

University of Windsor

## Scholarship at UWindsor

---

Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Theses, Dissertations, and Major Papers

---

4-13-2017

# Speaking for Purpose: A Case Study of Bilingual Immersion Pedagogy Within the Chinese EFL Context

David Roman Potocek  
*University of Windsor*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/etd>

---

### Recommended Citation

Potocek, David Roman, "Speaking for Purpose: A Case Study of Bilingual Immersion Pedagogy Within the Chinese EFL Context" (2017). *Electronic Theses and Dissertations*. 5949.  
<https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/etd/5949>

This online database contains the full-text of PhD dissertations and Masters' theses of University of Windsor students from 1954 forward. These documents are made available for personal study and research purposes only, in accordance with the Canadian Copyright Act and the Creative Commons license—CC BY-NC-ND (Attribution, Non-Commercial, No Derivative Works). Under this license, works must always be attributed to the copyright holder (original author), cannot be used for any commercial purposes, and may not be altered. Any other use would require the permission of the copyright holder. Students may inquire about withdrawing their dissertation and/or thesis from this database. For additional inquiries, please contact the repository administrator via email ([scholarship@uwindsor.ca](mailto:scholarship@uwindsor.ca)) or by telephone at 519-253-3000ext. 3208.

Speaking for Purpose: A Case Study of Bilingual Immersion Pedagogy  
Within the Chinese EFL Context

By

David Roman Potocek

A Thesis  
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies  
through the Faculty of Education  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
the Degree of Master of Education  
at the University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

2017

© 2017 David Roman Potocek

**Speaking for Purpose: A Case Study of Bilingual Immersion Pedagogy**  
**Within the Chinese EFL Context**

By

**David Roman Potocek**

APPROVED BY:

---

J. Yang  
Department of Earth & Environmental Sciences

---

A. Allen  
Faculty of Education

---

S. Xu, Advisor  
Faculty of Education

13 January, 2017

### **Author's Declaration of Originality**

I hereby certify that I am the sole author of this thesis and that no part of this thesis has been published or submitted for publication.

I certify that, to the best of my knowledge, my thesis does not infringe upon anyone's copyright or violate my proprietary rights and that any ideas, techniques, quotations, and that any other material from the work of other people included in my thesis, published or otherwise, is fully acknowledged in accordance with the standard referencing practices. Furthermore, to the extent that I have included copyrighted material that surpasses the bounds of fair dealing within the meaning of the *Canada Copyright Act*, I certify that I have obtained written permission from the copyright owner(s) to include such materials(s) in my thesis and have included copies of such copyright clearances in my appendix.

I declare that this is a true copy of my thesis, including any final revisions, as approved by my thesis committee and the Graduate Studies Office, and that this thesis has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution.

## **Abstract**

The objective of this international case study is to explore the beliefs and practices of two Chinese English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers and two Chinese pre-service teachers of English teaching within the EFL program in China. Working in partnership with the Reciprocal Learning Program, part of the SSHRC Partnership Grant Project, the study was able to conduct research at Southwest University in Chongqing, China. Through a qualitative case study framework, the study has implemented a narrative inquiry methodology using observations, interviews, and a document analysis as the primary data collection methods. Observations in two Southwestern Chinese EFL school classrooms were conducted in order to gauge the teaching practice and implementation of bilingual education and language immersion within the classroom. Interviews were conducted with each of the Chinese EFL school teachers and university pre-service teacher candidates in order to capture their teaching beliefs, lived experiences, thoughts, and stories within their lives and the English language learning program. A document analysis was conducted for EFL teaching materials and resources in order to gauge their support of the EFL learning environment. The findings of the study provide insight into the fundamental objectives of the Chinese English as a Foreign Language program, developing English teacher pedagogy, and international language teaching practices. The particular study supports future international education implementing cross-cultural learning where both Canada and China may learn cooperatively together.

**Keywords:** second language acquisition, Canada, China, EFL teachers, language immersion, pre-service teachers, teacher beliefs and practices.

## Acknowledgements

This research project was made possible with the massive amounts of efforts from the individuals involved within the SSHRC Partnership Grant Project, Canada-China Reciprocal Learning Program (RLP), partnering universities Southwest University and the University of Windsor.

I would like to extend my most gracious and sincere thanks to Dr. Shijing Xu, my supervisor. I have had the honour and privilege of knowing and working alongside Dr. Xu for over three years. I am so very grateful for her wisdom, guidance, and motivation which allowed me to complete my thesis. Additionally, I had the honour of participating in the SSHRC Partnership Grant Project within the Reciprocal Learning Program and the Sister Schools Project as a graduate assistant and research assistant under Dr. Shijing Xu. The three year and continuing expedition has taught me a plethora of valuable knowledge. This opportunity has also provided me with the most fantastic research resources, colleagues, and faculty at the University of Windsor.

I would also like to send a special thanks to my committee members, Dr. Andrew Allen and Dr. Jianwen Yang. I am honoured to have received most gracious knowledge and encouragement to begin my thesis writing experience in order to complete it. Additionally, the writing process would not have been possible without those committed to the RLP such as director Dr. Shijing Xu and research associate Minghua Wang.

A greatest appreciation goes out to all of the individuals involved with the RLP in Canada and especially in China. I would like to thank Southwest University and all local schools which opened their doors and classrooms to me. Additionally, my thanks go out to the Mitacs

Globalink Research Award which made it financially possible to visit China and the research sites.

Finally, I would to express a large thank you to my family and friends for their continued support and encouragement throughout my entire educational career.

## Table of Contents

<b>Author’s Declaration of Originality</b> .....	III
<b>Abstract</b> .....	IV
<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	V
<b>Chapter One: Introduction to the Study</b> .....	1
Background of the Study .....	1
Definition of Terms .....	1
Research Background.....	3
The Foundations of English Language Learning Education in China .....	5
The Present Study .....	6
Research Phenomenon .....	6
Purpose of the Study .....	8
Research Questions .....	8
Importance of the Study .....	9
International Context.....	10
Within the Study .....	12
Theoretical Frameworks.....	12
Bilingual Education Model .....	13
Language Immersion Education .....	15
Locating Myself in the Study .....	17
Epistemology.....	19
Limitations and Delimitations.....	21
<b>Chapter Two: Review of the Literature</b> .....	23
Introduction .....	23
Chinese Educational Reforms and Mandates .....	23
The Call for Bilingual Education.....	25



The North American Model of Bilingual Education.....	25
The Chinese Perspective on Bilingual Education .....	27
Delving into Language Immersion Pedagogy .....	28
The West as a Role Model .....	28
Immersion in the East.....	30
Language Immersion vs. Non- Immersion .....	31
An Important Voice to be Heard .....	32
Issues and Concessions.....	34
Summary.....	35
Figure 1 .....	37
<b>Chapter Three: Methodology .....</b>	<b>38</b>
The Research Study Design.....	38
Qualitative Research .....	38
Case Study.....	39
Narrative Inquiry .....	40
Experience and Narrative Inquiry .....	40
Thinking Narratively.....	41
Narrative Dimensions.....	42
Narrative Account .....	42
The Research Context.....	43
The Canada- China Reciprocal Learning Program .....	43
Mitacs Globalink Research Award .....	44
Research Procedure Overview.....	46
Research Sites & Participants .....	48
Research Sites .....	48
Primary School.....	49
A typical, hot, day at Primary School.....	50
Secondary School.....	51

