The Medium of Instruction in Chinese L2 Classrooms in Scotland: An Investigation of Attitudes and Practices

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Abstract

The choice and use of mediums of instruction have been controversial issues in foreign language education, including Chinese L2 teaching. Rational employment of mediums of instruction is significant in promoting effective foreign language classroom teaching worldwide. So far, relevant research on Scotland is still lacking. This article investigates teachers' attitudes and practices of mediums of instruction in Chinese L2 classrooms in Scotland. Based on a questionnaire survey and semi-structured interviews, the study found that most teachers were inclined to a bilingual form of instruction and supported L1 use in classes. Classroom observation demonstrated the language choices and practices in actual classes, reflecting a relatively strong reliance on English. The findings revealed the pros and cons of L1 as a medium of instruction, to some extent. Suggestions were thus offered for teachers on the reasonable use of mediums of instruction. The article also calls for further research on the effectiveness of the use of mediums of instruction in diverse world contexts.

Keywords: medium of instruction, language choice, foreign language education, Chinese, Scotland

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1 INTRODUCTION

The 'pure target language' principle has long dominated the teaching of Chinese as a second language (CSL), aiming to provide learners with a rich and authentic Chinese learning environment (Sun, 2003). In recent years, an increasing number of beginners with diverse linguistic backgrounds have been learning Chinese worldwide. The multilingual reality in contexts and beginners' language proficiency have posed challenges to the choice and use of mediums of instruction, which could be the target language, a student's L1, and other languages commanded by both teacher and students (Jiang, 2011). In response to the issue, some research has advocated a move towards bilingualism and multilingualism in CSL classrooms (Moloney & Xu, 2015; Wang, 2019; Zhang & Li, 2015). However, the monolingual norm still prevails in most CSL classrooms in and outside China.

This article situates Scotland. Its foreign language policy and the language background of classroom participants make it unique in the use of mediums of instruction in CSL classrooms, which endows the region with certain research significance. Unlike the 'Chinese-only' immersion method that prevails across CSL programmes in China and many other countries, including the USA, the value of a student's L1 as a medium of instruction is emphasised within the Scottish policy context. The ability to reflect on the L1 learning experience and apply it to the L2 learning, known as 'successful learners' of modern languages, is one of the key capabilities the national framework of Curriculum for Excellence aims to develop in all Scottish young people (Scottish Government, 2009). A student's prior L1 learning is considered a booster rather than an obstacle to the new language learning. Based on the principle, comparative learning between the features of both languages has been mentioned within the policy discourse, such as 'explore similarities and differences between sound patterns in different languages' (Scottish Government, 2009, p. 4) and 'make comparisons and explore connections between spelling patterns in English and the language I am learning' (Scottish Government, 2009, p. 7). These have provided some support for the use of English in Scottish CSL classrooms, to some extent.

The language background of teachers and students is another significant factor for language choice in CSL classrooms. Teachers are primarily native Chinese-speaking and English-proficient bilinguals. English is also the most common, even the sole language used by students in school and family. Research by Ma (2019) has shown the situation that English is the main medium of instruction in Scottish CSL classrooms. This is quite different from that of Chinese CSL classrooms where English is usually not used as the primary medium of instruction, given the fact that English is not well commanded by all overseas students in China and even teachers themselves (Wang, 2007).

Flexible and effective pedagogies in classroom contexts have been on the research agenda for Chinese education worldwide. The appropriate decisions and practice of mediums of instruction help to arrange reasonable classroom teaching and promote effective learning outcomes. It is important to understand how classroom participants think and use the medium of instruction, which can reflect the actual CSL classroom teaching and learning and inspire Chinese and other foreign language educators and practitioners worldwide. Up to now, limited studies have been heard on the choice and practice of the medium of instruction in Scotland and other regions of the UK.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical basis

A medium of instruction refers to the language used by a teacher to teach students. It may or may not be the official language of a region or country. In situations when a foreign language is the teaching content, more than one language would be involved in the classroom instruction. Teaching the language through the target language itself increases students' exposure to it; other languages that students have already mastered function as an aid in the new language teaching. In a CSL classroom, learners' mother tongue or L1 is usually considered the most common medium of instruction. In some cases, however, English is used as a

common medium of instruction, also known as a lingua franca or bridge language, when teachers and students do not share or understand the same L1. For instance, English may be used in a French CSL classroom, if the native teacher from China has no knowledge of any French. Jiang (2011) has made a clear explanation of the medium of instruction in CSL classrooms. She believes that besides the mother tongue or L1, the medium of instruction can also be the target language or other languages commanded by both teachers and students. In a broad sense, it includes all the languages used by a teacher in classrooms; in a narrow sense, it refers to other languages used other than the target language. The broad definition runs throughout the article.

Decisions on mediums of instruction are most based on Stephen Krashen's theory of second language acquisition. The input hypothesis states that learners progress in their L2 learning when they comprehend L2 input ('i+1') that is slightly beyond their current level ('i') (Krashen, 1982). In other words, teachers should provide students with adequate and even some slightly advanced L2 input to achieve progress. This encourages more target language to be used directly as the medium of instruction. However, it should notice whether the L2 input conforms to the 'i+1' principle. If the language used is far higher than learners' current level, invalid and incomprehensible input would be caused. Therefore, the use of mediums of instruction should be determined according to the language level of students. The affective filter hypothesis, on the other hand, holds that some 'affective variables', such as motivation, anxiety and personality, influence the L2 learning effect. Anxiety and lack of confidence will increase the affective filter on language input, forming psychological barriers, and then preventing comprehensible input from being obtained by learners. These are exactly the issues faced by many CSL beginners. In this case, if teachers appropriately use L1 or other languages that students have mastered to help them better understand relevant language knowledge, it will help reduce the affective filter and may be more conducive to students' acquisition of a new language.

