators. Unlike a lot of EMI literature on the market, it does not present in-depth results of EMI research centred around a type of setting or geographical region, nor does it aim to do so. The book's notable strength is the broad scope of teaching and learning issues being covered. The authors find an effective balance between theory and practice and promote readers' engagement with key questions in EMI that have been raised in the scholarly community: what academic literacy in EMI is, whose responsibility it is to develop it, and what the best practice is in achieving this.

Given that the book aims to introduce key EMI concepts and discuss the many practical issues at classroom level, the overview is understandably broad rather than deep. For this reason, it may not be suitable for language education researchers looking for the latest research insights from specific EMI settings. However, for interested postgraduate students and current and future EMI teachers, the book can serve as an introduction to the considerable and fast-growing EMI literature devoted to more specific aspects of EMI.

This volume can be used as a coursebook in applied linguistics and TESOL programs with EMI specialisation. It will interest in-service EMI teachers and EAP and ESP teachers, especially in settings where collaboration between the two specialists is feasible. Teacher educators and professional development providers will also find the volume a useful, practical resource for developing the teaching practices of EMI teachers. Finally, the volume can be a sobering read for EMI policy developers as it critically and systematically unpacks the many challenges and consequences of implementing EMI.

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Book Review: Jackson, J. (2024). *Introducing language and intercultural communication* (3rd ed.). Routledge.

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Jane Jackson's third edition of *Introducing Language and Intercultural Communication* underscores the critical importance of cultural understanding in effective communication, which is especially vital in today's world, where there has been an increasing tendency to resort to incendiary language against cultures and people considered different. Jackson proposes a framework that prioritises cultural sensitivity, reminding the reader that English language fluency alone is insufficient when seeking to communicate with others and that there is a need to understand and respect the cultural dimensions involved in communication.

Chapter 1 serves two primary purposes: it defines the key terms essential to understanding the rest of the book and explains why effective communication across cultures is critically important today. Jackson defines intercultural communication 'as the negotiated interpersonal interactions between individuals (or groups) with different identities (e.g. cultural, ethnic, social linguistic, regional) and varying degrees of power or status who have been socialised in different cultural and/or linguistic environments' (p. 2). She explains that the demand for skilled intercultural communicators is more pressing than ever due to the increased contact among cultures driven by technological advancements and globalisation. This need is particularly crucial to address complex global challenges—including climate change, health crises, conflicts, and the rise of extremist ideologies—in a culturally sensitive manner. The chapter ends with an important lesson on the ethical dimensions of intercultural communication.

Chapter 2 acquaints the reader with current debates about defining what culture means. Jackson discusses how children will become enculturated into the way of life of a particular society and acquire the linguistic, pragmatic and cultural norms that allow them to participate in the community. However, she recognises that the traditional perspective, which posits that individuals must learn a single set of cultural norms specific to a community, is becoming less applicable in today's dynamic, global, and multicultural context where culture is fluid and variable. The chapter then shifts to discuss an alternative perspective that suggests viewing culture through a critical lens. Similar to other constructivist thinkers, proponents of a critical approach challenge the idea of culture as a static entity inherited from one generation to the next, suggesting instead that it is actively constructed through discourse and continuously evolves according to its context (Bennett, 2020). This elevates recognition that culture does not refer to a homogeneous grouping of people with similar cultural artifacts. However, significant variation exists among individuals within any broader culture.

The topic of communication and culture is taken up in the following two chapters (Chapters 3 and 4), topics that may resonate more with those particularly interested in the linguistic aspects of culture. Communication is described as a process that is irreversible, dynamic, interactive/transactive, symbolic, intentional/unintentional, contextual, pervasive, power-infused and cultural. Jackson describes how, in the case of intercultural communication, successful interactions are highly dependent on how well interlocutors accommodate different communication styles. Some cultures favour high-context communication, where information is indirectly conveyed to engage the listener. Conversely, other cultures prefer low-context communication, which focuses on the direct exchange of ideas, information, and opinions. Furthermore, she notes the many ways communication influences non-verbal aspects (e.g. facial expression, use of space, physical appearance) and the importance of interlocutors being cognizant of how these can influence how we view others. In line with current thinking in intercultural pragmatics, effective intercultural communication is achieved when interlocutors seek to converge in their communication styles (Kecskes, 2022; Ifantidou, 2022).