A 14-hour school day.....	52
Research Participants .....	53
Figure 2 .....	54
Ms. Li .....	54
Ms. Chan.....	55
Ms. Yeoh.....	55
Mr. Lee.....	56
Data Collection Methods.....	57
Method 1: Observations .....	57
Method 2: Individual Interviews.....	58
Method 3: Document Analysis.....	59
English Teaching Support Documents.....	61
Data Analysis .....	62
Interpretation of Data .....	63
Ethical Considerations.....	64
<b>Chapter Four: The Research Findings.....</b>	<b>66</b>
Introduction .....	66
Teacher’s Beliefs about EFL Pedagogy .....	67
Student Interest is Paramount.....	67
Developing the Students’s Interest.....	67
Maintaining Students’s Interest.....	70
Interest is Demanding .....	73
EFL Teachers’ English Teaching Practices.....	74
Language Immersion Practice in the Lessons.....	74
“I provide students a lot of chances to speak!” .....	74
The Practice of Bilingual Education .....	77
Utilizing a Balance of English and Chinese.....	77
“I speak English and speak Chinese less” .....	78
English Teaching Strategies .....	79

The Little Teacher .....	79
“After me please” .....	81
Integration of EFL Teaching Resources .....	82
Using Teaching Resources in Language Immersion.....	82
The English Textbook to Support Bilingual Learning.....	84
Figure 3 .....	86
Figure 4 .....	86
Teaching Resources in the Mix.....	87
The Influence of Chinese English Curriculum Standards on Teaching Practice.....	88
Pedagogical English Curriculum Learnings at the University Level.....	88
Chinese in English class.....	91
Summary.....	92
<b>Chapter Five: Discussing the Research and Concluding Remarks.....</b>	<b>94</b>
Discussions .....	94
Introduction .....	94
EFL Teacher Beliefs.....	94
Nurturing Students’ Interest .....	94
Play in English Learning.....	96
Encouraging Participation .....	96
Instructional Teaching Practices.....	97
Language Immersion Practice & Pedagogy .....	97
A Blended Learning Experience .....	98
Identifying the Issues .....	99
An Existing Gap Between EFL and ESL.....	100
The Bilingual Model in Chinese English Classrooms.....	101
Chinese EFL in a Unique Position .....	101
Chinese as a Median.....	102
Impact of English Curriculum Standards on Teaching Practice.....	103
Impact of Curriculum on English Teaching & Learning .....	103

Impact of English Teacher Resources .....	104
Teachers as Curriculum Planners .....	106
Summary & Concluding Remarks.....	106
Figure 5.....	109
Narrative Inquiry: A Discussion of Participants and Research .....	110
The Life Space of the Participants .....	110
A Personal Narrative .....	112
<b>Chapter Six: Implications &amp; Suggestions.....</b>	<b>114</b>
Implications .....	114
Continued Teacher Education .....	114
Teacher Resources and Curriculum .....	116
The Canadian Context.....	117
English Language Learning in Ontario Schools .....	118
Suggestions for Future Studies .....	120
References .....	122
Appendix A.....	129
Appendix B.....	133
Appendix C.....	137
Appendix D.....	138
Appendix E.....	140
Appendix F .....	142
Appendix G.....	144
Appendix H.....	146
Appendix I.....	147
Appendix J.....	148
Appendix K.....	149
Vita Auctoris .....	150

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

### Background of the Study

The topic of language acquisition has been of consistent growing discourse in the field of education. The language learning component within the field of education has continued to establish new and innovative teaching pedagogy and strategies. The bilingual education pedagogy utilizing students' primary and additional languages has begun to influence language learning in Canada, China and the rest of the globe (Cummins & Swain, 1986; Cummins, 2011). The implementation of bilingual education (BE) programs, language immersion and bilingual learning/ teaching strategies has impacted previous language learning ideologies. In this ever changing and globalizing world, I argue for the importance of acquiring and maintaining languages. The bilingual education programs promote bilingualism by providing students with the necessary tools to learn in an environment implementing both their primary native language and their new target language (Cummins, 1981). As an advocate for bilingual education strategies, the following study seeks to explore the implementation of bilingual methods utilizing language immersion in an international context.

### Definition of Terms

Throughout the following section I plan to briefly define and describe the major key terms that will be highlighted within this thesis document. The upcoming chapters will be exploring the *English as Foreign Language (EFL)* program within the country of China. EFL programs worldwide are unique because they involve the study of the English language by non-native speakers in countries where English is not the predominant method of communication (Nordquist, 2014). One of the main frameworks that will guide this investigation is the concept of *Bilingual Education (BE)*. This concept is simply regarded as an education being conducted in two different

languages working in cohesion (Cummins, 1977). This educational model strives on developing the English Language Learner's (ELL's) additional language (L2) by working in harmony with the students' primary language (L1) (Cummins & Swain, 1986). Generally, Tong and Shi (2012) view bilingual education as "the use of two languages for instruction" with the ultimate goal of "additive bilingualism, biliteracy, and cultural diversity, while the forms of bilingual education can vary greatly" (p. 166). Another main framework is the concept of *language immersion*. According to Song and Cheng (2011) "the immersion model is a method of foreign language instruction in which the foreign language is the major vehicle for content instruction and classroom communication" (p. 97). This method of language learning provides opportunity to students to become "absorbed in a language environment that promotes natural, meaningful communication" (Song & Cheng, 2011, p.97). Uniquely, in this study, bilingual education and language immersion will be examined within an environment where English is not the dominant language of communication. For the purpose of this study, language immersion will be examined through the use of communicative English including speaking and listening within the EFL classroom. Additionally, bilingual education will be examined through the implementation of English and Chinese<sup>1</sup> as dual languages within the EFL classroom. The term *pre-service* in the context of teacher education within this document refers to Bachelor of Education student teachers who were, at the time of the study, participating in their teaching placement and engaging in classes at the university level. Specifically, Chinese Bachelor of Education students at Southwest University participate in the education program for 4 years simultaneously taking major specific classes as well as education pedagogy.

---

<sup>1</sup>Throughout the document the term Chinese in regards to language refers to the predominant Mandarin dialect.