2.2 Relevant research

Whether to use other languages as mediums of instruction in L2 classrooms has been one of the most controversial issues in the field of foreign language education (Shin et al., 2020). Early discussions on the issue came from the controversy over different teaching approaches. The grammar-translation method advocates a combination use of mother tongue and L2 in the instruction, aiming to improve learners' reading and writing ability by relying on mother tongues and translation. The direct method and audio-lingual method oppositely believe that mother tongues should be restricted or even banned in L2 teaching. More recent teaching methods, such as the communicative approach, also advocate for practical language use in an authentic L2 setting (Bruen & Kelly, 2014), which implicitly discourages the use of other languages in L2 instruction.

The exclusive use of L2 in classrooms has been based on the view that L2 acquisition relies on a large amount of L2 input. As Ellis (1984) pointed out, the use of a mother tongue in foreign language classrooms would reduce the chance of learners' exposure to the target language and limit the effect of foreign language learning. Atkinson (1993) even believed that the use of students' L1 in classrooms is a waste of precious time in learning L2. Research by Almohaimeed and Almurshed (2018) further showed that advanced L2 learners mostly believe that learning via the target language is more effective. However, in contrast, many studies have confirmed the multi-functionality of L1 in L2 classrooms. For instance, L1 can help explain vocabulary and cultural content (De La Campa & Nassaji, 2009), alleviate learning anxiety (Norman, 2008; Wilden & Porsch, 2020), close teacher-student relationships (Debreli, 2016), and promote classroom management (Hall & Cook, 2013). These have shown the positive role of L1 as a medium of instruction and the possibility of its application in foreign language classrooms. However, some teachers argued that it should be used only when necessary, and overuse would be counterproductive (Mahmoudi & Amirkhiz, 2011).

In line with the academic controversy in foreign language education, relevant research in the field of CSL can be roughly divided into two categories: teaching in the target language only; combining the target language with students' L1 or English as a lingua franca. Focused on beginners, Chen (2013) argued that students' L1 can better guide them to get started and reduce the fear of Chinese learning, while the pure Chinese approach often fails to achieve the expected effect. A longitudinal experiment by Wu (2018) found that students taught via Chinese and English performed better than those via Chinese only in elementary level learning and kept prevailed in follow-up learning. Although this study is only based on limited written tests, it has narrowed the gap of quantitative research in related fields. Nevertheless, some researchers have warned that the employment of L1 or English in L2 classrooms can easily lead to students' sense of dependence on the auxiliary languages (e.g., Du, 2009). A pure Chinese classroom has been believed achievable and to create a favourable context for understanding the mindset of the target country (Hao, 2011). The willingness to protect the purity of Chinese language and undertake the mission of Chinese teaching has also led some practitioners and educators to insist on the 'Chinese-only' strategy (Wang, 2007; Zhao & Huang, 2010).

Recent studies have revealed classroom participants' varied attitudes and choices of the medium of instruction in CSL classrooms. Zhang and Feng (2019) indicated a general recognition of using a mother tongue or English among teachers at Confucius Institutes in some regions of Europe, North Africa, and Southeast Asia. Wang and Kirkpatrick (2012) found that some teachers in China preferred to mix Chinese and English in teaching international students Chinese despite the 'pure Chinese' principle. However, a survey by Wang (2019) showed that some teachers in China used solely Chinese in their teaching in order to set an example for students and better manage multilingual classrooms. Focusing on students, Shi (2018) reported that Thai students favoured an L1-inclusive medium of instruction and can accept the use of English. In contrast, some Korean adult learners in China can even accept a 'Chinese-only' CSL classroom setting (Li, 2017). These results

show that the choices and practices of the medium of instruction may be under the influence of different linguistic and regional backgrounds, as well as the personal willingness of classroom participants.

So far, few studies have looked specifically at the use of mediums of instruction in Scottish CSL classrooms, whilst each region including Scotland has its unique situation and context. In terms of methodology, questionnaire surveys and interviews were the most adopted methods in the field. However, the subjectivity of the respondents may exist in the results. More alternative research methods, such as classroom observation, are thus required to understand the actual practices in natural settings. Given these, situating Scotland, this article attempts to investigate and understand the choices and practices of mediums of instruction in CSL classrooms. Two specific research questions are: (1) What are the teachers' attitudes towards the use of mediums of instruction in CSL classrooms? (2) What are the situation and characteristics of the use of mediums of instruction in real CSL classrooms?

In the following parts, the paper presented the research design, and then focused on the necessity, effectiveness, and amount of the use of the medium of instruction on teachers' views. It then looked at the actual practice of mediums of instruction in natural classroom settings from multiple perspectives. Suggestions on the appropriate use of mediums of instruction were provided after that.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research aim

This study attempts to investigate the use of mediums of instruction in primary CSL classrooms in Scotland at two levels: attitudes of teachers towards the use of mediums of instruction; the situations and characteristics of mediums of instruction used in naturalistic classrooms. The purpose of the research is to understand how teachers think and choose different languages in instruction and how the languages are used in actual CSL classes. On this basis, it attempts to

further understand the real situation of Chinese language teaching in Scotland, providing relevant data and inspiration for future Chinese language educators and practitioners worldwide.