The book explains how perceptions of one's own identity and that of others significantly influence intercultural communication, and at times, the dark side of identity can hinder successful interactions. Chapter 5 outlines the many dimensions of identities (e.g. social, cultural, racial and ethnic) and argues that identities are shaped by the specific context and time period and are continually

negotiated through social interactions. This definition of identity sets the stage for exploring the negative dimensions of identity in Chapter 6, where perceiving identity as static and as a homogenous property tied to specific races frequently leads to racist and xenophobic attitudes in intercultural communication contexts. At this juncture, the book presents one of the core principles of intercultural studies, ethnocentrism. An ethnocentric view sets an individual's own culture as the normative standard by which the world is best understood, and all other cultures are viewed according to this standard, which often creates negative value judgements about alternative cultural ways of knowing. Therefore, intercultural communication requires people to be mindful of their ethnocentric tendencies and refrain from snap decisions about how unfamiliar ways may be inferior to one's own culturally informed understanding of the world.

Chapter 7 explores the various forms and methods of intercultural adaptation, beginning with an overview of migratory patterns that can be either short-term or long-term. It then discusses how acculturation varies significantly based on an individual's attitude towards maintaining their home culture, adopting the new culture, or attempting to integrate both. The chapter continues by examining the experiences of students studying abroad, detailing the stages involved in adapting to a new environment. Particular focus is given to the negative and positive impacts of language and culture shock, factors that influence the severity of culture shock, and strategies that can be employed beforehand to reduce stress and frustration. This helps students prepare for and manage a disorienting experience of adjusting to a new culture.

Similar to previous chapters, Chapter 8 explores intercultural relationships by defining the nature of intercultural and interpersonal relationships. Such relationships describe the union of people across different races, ethnicities, nationalities, religions, social classes and languages. It becomes clear at this point why Jackson introduced many concepts about identity and communication styles earlier in the book, as her listing of the different facilitators and barriers to forming personal intercultural relationships draws upon this material. For example, individuals who effectively recognise the self-identities of others in a relationship tend to sustain more positive intercultural relationships. Additionally, the themes of emotional sensitivity and emotional intelligence recur throughout the chapter, adding a new layer to understanding intercultural relationships.

Jackson then addresses the problem of conflict that can disrupt relationships (Chapter 9). Differing conflict styles are a key challenge when involving more than

one culture, as cultures vary in directness and emotional expressiveness when conflict arises. Jackson discusses how conflict is often seen as an attack on a person's identity, and varying approaches to maintaining face can lead to misunderstandings. She argues that the many potential sources of conflict require that intercultural communicators enhance their understanding of culturally based conflict styles, practice mindfulness to remain aware of various emotions and thoughts, engage in self-reflection, utilise effective conflict communication skills, and maintain flexibility in their communication approaches.

While most of the book has focused on the social and relational advantages of intercultural communication, Chapter 10 shows how intercultural communication is important to creating commercially successful businesses. The chapter notes that the study of cultural differences within the business community led to the initial research on core differences between cultural groups, with many of these theories continuing to be influential today.

The concluding chapter explores the broader significance of intercultural communication by examining its relationship with overall communicative competence and its importance in ethical behaviour and global citizenship. The book highlights previous studies indicating a weak correlation between language proficiency and intercultural sensitivity, suggesting that intercultural communicative competence might be an independent construct not fully explained by traditional models of communicative competence. This is consistent with the criticism of the traditional communicative competence models proposed by Canale and Swain (1980) and Bachman (1990), which emphasise the individual. In contrast, intercultural communicative competence focuses on the speaker's ability to establish shared meaning (Yong, 2019). Jackson notes Byram's (1997) contribution to the field with the development of his model of *Intercultural Communicative Competence*. He built upon the notion of communicative competence by integrating a cultural dimension, underscoring that language learning involves more than just linguistic skills but also the development of attitudes, knowledge, critical cultural awareness, and skills in interpreting and interacting. The chapter concludes with a reminder that as global citizens, everyone needs to develop intercultural competency to respect human rights and uphold ethical responsibilities more effectively.

Jackson has intentionally crafted a book that is accessible and engaging for newcomers to intercultural communication. The readability of the book is helped by the incorporation of multiple vignettes and practical suggestions to provide

concrete examples alongside the theoretical concepts discussed. In the previous edition, she dedicated a chapter to the history of language and intercultural communication and used more technical language in the chapter titles. Jackson has since eliminated this section and revised the headings by using more accessible terms, clearly making a significant effort to make the book's content resonate with the experiences of many potential readers.

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