## Research Background

During my pre-service teacher education program at the University of Windsor in Canada, I had the unique opportunity to travel abroad to China through the Canada-China Teacher Education Reciprocal Learning Program developed by Dr. Shijing Xu at the University of Windsor with Dr. Shijian Chen at Southwest University, China. The goal of the program is to reciprocate knowledge of teaching styles, pedagogy, learning strategies and much more (Xu & Connelly, 2013 as cited in Xu, Chen, & Huang, 2015). First and foremost, the Reciprocal Learning Program (RLP) is a component of Xu and Connelly's (2013-2020) larger Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Partnership Program in Canada. The partnership program develops "the idea of a global community by bridging ideas, things and people between countries and cultures" (Xu & Connelly, 2013, p.6). As primary founders of the SSHRC Partnership Program, Xu and Connelly argue the importance of addressing diversity issues within the teacher preparation programs due to the vast Chinese immigrant population in Ontario (Xu & Connelly, 2013). The SSHRC project attempts to achieve this goal by building on the *Teacher Education Reciprocal Learning Program*. Dr. Shijing Xu at the University of Windsor (UW) with Dr. Shijian Chen at Southwest University (SWU) have developed the Reciprocal Learning Program (RLP) in order to create a cross-cultural learning experience for both Canadian and Chinese pre-service teachers (Xu et al., 2015). The SSHRC project and the RLP have successfully grown with support from many universities and massive amounts of efforts and dedication through many years of educational research. I have had the honour to take part in the Reciprocal Learning Program as a pre-service student and as a graduate student attempting to develop a personal research project stemming from the larger project. Additionally, my successful application for the Mitacs Globalink Research Award (GRA) scholarship enabled

me with the necessary funding to travel and stay in China for three months. Mitacs (2015) is a Canadian not-for-profit organization that has established research and training programs in Canada for the past 15 years. Mitacs works with many universities across the country of Canada that builds partnerships around the globe supporting education and innovation (Mitacs, 2015). With partnership from the SSHRC project, the RLP, and MITACS Globalink research scholarship, my personal research endeavours were made possible.

Throughout my experience in China with the Reciprocal Learning Program (RLP) alongside the University of Windsor home supervisor and the Southwest University host supervisors we were able to visit many local primary and secondary schools within the city of Chongqing. We were encouraged to speak with the teachers, vice-principals, and principals in order to ask questions and clarify teaching strategies. The most memorable observation was the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) class at a local high school when I visited the first time in 2014. It was the middle of May as the high school students were hard at work preparing for their important end of the year examinations. The English teacher was very enthusiastic, welcoming, and approachable. The teacher encouraged all of her Chinese students to speak in the English language in her class with the use of activities and games. The majority of class time was spent learning and speaking in front of the entire class. After the class, I was able to discuss English language learning strategies with the English teacher. The teacher believed that the students need practice speaking English because majority of their previous English learning experiences was focused on non-communicative practices. After further discussion with the English teacher we hypothesized that this potential lack of communicative practice or immersion in the English language could eventually pose a problem for the Chinese students. This may be due to the fact that the Chinese students have minimal opportunities to practice their spoken English outside of



the English classroom. Making the class time extremely important for all the students. I was immediately intrigued to further explore the phenomenon of the continued need for communicative English practice within the Chinese English as a Foreign Language classroom by continuing my participation with the Canada-China Reciprocal Learning Program and conduct further research and study into the field.

### **The Foundations of English Language Learning Education in China**

Over the past few decades China has undergone massive and extensive reforms especially within the Ministry of Education (Zhang & Liu, 2014). Zhang and Liu (2014) discuss that the English Curriculum Standards intend to implement interactive pedagogical approaches to teaching and learning that will differ from historical teaching methods. The learning of the English language became extremely important and a valuable asset to possess. In their investigation of primary English immersion teachers in China, Song and Cheng (2010) studied the background, instructional contexts, professional development and perceptions of English language teaching in China. They have noted that the current English National Curriculum in China mandates English language learning at the grade three level and even grade one at some locations (Song & Cheng, 2010). Building on this foundation, the 2009 educational reform established more interactive and collaborative learning approaches promoting mutual interactions rather than the old teacher-centred pedagogy (Yan & He, 2012). The new approach would provide students with unique interactive experiences in order to utilize the English language in an immersion environment. The research and literature demonstrates the success and benefits of bilingual education and language immersion without compromising the students' primary language (L1) (Cheng, Li, Kirby, Qiang, & Wade-Woolley, 2010). However, problems

arose when teachers struggled with the new teaching mandates and immersion pedagogy. An implementation gap developed between the new policy and the practice of the English teachers (Yan, 2012). Additionally, the research done by Zhang and Liu (2014) articulate that the teachers' beliefs heavily influence the extent of success when implementing educational reform and new English curriculum and policies. The existing body of literature calls for additional research into exploring the beliefs and practices of Chinese English language teachers.

## **The Present Study**

### **Research Phenomenon**

In their research, Zhang and Liu (2014) discuss the importance of pursuing an English curriculum reform involving specific attention in developing students' English communicative abilities while simultaneously shedding light on the complex and difficult nature of the Chinese English as a Foreign Language (EFL) program. The Chinese English teachers demonstrate a multi-dimensional view towards the educational reforms by "supporting the constructivist ideas of collaborative learning and teacher-student interactions" while also embracing "traditional beliefs and practices of textbook based instruction, grammar and language form, drill/ practice and teacher authority due to constraints of the teaching reality, such as high-stakes knowledge-based testing and limited resources" (Zhang & Liu, 2014, p. 200). I have spent significant time reflecting on my study trip abroad as well as further academic investigation of the literature including work that has been done by Lin and Chien (2010), Xue (2013), Qiang & Kang (2011) and many more. According to this research, I found the phenomenon that Chinese students are having difficulty communicating and expressing themselves in the spoken English language due to the limited time students actually spend speaking the English language on a typical day. For

example, the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) program in China is an English learning program that helps students learn grammatical, communicative, and cultural English within and outside of the local school system (Lin & Chien, 2010). English as a foreign language implies that English is being taught in an area where English is not the primary native language which presents minimal use outside of the classroom (Lin & Chien, 2010). Due to this fact, it becomes difficult for students to gain the necessary experience to use their communicative English.

Furthermore, a qualitative study conducted by Mo Xue (2013) found that Chinese University level international students are having difficulties and present a lack of confidence when needing to communicate in the English language with native English speakers. These Chinese students typically study English as Foreign Language (EFL) for many years as well as pass the numerous English tests required for international study (Xue, 2013). Taking this into consideration, the deficiency in communicative English the Chinese students have is affecting their academic performance and impacting their social interaction with fellow classmates and teachers (Xue, 2013).

I argue that much of the English communicative difficulties presented by the Chinese international students stems from early English teaching within the EFL programs. Chinese students within the EFL programs are in need of additional practice and implementation of the English language for future international success. Importantly, the literature also expressed the vital role that English teachers play in the development and success of the Chinese students' English language learning. It is therefore necessary to gain the beliefs and practices of English teaching pedagogy from the EFL teachers and pre-service teachers in order to understand the phenomenon further.

## **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this international case study is to explore the beliefs and practices from two Chinese English as a Foreign Language teachers implementing English language learning strategies in their EFL classrooms. The case study also seeks to explore the beliefs and practices from two Chinese English pre-service teachers exploring new English pedagogy and teaching methods. The utilization of observations, interviews, and document analysis aided me to explore the use of the English language in the setting of the EFL learning environment. The concepts of language immersion and bilingual education have been utilized as the theoretical lens throughout the data collection process.

Qiang and Kang (2011) explain that the English immersion pedagogy stemming from the bilingual education model continues to become an important project in the reform of English language education in China. Furthermore, the overarching goal of the immersion strategy is additive bilingualism; where students can become more proficient in the English target language without compromising their mother tongue (Qiang & Kang, 2011). This particular research study aims to explore the beliefs and practices of current and future EFL teachers utilizing these important teaching concepts.