3.2 Research objects

The investigation focused on teachers and students at Edinburgh Chinese School, a Chinese school in Scotland where most classroom participants were ethnic Chinese. The school is positioned more as a language heritage school and follows the Scottish national Curriculum for Excellence. The researchers have learned from the head and teachers that almost 85% of the students have at least one parent from China; teachers are mostly local Chinese with the excellent bilingual ability and at least three years of teaching experience. Classes are divided by age, rather than language level, into primary, secondary, and adult classes. Although the language proficiency varies even in the same class, the overall students are at the beginning level. The purposive sampling (Cohen et al., 2007) was selected due to the diverse language background of the participants, for which they are more likely to face the dilemma of language choice in CSL classes. It was also because few research objects have focused on ethnic Chinese in the field.

3.3 Research methods and design

The article conducted a mixed methods approach to address the research aim and questions. A questionnaire survey and semi-structured interviews were chosen as appropriate ways to obtain teachers' attitudes and inner thoughts concerning the use of mediums of instruction in CSL classrooms (Alvesson, 2002). Classroom observation was adopted to understand the actual situation and characteristics of language employment in naturalistic settings.

The questionnaire survey was bilingual and consisted of two parts: basic information of teachers and their attitudes towards the necessity and effectiveness of the use of mediums of instruction. Questionnaires were distributed with the approval and support of the school board and were collected with full respect for

the wishes of teachers. In addition, the questionnaire protected the personal privacy of participating teachers and was conducted in an anonymous online format.

Following the questionnaire survey, interview invitations were sent to the teachers. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to gain a deeper understanding of the specific attitudes towards language use in classes, such as the reasons and influencing factors for their choices of the medium of instruction. Online interviews were considered appropriate due to the Covid-19. The time, duration, and language were set according to the convenience and preferences of the participants. Additionally, all participants were anonymised respectively as T1, T2, and T3.

Primary and junior secondary classes were the focus of classroom observation due to the largest class size. The observation included two phases and lasted about four months. Phase one mainly relied on traditional classroom instruction; phase two transferred to the online Zoom teaching due to the Covid-19. The framework of observation adopted the LICC Paradigm developed by the research team from East China Normal University (Cui, 2012; Shen & Cui, 2008). Following the classroom observation table (see Appendix C), CSL lessons were observed and recorded from four dimensions: Learning, Instruction, Curriculum, and Culture. Surrounding the situation and characteristics of the use of mediums of instruction, the dimension of learning focused on the interactions and study status of students; the dimension of instruction was concerned about how teachers presented knowledge and supported students; the dimension of curriculum looked at course arrangement and implementation; classroom atmosphere was the focus of dimension of culture. The advantage of this framework lies in that it constructs a comprehensive observation system with multiple perspectives, which breaks the traditional observation mode that only focuses on teachers' behaviour, thus widely used in Chinese classroom observation.

Figure 1. LICC Paradigm (Shen & Cui, 2008)
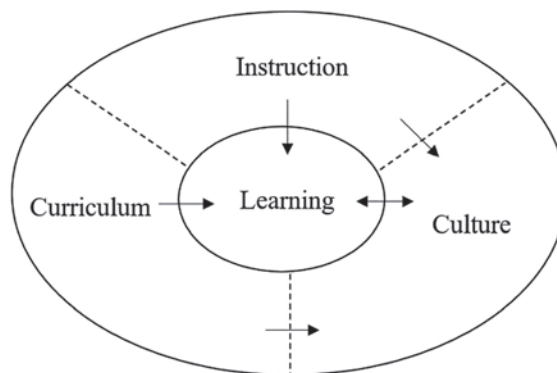

4 FINDINGS

4.1 Research question 1: teachers' attitudes

15 teachers completed the questionnaire survey, most of whom have rich Chinese as L2 teaching experience. Among them, 86.67% were ethnic Chinese (N=13), and 13.33% were overseas Chinese students (N=2). Three of them participated in interviews. Besides the target language, Chinese, all the teachers (100%, N=15) used students' L1, English, as the medium of instruction in classes. According to ILR Proficiency Levels, more than 70% of the teachers considered their English proficiency as Professional Working Proficiency and the above (International Center for Language Studies, n.d.). Relatively higher proficiency in English made the teachers more confident in using the students' L1 to assist CSL teaching.

4.1.1 The necessity of L1 use

The survey results reflected teachers' generally positive attitudes towards the necessity of L1 use in CSL classrooms. Most participants agreed (40%) and even strongly agreed (40%) with the viewpoint that it is necessary for them to use students' L1 in CSL instruction. This echoed the actual L1 use in classes that English was employed as the sole medium of instruction besides the target language, to some extent.

Figure 2. Teachers' recognition of the necessity of L1 use
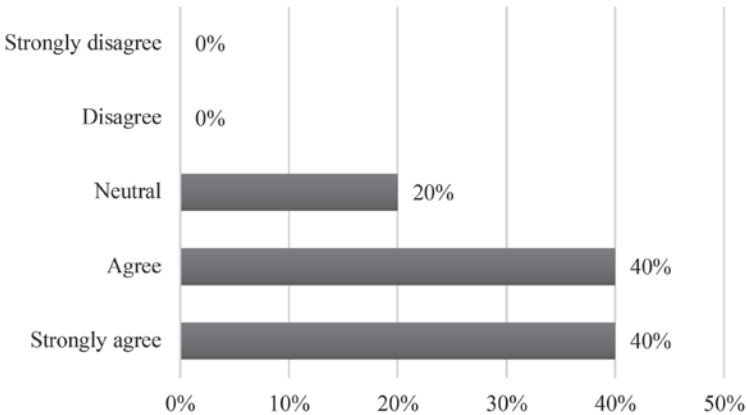
The teachers further attributed the necessity of using L1 to the consideration of students' present lower Chinese proficiency. When a 'Chinese-only' instruction was adopted, students may not comprehend the teachers' speech well, resulting in a large amount of invalid language input. Furthermore, it may strengthen the student's psychological and emotional barrier and easily cause anxiety, fear of difficulty, and even complete disengagement, thus hindering the L2 learning (Macaro & Lee, 2013). As teachers stated in interviews:

> I have to use English due to students' weak foundations in Chinese. Sometimes, it would be difficult for students to understand some new words and grammar or other difficult knowledge points, if they were all explained in Chinese. (T1)
>
> 因为他们目前的中文学习主要还是处于初级阶段的，这个时候就需要适当借助一些英语……中文对他们来说还是比较难的，我不想让我的学生们感觉到很有压力，主要还是考虑到要让他们愿意学。(T2)
>
> [Because their current Chinese learning is mainly at the primary stage. At this time, certain English is required…Chinese is not easy for them, and I don't want my students to feel very stressed. The primary consideration is to make them willing to learn.]

Given that most students were at the beginning level of Chinese learning, 80% of the teachers held a negative attitude towards the exclusive use of Chinese in their classes. Specifically, 67% of the teachers considered it was unlikely to ban the L1 use at present; 13% thought it was impossible to achieve. In the practical view, this again shows that most teachers regarded a certain L1 use as necessary in CSL teaching.

Figure 3. The exclusive use of Chinese from the teachers' perspective
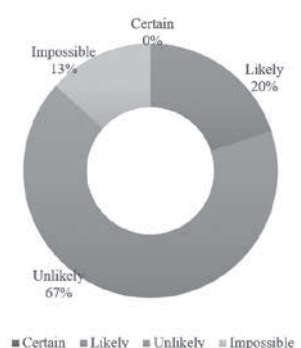
4.1.2 The effectiveness of L1 use

Some teachers mentioned the convenience and efficiency of L1 use in CSL classrooms. From the perspective of teachers' instruction, the use of English is conducive to the smooth progress of teaching and time saving; in terms of students' learning, the teacher's use of English also helps them better understand learning content and operational classroom instructions.

> One of the reasons why I use students' L1 is because it is very convenient. Sometimes a language point is very complicated if it is explained in Chinese; if it is explained in English, students will know what it means at once⋯so sometimes it can save time. (T3)
> 有时候我用汉语提问学生，发现他们可能并不是很明白我的意思，于是我就会用英语再说一遍，像翻译一样，再翻译一下，然后学生就能懂了。(T2)

[Sometimes, I asked a question in Chinese but found that my students might not understand what I meant, so I repeated it in English, just like a translation, and then the students would understand.]

Most teachers emphasised the explanatory role of L1 in CSL teaching. When students encounter Chinese content that they did not understand, compared with insisting on only using the target language, more teachers would choose to use students' L1, English, to supplement the explanation. 73.33% of the teachers further believed that with the help of L1, students would soon understand the language points that they did not understand before.

However, there were cases where teachers try not to use the L1. Compared with insisting on using pure Chinese to explain (20%), in more cases, teachers would combine body language, pictures, and physical objects to promote students' understanding (60%). This implicates that in CSL teaching, in addition to using languages as explanatory tools, teachers can also take advantage of other non-verbal means as assistance.

Figure 4. The different ways in which teachers explain students' questions
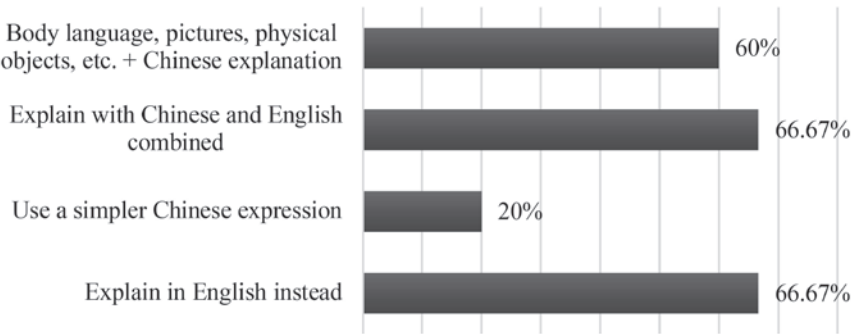

4.1.3 The amount of L1 use

Although the Chinese teachers generally held a positive attitude towards using students' L1, they did not advocate an excessive reliance on it in actual teaching. It is evidenced from their ideal proportion of L1 use in CSL classrooms

that about 95% of the teachers argued that the L1 use should not exceed the target language use. Among them, more than 60% of the teachers' ideal use of L1 was 20%-50%; 26.67% even believed that the proportion should be controlled within 20% to ensure enough target language input.

Figure 5. Teachers' ideal proportion of L1 use
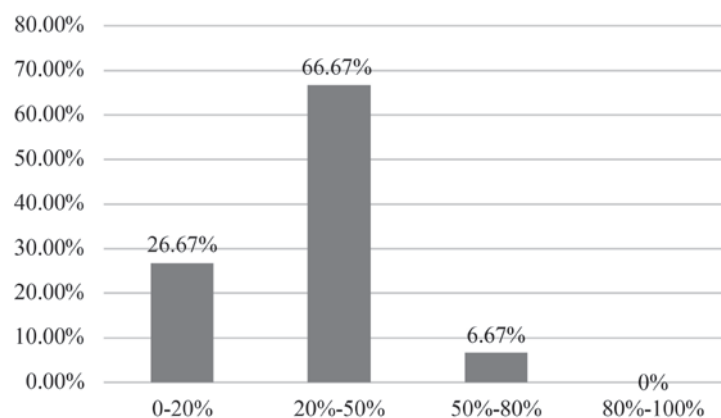
The result is relevant to the fact that most students are of Chinese descent. The researchers have learned from the teachers that most of the students learn Chinese from their parents' desire to pass on their language and culture. For this reason, the teachers have tried to provide students with more opportunities to maximise their exposure to Chinese in classrooms.

Nevertheless, most teachers in interviews proposed that the specific amount of L1 use should be based on the varied needs of individual students. It means that the frequency and proportion of the L1 use should be adjusted according to the different levels and progress of students. As one teacher said:

> In my opinion, it depends on the students⋯I mean, it should be targeted. For students with a good foundation, I will use more Chinese, because at this time, they can achieve further development. But for those with a weak foundation, I will use more English, and then adjust it continually according to their progress. (T1)

4.2 Research question 2: the situation and characteristics of language use

Approximately 20 CSL lessons were observed under the LICC Paradigm. Within the observed classrooms, most students were of Chinese descent, but their Chinese language proficiency varied even in the same class. Some common characterises of mediums of instruction in the observed classes are summarised below.

4.2.1 Dimension of learning

Students, especially the younger students, were found to generally have a strong dependence on their L1 in classroom learning. It was prevalent in classes that students relied on English translation and annotations to understand learning content. When certain vocabulary and expressions were mentioned, students generally associated them with the corresponding ones in English for understanding and memorisation. For instance,

> Teacher: 谁知道"观察"是什么意思？[Does anyone know what '观察' means?]
>
> Student 1: I know, I know, investigate.
>
> Student 2: Observe.

Although this translation method seems conducive to a quick understanding for beginners, it is not always effective but may bring about students' uncertainty about the meaning and usage (Du, 2009). In the above case, the Chinese vocabulary '观察' is not wholly corresponding to 'investigate' or 'observe' in English. Besides as a verb, '观察' can be a noun in Chinese; 'investigate' is also related to '研究／探究' in Chinese, with a broader register. In this sense, when direct translation is made between Chinese and English, any incomplete or inappropriate explanation would cause a negative transfer in students' learning.

Students were also observed to use L1 frequently in classroom communication

and interaction. When relevant expressions were required, students first tended to use English but lacked the autonomy to use the target language; however, on the teacher's reminder or request, they can switch to the language they were learning.

> Teacher (asked a question to all students): 你们喜欢汉堡包吗？ [Do you like burgers?]
> Students: Yeah.
> Teacher: 用汉语怎么说？ [How to say this in Chinese?]
> Students: 喜欢。[Yes, I do.]

There might be two main reasons for this. First, due to the young age of the students, their cognitive mental development has not yet matured. They thus may lack certain metacognitive strategies to help monitor and adjust their reliance on the L1. Also, relatively short learning periods and lower Chinese levels may lead to the students' lack of confidence in using Chinese but rely on their L1 in classroom communication. This implicates that the younger students may need more support and guidance from teachers in classrooms.

4.2.2 Dimension of instruction

Teachers used students' L1, English, most frequently in the teaching of vocabulary and grammar. When explaining new words and grammar points, teachers often connected their Chinese meaning to English, providing students with corresponding English explanations. Compound words were usually interpreted as morphemes. For example, '西医' [western medicine] was split into '西' [west] and '医' [medicine] for understanding in English. For polysemous words in Chinese, teachers tried to find different English words to match them. One teacher was observed to use three English words, including 'news', 'message', and 'information', to interpret '消息'. It was the case with the explanation of sentences. The general practice was to provide Chinese sentences first and then repeated them in English accordingly. This supports the view that L1 helps to achieve certain instructional purposes in providing translation and

clarifying grammatical patterns (De La Campa & Nassaji, 2009; Hall & Cook, 2013).

Besides vocabulary and grammar, consistent with a research result in London (Ma, 2019), L1 was also employed to introduce cultural content. It was observed that a teacher used English less frequently overall in class but used more English in the part introducing the origins and customs of the Dragon Boat Festival. In another class, the Chinese cultural significance of ' 喜鹊 ' [magpie] was explained by a great deal of English, such as 'lucky bird', 'bring happiness and good luck', and 'symbol of Chinese Valentine's Day'. This may be because the diverse cultural background was somewhat challenging to understand and master for the students at the beginning level.

In some cases, teachers used English in interactions with students, including conducting classroom management, explaining activity procedures, and checking comprehension of learning content. The purpose was to facilitate effective communication between the two sides and expect corresponding replies from students. This mirrors the reasons mentioned in the interview for teachers to use L1 to help students better understand operational classroom instructions. However, when specific language points were involved, Chinese were often used directly in teacher discourse. For instance, teachers rarely resorted to English when providing corrective feedback, regardless of their students' Chinese foundations. This enabled students to quickly enter the environment of learning the target language and prepared well for the subsequent evaluation. Also, the feedback in Chinese provided direct target language stimulation, helping students better realise the problem and make corrections.

4.2.3 Dimension of curriculum

The grammar-translation method was found as the primary teaching approach in classrooms. This may be related to the setting and implementation of Chinese courses, which mainly focus on vocabulary and grammar teaching. Students have been required to understand and master the meaning and usage of vocabulary and grammar. Grammar translation is easier to achieve this, by directly

connecting L1 and L2 to help understand the corresponding meaning of knowledge points. This kind of comparative learning between languages, as mentioned earlier, is also an educational concept advocated in the Scottish context.