## **Research Questions**

The following research questions have been used as a means to guide the investigation in the direction of bilingual education and language immersion within the Chinese English as a Foreign Language Program. Specifically, the research study intends to address the following two main research questions with underlying sub questions.

### Major questions:

1. What are the beliefs and practices of two Chinese English as a Foreign Language teachers implementing English language learning pedagogy in their EFL classrooms?
2. What are the beliefs and practices of two Chinese English as a Foreign Language pre-service teacher candidates learning and developing teaching strategies?

### Sub Questions:

1. How is bilingual education and language immersion implemented in the teachers' teaching practices?
2. How does the implementation of Chinese English Curriculum Standards (ECS) reform impact the EFL teachers' beliefs and practices when utilizing bilingual education or language immersion strategies?
3. To what extent, do EFL teachers implement English teaching resources and materials into their classrooms to achieve their curriculum learning goals?

### **Importance of the Study**

I argue that the objective or aim of my research agenda is to promote learning and action while bringing together researchers, participants, and data and knowledge. In particular, my research seeks to explore the unique international data in order to contextualize it within the larger body of research. The purpose of my research aims to add valuable information to the research community of the SSHRC partnership project as well as the many sites of my research including Southwest University and the local schools in China as well as the University of Windsor and local schools in Canada. Additionally, the goal of my study is to gain valuable and transferable information to the Canadian education system as well as support and provide insights to the English Language Learning programs in China. By studying the English as a

Foreign Language program in China it is the hope of this current study to suggest implications for administrators, teachers, and students working in a linguistically diverse context in Canada.

**International context.** In this increasingly globalized world education research has steered toward the value of international education projects (Creemers, 2006). In his paper, Creemers (2006) advocates the potential importance, value, and knowledge international education can have toward national policies. Different countries around the world implement a variety of unique education systems; international education research strives to explore educational effectiveness within countries and attempts to find collaborations and relationships between nations (Creemers, 2006). My particular study follows an international education research ideology by attempting to conduct research in the educational field in China in order to explore different pedagogical approaches in the field of language learning. As Canada's population continues to become more diverse it is the overarching goal of my study to use the results and knowledge gained to support the Canadian language learning system, classrooms, teachers, and students.

Canada has been a country of consistent growth of immigrants from countries all over the globe. According to Statistics Canada (2015), there continues to be a migratory increase throughout Canada that is playing an increased role in population growth. In fact, this migratory increase could account for more than 80% of Canada's population growth (Statistics Canada, 2015). This population growth also reflects the growing diversity within Canadian schools. There are thousands of newcomer students entering Canadian schools as English Language Learners (ELLs) (Guo, 2012). In order to accommodate the large influx of ELL newcomer Canadians the Ontario Ministry of Education (2007) established an English Literacy Development program that

focuses on students whose first language is not English and come from countries with limited access to education and language and literacy development. The goal of the policy and program is to direct and guide the English language learners to a successful future by providing them with the necessary assistance and resources (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007). This public document was developed to support the primary and secondary curriculums already in place to support educators and learners of the English language (Ontario Ministry of Education 2001, 2006, & 2007). Furthermore, since 2005 additional documents have been developed specifically to support Ontario educators of English language learners. These practical guides for Ontario educators include; *Supporting English Language Learners with Limited Prior School*, *Supporting English Language Learners*, and *Many Roots Many Voices Supporting English language learners in every classroom* (Ontario Ministry of Education 2005, 2008, & 2008). Throughout the development of this study I have made consistent reference to these documents in order to support language education in Canada. I will continue to refer to these ELL supportive documents for Ontario educators in the Discussion and Findings chapters of this document.

Even with the vast number of supporting documents for Canadian teachers; recent research has demonstrated that many teachers are not prepared to work effectively with immigrant parents and students (Guo, 2007). I therefore argue the further need and importance of this study of having implications to assist teachers in today's multilingual and diverse schools. This study can also assist teachers to understand how newcomer Canadians learn in an international context and understand how to work with students and parents from other cultures.

**Within the study.** I have designed the research study in such a way that participants in the study could also stand to benefit from their involvement in the project by reflecting on their teaching methods and pedagogy while gaining useful knowledge about themselves and the field of education. The participants had opportunities to engage with me in order to share and reflect on their English education teaching/ learning experiences. It was also my goal to reciprocate any knowledge with the participants while conducting the research project. Furthermore, participants in this particular study could potentially expand their current knowledge base by providing essential resources and reflections toward the implementation of language learning strategies in Chinese English classrooms. This can further promote effective English language use in China. The study and the participants involved could also spark further research in the field of second language acquisition. The potential Chinese EFL teachers and pre-service teacher candidates working within the project could also gain essential knowledge and experience from Canadian English teaching methodology and resources.

It is the overarching goal of this research study to promote a collaborative working environment between researcher and participants. Ideally, communication and collaboration will continue well after the study has ended in order to gain valuable insight from the emerging knowledge.

### **Theoretical Frameworks**

The objective of the theoretical framework section is to present valuable information regarding the use of bilingual education and language immersion pedagogy in the EFL classroom. The investigation was guided by the theoretical lens of bilingual education and language immersion serving as a framework for the study. The aforementioned concepts can be



further explained using a variety of effective theories and practical methods and will be expanded with additional detail in the Literature Review chapter of this document. The focus of language immersion was on the communicative nature of the English language and bilingual education focused on the dual language use of English and Chinese within the EFL classroom.

**Bilingual education model.** As the discourse of language learning continues to evolve and grow it is the responsibility of educators and policy makers alike to develop and innovate effective pedagogical tools and programs for English Language Learners (ELL) such as the bilingual model. As mentioned in the introduction, Cummins and Swain (1986) express bilingual education as the development of two languages promoted by a school programme or classroom. This unique educational model strives on developing the ELL's additional language (L2) by working in harmony with the students' primary language (L1) (Cummins & Swain, 1986). Canada has been at the forefront of bilingual education development for many years where research has suggested the cognitive benefits bilingualism and bilingual learning (Cummins, 1977).

Bilingual education is often presented in a variety of curriculum configurations in order to serve different purposes and achieve different goals. The major bilingual pedagogical programs include: *language immersion* which involves the complete use of the target language with support of the primary language; *two-way bilingual programs* that encourage the development of both linguistic majority and minority students who often attend the same classes; *transitional bilingual programs* eventually phase out the students' first language by promoting dual languages in early education (Leung, 2005). My research study seeks to explore the use of the first bilingual pedagogical approach, *language immersion*, within the EFL context.