Although there were other teaching approaches in classrooms, they usually served as a supplement to the grammar-translation method. For instance, the intuitive method helped associate new words with pictures and physical objects; however, teachers would still provide corresponding textual annotations or oral interpretations in English. The communicative approach, which emphasises the use of target language in communication, was only adopted in a few grammar practices.

Despite this, the application of modern multimedia technology during the Covid-19 reduced the frequency of English use in classrooms. Multimedia technology has enabled students to access rich and diverse resources, including texts, pictures, sounds, and animations, leading to a fast understanding of knowledge points and an increase in learning motivation and interest (Sawin, 2018). Its adoption has helped alleviate the teachers' reliance on English to explain Chinese learning contents. Plenty of classroom cases remarkably demonstrated this point. For instance, when explaining the vocabulary '清楚' [clear], instead of direct translation in words, a teacher presented two pictures of scenery on the screen, one was clear, one was not clear, enabling students to quickly understand the meaning visually. Some teachers used animation software in the teaching of Chinese characters. The stoke orders of characters were shown to the students in GIFs, thus avoiding the complicated explanation in English.

4.2.4 Dimension of culture

In line with Hall and Cook (2013), the use of students' L1 in classrooms was found to help close the relationship and shorten the psychological distance between teachers and students. In the observed classes, the communication and interaction between teachers and students mostly relied on L1, creating a favourable atmosphere to promote teacher-student interaction and student learning.

For instance, in a grammar exercise, the teacher introduced the dishes of a local Chinese restaurant, and the brief exchange of dining experiences in English between teachers and students only made the classroom activity reach the highest point.

A harmonious classroom atmosphere was not only between teachers and students but also among students. Students always used L1 in interactions and communications in and between classes. As their most familiar language, the use of English was beneficial in promoting ease and comfort in contact, thereby reducing the psychological pressure of learning a new language.

Some teachers' choice and use of L1 varied with different learners, considering their discrepant Chinese proficiency and L1 demands. Take the instruction of 'reading new words/texts' as an example, when inviting those who have relatively weak foundations, English would be employed as a supplement, to ensure the students can understand what the instructions mean. Besides, the teacher always invited in an encouraging tone, such as 'have a try, 好不好', to give the more introverted children confidence in uttering Chinese. In this sense, each learner was treated 'differently' but was given equal respect and trust, promoting a 'democratic' classroom with the full participation of students.

5 DISCUSSION

The results have reflected the pros and cons of students' L1 as a medium of instruction. As an effective tool for the teaching and learning of L2, L1 has contributed to achieving some instructional purposes in explaining language points, smoothing the teaching progress, and facilitating easier understanding. L1 has also been helpful in building interpersonal relationships by promoting effective communication and creating a democratic and harmonious classroom atmosphere. However, given that Chinese and English language systems are not wholly equivalent, the direct translation may lead to inaccuracy and even confusion in students' understanding. Besides, the excessive reliance on L1 has discouraged

students from thinking and expressing themselves in the target language.

Following García (2011), this paper argues that it is not necessary to negate the use of other languages in L2 classrooms completely, but to recognise their positive roles in promoting the new language learning. However, an effective and successful achievement in L2 requires that the medium of instruction should be employed moderately, correctly, and appropriately. One significant issue then emerges: how can teachers use the medium of instruction in a reasonable way to achieve positive effects while avoiding over-dependence? There are a few aspects teachers can take into consideration to promote an effective and diverse CSL classroom.

Focus on individual students' demands. Students' preferences and expectations for the use of mediums of instruction vary in language learning. Teachers should first understand the reasons why students have such ideas, and then pay more attention to their needs in actual instruction. Nevertheless, teachers cannot only meet the wishes of students, but need to give professional guidance. When providing necessary L1 support for those with weak foundations, teachers should try to avoid negative transfers caused by the direct translation. For instance, besides the solely corresponding English translation of vocabulary, supportive context and specific examples in authentic Chinese communication can be offered to promote a full understanding (Türker, 2019). Also, although more target language exposure should be given to learners with relatively higher levels, the teaching needs to follow the principle of 'i+1' to achieve comprehensible input (Krashen, 1982). It means that teachers can provide as much Chinese as possible within the acceptable range of the students. Additionally, it is vital to notice that the use of mediums of instruction in classrooms is constantly changing and developing, thus requiring a dynamic perspective to look at it. Given that students' Chinese proficiency is not static, the choices and practices of the medium of instruction should be adjusted accordingly.

Take advantage of supplementary means. Some non-verbal methods, such as body language, pictures, and physical objects, can assist in explaining language

points and facilitate students' easier understanding (Bambaeeroo & Shokrpour, 2017). The questionnaire result that 60% of the teachers have combined these means with Chinese explanations also reflects the feasibility, to some extent. Besides non-verbal means, simplifying complex Chinese expressions and fixing commonly used instructions avoid complex and repetitive English interpretations (Shi, 2018). Such approaches focusing on target language help reduce reliance on the L1 use and provide students with more opportunities for L2 exposure within the limited time of a class. Additionally, as shown in classroom observation, interesting and diverse multimedia technologies are efficient in promoting understanding, attracting attention, and arousing interests. The adoption enjoys an advantage over relying solely on L1 in assisting teaching. Nevertheless, most Chinese community schools in Scotland have not been equipped with multimedia equipment, which requires further attention and support from all sectors of society.

Enrich teaching methods. Besides the grammar-translation method, there is a need for approaches that emphasise authentic exposure to and actual use of the target language, such as the communicative approach and task-based teaching method. For instance, by organising practical activities and meaningful tasks, such as shopping at Chinese stores and ordering at Chinese restaurants, students would be immersed in the Chinese setting and motivated to express themselves in Chinese. These approaches are helpful to cultivate Chinese thinking mode, to think and speak in Chinese, and to improve the real communicative ability. It reminds teachers to innovate the design of relevant classroom activities, consciously adopt multiple teaching approaches and gradually reduce the dependence on direct Chinese-English translation as students make progress.

6 CONCLUSION

Situated in a Scottish CSL classroom setting, this study has revealed the choices and practices of mediums of instruction through a mixed-methods approach. Chinese and English were used as the mediums of instruction. The

teachers generally supported the use of students' L1, English, and emphasised its positive role in promoting Chinese teaching. It was also believed that the specific amount of L1 use should be based on the different needs of students. In actual CSL classrooms, teaching objects, teaching means, and specific teaching procedures have affected the choice and moderate use of the mediums of instruction. Students' L1 has promoted the smooth progress of classroom teaching and a favourable learning atmosphere. Nevertheless, there still existed a general reliance on English and direct Chinese-English translation. Given this, to use the medium of instruction in moderation, teachers have been advised to pay attention to learners' diverse demands for mediums of instruction and enrich teaching means and methods.

The paper has offered some evidence that influenced by many factors such as the educational philosophy, individual teacher-student backgrounds, and external conditions, the Chinese language teaching in Scotland, the UK has its unique conditions and characteristics in the use of mediums of instruction. It helps narrow the research gap on classroom teaching and pedagogies in the field of CSL. However, as a case study, due to the small sample size, the issue of generalisability may still exist in the research results. More relevant studies on Scotland and the UK are thus expected in the future. Besides, the reasonable and effective use of mediums of instruction should be discussed with specific regions and classroom settings, rather than relying on a 'one size fits all' approach. The paper then calls for further exploration of the effectiveness of the use of mediums of instruction in diverse world contexts.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

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APPENDIX A

A Survey for Teachers' Attitudes towards the Use of Mediums of Instruction (English version)

Dear teacher,

We are conducting a study on Chinese teaching and learning in Scotland, and we sincerely invite you to participate in our questionnaire survey. This survey aims to understand the use of mediums of instruction in Scottish Chinese classes. We greatly value your opinions and perceptions as a frontline teacher. We look forward to your participation in this survey in a completely anonymous manner, and no personal information will be disclosed. Please rest assured!

If you have any questions and suggestions, please contact us at email: ***. Thank you!

I Basic information

1. What is your gender? [Single choice]

○ Female

○ Male

○ I prefer to self describe as____

○ I prefer not to say

2. How about your age? [Single choice]

○ 35 years old and below

○ 36-45

○ 45-59

○ 60 years old and above

○ I prefer not to say

3. Your highest degree is [Free text questions]

_____

4. The major(s) you have studied [Free text questions]

_____

5. What is your identity? [Single choice]

○ Ethnic Chinese

○ Native Scot

○ Overseas Chinese

○ Overseas Chinese student

○ Other____

6. How long have you been teaching Chinese as a L2 language? [Free text questions]

_____

7. You are currently teaching students of____ [Single choice]

○ Early childhood

○ Primary school

○ Junior secondary school

○ Upper secondary school

○ Higher education

○ Other____

8. What teaching materials do you use? [Free text questions]

_____

II Attitude towards the use of mediums of instruction

1. Do you use other languages to teach besides Chinese in Chinese classes? [Single choice]

○ Yes [Go to Q2]

○ No [Go to Q5]

2. What is(are) the language(s)? [Free text questions]

_____ [Go to Q3]

3. How do you evaluate your proficiency in the language(s)? [Single choice]

○ 0+ – Memorised Proficiency

know some numbers and isolated words and phrases but unable to read connected prose

○ 1 – Elementary Proficiency

satisfy minimum courtesy requirements and maintain very simple conversations on familiar

topics

○ 2 – Limited Working Proficiency

able to satisfy routine social demands and limited work requirements

○ 3 – Professional Working Proficiency

able to speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate

effectively in most conversations on practical, social, and professional topics; able to

understand the essentials of all speech in a standard dialect

○ 4 – Full Professional Proficiency

able to use the language fluently and accurately on all levels and as normally pertinent

to professional needs; able to understand all forms and styles of speech pertinent to

professional needs

○ 5 – Native / Bilingual Proficiency

has a proficiency equivalent to that of an educated native speaker

*If you have more than one language to evaluate and with more than one answers,

please note here____*

4. What is your ideal proportion of using **these other languages** in your Chinese

classes? [Single choice]

○ 0-20%

○ 20%-50%

○ 50%-80%

○ 80%-100%

5. What do you usually do when students do not understand the Chinese learning

content in classes? [Multiple choice]

□ Body language, pictures, physical objects, etc. + Chinese explanation

□ Explain with Chinese and other languages combined

□ Use a simpler Chinese expression

□ Explain in other languages instead

□ Other____

6. When you use other languages to answer students' questions about Chinese language points, you find that students usually____ [Single choice]

○ Students can understand soon

○ Students are still confused

○ Students are not very clear, and other methods may be required

○ Hard to tell

○ I never use languages other than Chinese to answer students' questions

7. To what extent do you agree that it is necessary for you to use your students' L1 to teach them Chinese? [Single choice]