With the support from the interdependence hypothesis, Cummins and colleagues (2012) argue for the benefits of encouraging and maintaining bilingual/ English Language Learning (ELL) student's L1 skills as they acquire the L2. "The interdependence hypothesis explains the fact that instruction through a minority language exerts no adverse consequences on students' academic development in the majority language despite considerably less instructional exposure to the majority language" (Cummins et al., 2012). The bilingual instructional strategies that encourage the implementation of students' L1 activate prior knowledge and help express intelligence at an appropriate level (Cummins, 2011). Additionally, Jim Cummins (2007) supports the additive bilingual model and argues that monolingual instruction often ignores the existence of a students' L1 and lacks cross-language transfer. Cummins (2007) continues to advocate for the development of multilingual classrooms in order to use students' L1, in this case Chinese, in the learning of an English target language (L2). These bilingual strategies not only help students acquire English as an additional language but also encourage to maintain their primary language.

Tong and Shi (2012) summarize the bilingual approach in China as implementing both Chinese and English for instructional purposes within the EFL classrooms. Tong and Shi (2012) extend this argument by stating that China attempts to promote English language use by establishing a unique bilingual education model in which this approach attempts to transition students away from the mainstream education of Chinese to a greater use of English as a medium of instruction as an elitist education system.

The bilingual education method is suitable for this research project because it establishes significant focus on the target language with support from the primary language. As a component

of bilingual education, the language immersion method has been used in conjunction as the theoretical frameworks for this particular study.

**Language immersion education.** In order to appropriately capture the theoretical lens of language immersion being used by this research study we must delve deeper into the concepts of language immersion. During the 1990s a group of academic scholars and practitioners known as the New London Group met in order to discuss ideas and concepts revolving around cultural and linguistic diversity. Due to our constantly expanding and globalizing world, the new London Group deemed it essential to focus attention on the multi-faceted topic of literacy. The group describes two main arguments they have with the developing cultural, institutional, and global order (Cope & Kalantzis, 1999). The first argument describes the multiplicity of communication channels and media and the second involves increasing salience of cultural and linguistic diversity (Cope & Kalantzis, 1999). Taking their arguments into consideration they developed the term “Multiliteracies” that encapsulated their discussions. Multiliteracies take into consideration the multiple modes of meaning integrated into linguistics. They also focused their attention on applying their new design into modern teaching pedagogy.

The multiliteracies framework utilizes four different orientations to learning, including: *situated practice*, involving an immersion experience; *overt instruction*, involving analytical and conscious understanding; *critical framing*, interpreting social and cultural context; *transformed practice*, transfer into meaning-making practice (Kalantzis & Cope, 2008). The framework allows teachers and students to surpass a superficial layer of learning and engage in a deeper conceptual understanding of the learning concepts (Kalantzis & Cope, 2008). My research study has focused on situated practice with the concept of multiliteracies. Situated practice is “the part

of pedagogy that is constituted by immersion in meaningful practices within a community of learners who are capable of playing multiple and different roles based on their backgrounds and experiences” (Cope & Kalantzis, 1999, p. 33). Situated practice can be considered the application of communicative language speaking which constitutes the immersion aspect that also considers the affective and sociocultural needs and identities of all learners (Cope & Kalantzis, 1999). This understanding of *situated practice* within immersion and utilizing multiple learning modes is fundamental when exploring the different teaching strategies implemented by the Chinese EFL teachers in their classroom.

The concept and utilization of language immersion pedagogy stretches much further than multiliteracies and the New London Group. Cummins (1983) discusses that the French immersion programs have been rapidly spreading across Canada and the success of these programs has been seen around the world. China as well as other countries around the world have adopted these concepts from the Canadian French immersion and the English as a Second Language curriculums (Song & Cheng, 2011). The immersion model aims at using the target language, in this case English, as the predominant medium of instruction and communication (Song & Cheng, 2011). According to Cummins’ (1983) research, he argues that “children’s second language (L2) skills benefited significantly from immersion and at no cost to their first language proficiency” (p. 118). In his paper, Cummins (1983) stresses that not only is instructional time very important for the language learner but he also considers the factors such as the extent of L2 usage and the quality of the curriculum. Immersion can be considered a very important component of language learning and serves as a necessary scaffold for future language development in any country.

The theoretical framework of this study utilizes the unique amalgamation of the two concepts of bilingual education and language immersion pedagogy. The two models complement each other well and will help direct this study throughout the methodology and data analysis steps.

### **Locating Myself in the Study**

I will begin the following section with an introduction of myself as a person, as a learner, and as a researcher. This section aims to identify a model of reflexivity and self-awareness as I embarked on a new research project. Creswell (2007) describes “reflexivity as the writer is conscious of the biases, values, and experiences that he or she brings to a qualitative research study” (p.243). As a way of understanding this phenomenon, I hope my reflexivity construct helps to shape my role as a researcher and how that impacts what I see, discuss, and hear throughout the study.

As a second language learner myself, I have become extremely interested in the development of language programs around the world. Our world today is becoming ever more globalized and through personal experience and observation I have witnessed a gradual increase in the importance of English language learning in non-English speaking countries. Taking this into consideration, I find the study of languages and the development of English language programs very fascinating and I want to become a part of its growth. My parents came to Canada from the small country of Czech Republic in the late 1980s and I was born in Canada speaking Czech as a first language. The use of the English language only began as I started primary school. With the use of Czech at home, English in school, and the learning of French at school I quickly became intrigued with the world of languages. Since this time about 20 years ago, the

Canadian education curriculum has attempted to work toward reflecting “the knowledge and experiences of the culturally and religiously diverse student and parent population” (Guo, 2012, p. 122). Policies and programs have been developed to assist English Language Learners (ELLs) and their English Literacy Development (ELD) (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007). As I became older, English became my dominant language and slowly took over my Czech household native tongue. This phenomenon is also expressed by Jim Cummins at the Ontario Institute for studies in Education (OISE) at the University of Toronto (UT) in many of his research endeavours. Cummins (1976) found a discrepancy between the importance of a child’s primary language (L1) and the new additional English language (L2). Additionally, Cummins (1976) discovered that in most households encompassing multiple languages the primary L1 language was diminishing due to the introduction of the additional L2 language.

My past experiences have now led me to pursue a bachelor’s degree in education followed by a master’s degree specializing in Second Language Acquisition, Culture, and Society. My passion for teaching and learning was a strong component for my aspirations to conduct a research study revolving around a foreign education system and how learning from it can help domestic learning experiences. Throughout my graduate education, I have taken part in Comparative and International Education, Qualitative Methods, and Second Language Acquisition classes. My continued reading and exploration in language acquisition literature has steered me to argue for the benefits and effectiveness of appropriate bilingual education and language immersion strategies and pedagogy.

My new graduate education experience has also guided me toward new and exciting research methods. Coming from a scientific background of anatomy, biology and physics, I was

enthused to explore qualitative methods such as narrative inquiry and case study. Collingridge and Gantt (2008), express the effectiveness of performing a qualitative study. A qualitative research study merits many of the important research qualities while maintaining unique data gathering methods (Collingridge & Gantt, 2008). A case study utilizing a narrative inquiry methodology was intriguing to me because of the freedom to get to know participants, become a part of their experiences, and to be captivated by their stories. As a personable individual, this research method allows me to significantly get involved into my research study and especially the participants.

Finally, there was no other place in the world that I would have wanted to conduct my study other than China. China was not only a country flourishing in English language learning experiences but also consistently welcomed me with open arms during my visits in 2014 and 2015. The hospitable qualities of the Chinese people allowed me to feel very comfortable in a foreign country filled with a unique and ancient culture, language, and history. It is my hope that my study provides a glimpse into the fantastic country of China.