○ Strongly agree

○ Agree

○ Neutral

○ Disagree

○ Strongly disagree

8. Do you think it is possible to achieve a 'Chinese-only' classroom in your class at present? [Single choice]

○ Certain

○ Likely

○ Unlikely

○ Impossible

APPENDIX B

媒介语使用教师态度调查问卷（中文版）

亲爱的老师，您好！

我们正在进行一项关于苏格兰汉语教学的研究，诚邀您参与我们的问卷调查。本调查旨在了解苏格兰汉语课堂中媒介语的使用情况。作为一线汉语教师，您的意见与想法对本研究至关重要，期待您的参与。本次调查以完全匿名的形式进行，不会泄露您的任何个人隐私信息，请您放心。

若您有任何相关问题和建议，请与我们联系。邮箱：***. 谢谢！

Ⅰ 基本信息

1. 您的性别是 [单选题]

○ 女

○ 男

○ 我想自己描述 _____

○ 不方便透露

2. 您的年龄段属于 [单选题]

○ 35 岁及以下

○ 36-45

○ 45-59

○ 60 岁及以上

○ 不方便透露

3. 您的最高学历为 [填空题]

_____

4. 您的受教育专业为 [填空题]

_____

5. 您的身份为 [单选题]

○华人

○苏格兰原著民

○华侨

○中国留学生

○其他 _____

6. 您从事汉语教学的时长为 [填空题]

_____

7. 您目前所教授的学生年龄段为 [单选题]

○幼儿

○小学

○初中

○高中

○大学

○其他 _____

8. 您目前使用的教学材料有哪些? [填空题]

_____

Ⅱ 媒介语使用态度

1. **除汉语外**,您在对外汉语课堂中是否使用**其他语言**? [单选题]

○是 **[跳转至第 2 题]**

○否 **[跳转至第 5 题]**

2. 其他语言为 [填空题]

_____ **[跳转至第 3 题]**

3. 您如何评价自己掌握该语言的水平 [单选题]

○ 0+ – Memorised Proficiency

只知道一些数字和孤立的单词和短语，不能阅读连贯的文章。

○ 1 – Elementary Proficiency

满足最低限度的礼貌要求，就熟悉的话题保持非常简单的对话。

○ 2 – Limited Working Proficiency

能够满足日常的交际需求和有限的工作要求。

○ 3 – Professional Working Proficiency

能够以比较准确的结构和词汇进行表达和参与大多数日常交际、社会和专业话题的对话；能听懂标准语中所有语言的要点。

○ 4 – Full Professional Proficiency

能够流利、准确地使用语言，并符合专业要求；能够理解与专业需求相关的所有演讲形式和风格。

○ 5 – Native / Bilingual Proficiency

具备与受过教育的母语人士相当的语言能力。

* 若您不止有一种语言需要评估，且有不同的选项，请在这里标注 _____

4. 您认为在您的汉语课堂中使用该语言的比例多少较为合适？ [单选题]

○ 0-20%

○ 20%-50%

○ 50%-80%

○ 80%-100%

5. 若学生无法理解您讲授的汉语内容，您一般会如何解决？ [多选题]

□借助肢体语言，图片，实物等 + 汉语解释

□综合使用汉语和其他语言来解释

□使用更简单的汉语解释

□改用其他语言解释

□其他 _____

6. 当您使用其他语言解答学生汉语知识点相关疑惑时，您发现学生通常 [单选题]

○豁然开朗

○依然不明白

○依然不是特别明白，可能需要借助其他方法

○不能判断，学生反应不明显

○从不使用其他语言解答学生疑惑

7. 在对外汉语教学中，您在多大程度上认同您有必要借助学生的母语进行教学？ [单选题]

○非常认同

○比较认同

○既不认同也不反对

○不太认同

○非常不认同

8. 您认为目前您的班级是否有可能实现全中文教学 [单选题]

○很有可能

○比较有可能

○不太有可能

○没有可能

APPENDIX C

LICC classroom observation table (original Chinese version) (Cui, 2012;

Shen & Cui, 2008)

要素	视角	观察点
学生学习 (Learning)	(1) 准备 (2) 倾听 (3) 互动 (4) 自主 (5) 达成	
教师教学 (Instruction)	(1) 环节 (2) 呈示 (3) 对话 (4) 指导 (5) 机智	
课程性质 (Curriculum)	(1) 目标 (2) 内容 (3) 实施 (4) 评价 (5) 资源	
课堂文化 (Culture)	(1) 思考 (2) 民主 (3) 创新 (4) 关爱 (5) 特质	

苏格兰汉语二语课堂媒介语：态度与实践调查

刘希 贾益民 *

摘要

媒介语的选用一直是外语教育领域，包括汉语作为第二语言教学领域中颇具争议的论题。其合理使用关乎各地课堂教学的有效开展。而截至目前，针对苏格兰的相关研究仍较为缺乏。文章以英国苏格兰地区为研究背景，探讨了汉语作为第二语言教学中教师对媒介语使用的态度与实际课堂实践。基于问卷调查和半结构化访谈，调查表明大多数教师倾向于双语教学模式，对课堂中学生母语的使用普遍持支持态度。课堂观察反映了实际汉语教学中语言的选择与使用，发现师生总体上对英语有较强的依赖性。研究结果在一定程度上揭示了学生母语作为媒介语的积极作用与潜在的负面影响，文章据此就合理使用媒介语尝试提出了相关教学建议。此外，有关世界范围内媒介语使用的有效性等问题仍需今后更多的关注与探讨。

关键词：媒介语　语言选择　外语教育　汉语　苏格兰

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