## **Epistemology**

The aforementioned components of my past life experiences and education have shaped my current preconceptions, credibility, trustworthiness, and epistemological stance. Throughout the following section I would like to expand on my philosophical assumptions and discuss the epistemology this project identifies with. As a further philosophical assumption, the epistemological views address the important interrelated relationship between the participants and the researcher (Creswell, 2007). Furthermore, the time in the field, collaboration and the impact of being studied develops a sense of “closeness” between the researched and the

researcher (Creswell, 2007). These qualities of research mentioned by Creswell are crucial components to this research study. Coming from a field of applied sciences in kinesiology and anatomy I was easily able to transition into qualitative research methods by embracing subjectivity as a strength in the study. I effectively resolved any possible conflicts with a science background by exposing myself as who I truly am; a friendly, personable, pleasant, easygoing person striving to learn from the people in this world.

This ideology can be shared with the accompanying epistemological stance from which this project has chosen to work with. The project aims to draw on the everyday actions, ideas, and concepts of the participants and the environment they live in. A social constructionism stance appropriately embodies the goals of this study. The constructionist view maintains an important sociocultural dimension by arguing for experiencing the “real relations” of a particular society by getting involved within it (Schwandt, 2000). The epistemological stance of social constructionism promotes the assumptions of identifying constructs, models, and schemes from the newly developed experiences and information (Schwandt, 2000). Furthermore, Schwandt (2000) states that within social constructionism, “we do not construct our interpretations in isolation but against a backdrop of shared understandings, practices, language, and so forth” (p. 197). This underlying perspective serves as an excellent frame of reference for the study due to the importance of maintaining a natural and ‘real’ working environment. Additionally, this stance fits in line with the project by promoting the traditional views of humanities and knowledge in that all data and information attained benefits all individuals involved and seeks to add to the larger body of literature.



## **Limitations and Delimitations**

In order to encompass the necessary aspects of the study such as the project sites, participants, and methodology I have identified specific parameters and boundaries. These boundaries delimit the study in terms of sites and number of participants, time limits, and data collection in order to achieve successful completion of the research project. The major limitation to the study has been the aspect of time and location. As the project is encompassed within the Canada-China Reciprocal Learning Program, the duration of time and place of the study was prearranged and was outside of my control. The larger SSHRC project and the Reciprocal Learning Program (RLP) at the University of Windsor, Southwest University and the Greater Essex County District School Board (GECDSB) created the bridge into Chinese schools and granted my access to all of my potential participants and data. The RLP provided me access to many research sites and participants within a comfortable and manageable scale. Additionally, according to the Mitacs Globalink research award that provided my funding it was mandatory to stay in the country of study for a minimum of 12 weeks. In order to accommodate the study for the time and location constraints I had to delimit certain aspects of the study such as observation length and the number of interviews.

I chose to investigate teachers as well as pre-service teacher candidates because they are all over the age of 18 and do not need further adult consent in order to participate in the research project. The 4 individual cases are all connected within the one unique bounded system at Southwest University. The four participants were chosen within the specific sites of the project such as Southwest University and two different local schools. Four participants was an ideal number because it accommodated all the research sites with at least one participant from each site. Furthermore, all EFL teachers or EFL pre-service teacher participants had the ability to

communicate with me in the English language. The language barrier within a foreign country posed the largest limitation to this study. This potentially limited the study's scope in terms of methodological processes, participant involvement, and the amount of data gathered. Conducting observations, interviews, and a document analysis appropriately allowed me to immerse myself in the research environment and seek information and stories regarding the purpose of the research project.

## **CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

### **Introduction**

My current research aspirations and endeavours build on the developed vast body of literature such as Cummins (1977; 1981; 1983; 2007; 2011), Swain (2000), Song and Cheng (2010), Cheng (1988; 2012) Cheng, et al. (2010), Liang (2011), Zhang and Liu (2014) and much more found within the field of language education. This chapter is a literature review pertaining to foreign language learning pedagogies taking into consideration past and present influences and how it affects the teacher. The chapter consists of five different sections. First, a brief evolution of foreign language teaching and learning development in China is explored. The second, most descriptive section, discusses the concepts of bilingual education and language immersion with further detail. Next, I provide some examples comparing language immersion education with non-immersion. In the fourth section of the literature review, the importance of studying the teacher voice is presented. The final section briefly goes over the important and possible issues and concessions past literature has identified with the mentioned theoretical frameworks. The following review of literature has been conducted utilizing a non-systematic method with special attention given to teachers' beliefs and practices. Relevant literature has primarily been found using the well-respected education article database known as ERIC.

### **Chinese Educational Reforms and Mandates**

Following the Chinese Cultural Revolution, during the 1970s China began to launch all-round reforms and started to “open up” to the world (Cheng, 1988). According to Cheng (1988), the Cultural Revolution implemented the closure of most of the schools in China in order for the population to work in the agriculture, business, and military fields. Throughout the open-door policy between 1980-1985, China took the opportunity to send over 15,000 students abroad to

study and learn English (Cheng, 1988). Additionally, at this time many foreign teachers arrived into China teaching across hundreds of institutions throughout the country (Cheng, 1988).

During these political and economic reforms, English language learning became an integral part of the education system and has not ceased since then.

Throughout their research, Zhang and Liu (2014) discuss that over the past decade China has undergone significant top-down reforms at all levels of education. Much of the focus of these reforms included the implementation of the English Curriculum Standards (ECS) of China (Zhang & Liu, 2014). Specifically, the ECS “intends to develop learner’s communicative competence, foster learner autonomy, and encourage interactive classroom participation” (Zhang & Liu, 2014, p. 188). China began to reform the standards in the English National Curriculum; this implemented compulsory English instruction beginning at grade three and recommended grade one in most socio-economically developed areas (Song & Cheng, 2010). Since this time the importance and respect for English language learning in the Chinese education system has consistently grown. However, there continued to be little change in the teaching methods, strategies, pedagogy and teacher training in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) program (Song & Cheng, 2010). English was consistently taught the same since the 1980s using intensive and extensive reading and grammar-translation strategies (Cheng, 1988). Furthermore, teachers were struggling to produce successful results partly contributed from the lack of teacher training (Cheng, 1988). Nevertheless, China has continued to produce new mandates and reforms for the English National Curriculum. In 2009, China developed one of the most ambitious and radical changes in its education history by attempting to make a fundamental change in underlying philosophy and practices in teaching (Yan, 2012). This educational reform would seek to change the more traditional teacher-centred and grammar based approaches with a more inquiry-oriented

pedagogy (Yan, 2012). The new 2009 Educational reform would again need teachers to assume new trustworthy facilitator or manager roles as opposed to an authoritarian instructor (Yan & He, 2012). This would be required in order to facilitate the more interactive and collaborative learning approach promoting mutual interactions between students and teachers and between students themselves (Yan & He, 2012). Moreover, numerous reports have shown an implementation gap between policy and practice as well as negative and complex emotions and difficulties from teachers (Yan, 2012). The problem inevitably stems from the grassroots teachers implementing the new curriculum (Yan & He, 2012). The problems described above call for further research and new pedagogical strategies.

### **The Call for Bilingual Education**

#### **A North American Model of Bilingual Education**

Bilingual education pedagogy can be considered the learning of an additional target language with support from the students' mother tongue (Cummins, 2011). The bilingual framework is rooted in the interdependent relationship between the students' L1 and L2 (Lopez & Tashakkori, 2006). Language education research has demonstrated that the use of the students' L1 in school does not detriment their English progression, but rather it can even accelerate L2 progression in acquisition and academic skill development (Lopez & Tashakkori, 2006). Lopez and Tashakkori (2006) conducted a mixed methods study in order to evaluate the bilingual progress of students. The quantitative data sets confirmed statistically significant data regarding the English language achievement in students utilizing the bilingual pedagogy in the United States between English and Spanish. Data analyses found significant differences in measures of oral acquisition in English, Spanish reading ability, and the perceived levels of English and Spanish proficiency (Lopez & Tashakkori, 2006).

The success of bilingual education can also be seen in Canada and the French Immersion program. Dr. Jim Cummins from Ontario, Canada has been studying bilingual education in Canada for many years. Cummins (1977) states that the evaluation of Canadian bilingual education programs suggests the possibility that bilingual education may have positive effects on the cognitive processes of children. However, Cummins (1977) emphasizes the importance of a threshold level of bilingual competence which a student must attain in order to begin to receive positive cognitive functioning. This threshold Cummins (1983) describes as the ‘optimal age’; I will continue to expand on Cummins’ (1981; 1983, 2007) theories throughout this literature review process. Cummins (1983) reports that many recent research studies have found a positive relationship between bilingualism and cognitive/ academic functioning. Many studies report positive results from language immersion learning and bilingualism ability such as being more sensitive to interpersonal communication, greater cognitive flexibility and creative thinking, as well as even more intellectually developed in general (Cummins, 1983). Furthermore, many “research studies which suggest that bilingual children who develop their proficiency in both languages experience intellectual and academic advantages over unilingual children” (Cummins, 1981, p. 21).

French immersion programs have prospered as Canada is an official bilingual nation and the acquisition of dual languages is becoming ever so predominant. Primarily, “immersion education has heightened our recognition of the influence of societal conditions on the outcomes of bilingual education, in particular, of the importance of the distinction between minority and majority language groups” (Swain 2000, p. 200). In Swain’s (2000) own research investigating French immersion in schools, she found positive results when L1 was clearly mediating students’ learning of French (L2). Students were successfully able to use their L1 to move the L2 task

along, use L1 to talk about L2, and use L1 during interpersonal relations (Swain 2000). Additionally, in Swain's review of French bilingual education literature, she reported on the 1992 study by Harley demonstrating bilingual language transfer from students' English to French production. Swain (2000) reported that students implementing both English and French were able to assume verb meaning equivalence and construction across both languages. The Canadian French bilingual and immersion program is well known around the world and is modelled after in many countries such as China.

### **The Chinese Perspective on Bilingual Education**

The bilingualism model for English language learning in China has been developed in order to improve the existing English language programs by addressing the communicative problems seen in Chinese English language learners (Cheng, et al., 2010).

Existing literature in the field of bilingual education has demonstrated positive effects on English language learning students (Cummins, 2011; Lopez & Tashakkori, 2006; Swain 2000; Cheng, et al., 2010). Zhou's (2011) study participants describe the importance of maintaining primary culture and language while simultaneously learning and understanding the target language and culture. Students are able to reflect on their own cultures, values, and beliefs while gaining a new knowledge base of a foreign language such as English (Zhou, 2011). However, Tong and Shi (2012) argue that further research needs to be done in bilingual education context within China. This is because "Chinese bilingual education is a special case that does not conform to bilingual education modes within the international contexts because the purpose, rather than being the typical enrichment program, is to gain practical or utilitarian benefits"

(Tong & Shi, 2012, p. 167). This information informs us that we need to spend significant time exploring the concept of bilingual education in the Chinese context.

Tong and Shi (2012) describe four major types of bilingual models in China: foreign language teaching in mainstream education, maintenance bilingual instruction, transitional bilingual instruction, and immersion bilingual instruction. The four different modes described by Tong and Shi (2012) use English in a variety of different mediums and distributions:

*A foreign language teaching in mainstream classrooms* is characterized by the exclusive use of Chinese to teach the content area, with English used for classroom management and/ or translations of concepts, formulas, and definitions. In the *transitional bilingual model*, Chinese is still the dominant language as opposed to English that is only used for necessary explanation. As a reverse version of the *transitional bilingual model*, *maintenance bilingual instruction* more frequently uses English as a language of instruction while Chinese occupies 10-50% of the curriculum time for the explanation of difficult concepts. In *immersion bilingual education* there is exclusive use of English as the language of instruction (p. 167).

Throughout their case study, Tong and Shi (2012) reiterate the implementation of the subsequent modes of bilingual English education at the university/college level of learning and how it impacts second language learning.

### **Delving into Language Immersion Pedagogy**

#### **The West as a Role Model**

Immersion education is a historical method of teaching practice and pedagogy that goes back to even the ancient times (Cummins, 1983). Cummins (1983) states that this method of



teaching can be seen in countries such as Ireland, Philippines, and several African countries long prior to the Canadian experiment. However, Cummins (1983) emphasizes that the Canadian experience is very unique not only because it “succeeded in transmitting high levels of French proficiency to students at no cost to other academic skills, but because they have been *seen* to have succeeded” (p. 118). Furthermore, research in the topic of language immersion and language learning phenomena played a crucial role to the success and spread of French immersion programs across Canada (Cummins, 1983). This Canadian experiment can now be known “as one of the most significant innovations in second-language teaching in this century” (Cummins, 1983, p. 118.). I will now further discuss some of the major arguments that Dr. Cummins poses in his study in 1983. These arguments can also be found within much of his most recent work including 2007, 2011, 2012 etc.

When we discuss the benefits of language immersion pedagogy we must touch on the question of instructional time and language development within the context of immersion. Cummins (1983) argues that there are many factors to consider, not just instructional time in language immersion learning programs to exert positive effects on student achievement. Studies have found a very small if at all significance gap between student’s second language (L2) abilities in partial immersion versus full immersion language programs (Cummins, 1983). This information supports that even a small amount of *quality* and *effective* language immersion education can benefit a student’s L2 proficiency.

Jim Cummins also sheds a light on the important factor of the “optimal age” issue. Cummins (1981) discusses that many research studies argue that there is an “optimal age” for learning an additional language; young learners. However, with more focus and in-depth analysis into the issue Cummins argues that older learners can learn languages just as effectively as

younger learners (Cummins, 1981; Cummins, 1983). Students in early immersion programs often learn important cognitive and academic skills simultaneously as they learn the new language, accumulating many hours on task (Cummins, 1983). On the other hand, “older learners come to the language acquisition task equipped with L1 reading and writing skills ... as well as knowledge about how grammatical systems work” (Cummins, 1983, p. 124-125). Additionally, Cummins (1981) elaborates on studies finding that with an appropriately developed cognitive/academic language proficiency older language learners in fact “manifest L2 cognitive/academic proficiency more rapidly than younger learners because it already exists in their L1” (p. 184). Finally, Cummins (1981) has consistently evaluated that early language learners will suffer no negative academic or cognitive effects and will catch up with their English language learning skills. This body of information promotes the quality learning of language immersion and the positive effects it can have on bilingual education and student bilingualism. Language immersion is considered an important subject around world and can be seen growing rapidly in China.

### **Immersion in the East**

Similar to the bilingual education models; the French immersion programs in Canada have significantly influenced the immersion program in China (Cheng, et al., 2010). The French immersion model was adopted in China in order to develop the English immersion programs (Cheng, et al., 2010). English continues to be one of the main learning areas at all primary/secondary schools and post-secondary institutions in China (Cheng, 2012). The English language is often seen as a gateway to future success in China and more research and policy change is quickly being implemented for new teaching methods and strategies.

Recent research demonstrates that English language immersion proves to be an effective means in facilitating second language acquisition without undermining the student's first language (Cheng, 2012; Song & Cheng, 2010). Song and Cheng (2010) argue that the English immersion model develops student's bilingualism by promoting natural and meaningful communication. This study by Song and Cheng (2010) reiterates that many immersion models around the world, including China, have been adopted from the successful Canadian French immersion program. Furthermore, the study investigated the perceptions and teaching practices of English teachers in China implementing language immersion. The study found that the Chinese English teacher generally lacked the educational background and is in need of consistent professional development (Song & Cheng, 2010).

English immersion school research in China expands with an investigation conducted by Liying Cheng in 2012. The study found positive indicators of language immersion success in cognitive reading and listening skills while maintaining Chinese literacy (L1) and numeracy (Cheng, 2012). Consistent to research done by Song and Cheng the investigation acknowledges a lack of English teacher training in subject content or English, aside from understanding pedagogy of immersion education (Cheng, 2012). Further studies have found positive results of English language immersion especially compared to the non-immersion counterpart.

### **Language Immersion vs. Non-Immersion**

The practice of language immersion is used for situations when the student must frequently switch from the primary language (L1) and their new additional language (L2) (Liang, 2011). In China, students must successfully balance their primary native language and the English language taught in the English as a Foreign Language classes. In the EFL setting it is

predominant that the use of the English language ceases after exiting the EFL classroom (Liang, 2011). The 2011 study by Liang examined the unique characteristics that language immersion programs offer compared to the non-immersion counterpart. Language immersion programs are flourishing throughout China and often implement a dynamic, interactive, activity based approach to learning (Liang, 2011). The situated nature, social interactions, and predominant use of the target language provide the students with a unique approach to learning (Liang, 2011).

Further research has demonstrated the success of including immersion education in harmony with the bilingual education model. “Immersion is an effective means of facilitating preschool and primary school students’ language proficiency, literacy and cognitive development, without undermining competence in their first language” (Cheng, et al., 2010, p. 151). The research study by Cheng and colleagues addressed the academic achievement represented by English (L2), Chinese (L1), and mathematics between the immersion and non-immersion students. The results demonstrated that the immersion students performed better than the non-immersion students in all three grades levels examined (Cheng, et al., 2010). Moreover, the immersion students performed similarly in Chinese and mathematics at two grades levels and once again outperformed non-immersion students at the third and higher grade level (Cheng, et al., 2010).

### **An Important Voice to be Heard**

The positive results being obtained from language immersion and bilingual education implementation would not be possible without the commitment and dedication from the English language teachers. The English teachers are one of the most important stakeholders when developing and implementing a new curriculum (Kong, Hoare & Chi, 2011). The goals, beliefs,

practices, and perceptions of the English language teachers are key factors for evaluating the progress and future directions of the English language curriculum (Kong, et al., 2011).

To further the statements made by Kong and colleagues (2011), Zhang and Liu (2014) refer to teachers as the “agents of change” and that the teachers’ beliefs, practices, and pedagogy are interconnected. According to Zhang and Liu (2014), “teachers’ belief can exert a strong influence on teachers’ pedagogical decision, instructional practices, and professional development” (p. 188). A teachers’ pedagogical beliefs and practices can influence the dynamics of language education, the language curriculum, and the students’ learning opportunities (Zhang & Liu, 2014).

Whilst studying cultural teaching and intercultural competence on teaching practice of English teachers in China, Zhou (2011) found that the teachers’ beliefs about the topics impacted their teaching practices and shaped their instructional behaviours. Even if all of the Chinese English teachers in the study felt the same way they demonstrated their beliefs and practices using different methods and did so for various reason (Zhou, 2011). Furthermore, Zhou’s (2011) findings suggest that a teacher’s teaching practice reflects their personally articulated objectives. There is often a consistency between teachers’ beliefs and their practice which supports the argument that teaching practice is demonstrated according to teachers’ personal curriculum which is shaped by their teacher knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988; Xu & Connelly, 2009 as cited in Zhou, 2011). Furthermore, Zhou, Xu, Bayley (2011) argue that this teacher knowledge is reflective of their narrative histories and cultural narrative history of their homeland of China.

The type of language education reform in China discussed throughout this paper heavily influences contextual factors such as language policies, mandated curriculum, school culture and

resources and how they affect teachers (Zhang & Liu, 2014). All of these mentioned factors will most likely affect a teachers' pedagogical approach and teaching strategies. It is therefore crucial to clearly understand a teachers' perceptions, practices and beliefs of a language education reform in order to have a successful transition (Zhang & Liu, 2014).

### **Issues and Concessions**

As the bilingual education model continues to grow and evolve there will also be critics challenging the aspects of the language learning approach. These critics provide a concession against the bilingual model. A major concern/ issue against bilingual education is the use of languages within the classroom and the language division across speakers (Leung, 2005). In a bilingual system, it is often the responsibility of the teacher to facilitate and organize the multilingual classroom. However, Leung (2005) states that in a multilingual setting, monolingual teachers articulate difficulties in monitoring the multiple languages. Student groups and pairs often become important assets in order to support the bilingual model (Cummins, 2007). However, the present research study argues that the Chinese English as a Foreign Language (EFL) educators have the unique ability to speak both the native language of Mandarin (L1) and the target language of English (L2). English educators would effectively be able to facilitate a dynamic classroom successfully incorporating both Mandarin and English languages.

Chinese teacher concerns and problems are also expressed in the Chinese English language immersion programs. Chinese English teachers are often pressured to create an optimal language environment that is promoting maximum student participation and effective use of the English language (Cheng, et al., 2010). As one of the most important stakeholders to policy reform teachers are often responsible for the appropriate application of new mandates. However,

teachers confirm that the pressures of a full syllabus, large class, and lack of support from administration make it difficult to implement an effective bilingual and immersion program (Kong, et al., 2011). The teachers also discuss a lack of teacher training, support and resources in order to implement a successful bilingual model (Kong, et al., 2011). Therefore, it is of even greater importance to seek the valuable information possibly gained from the Chinese English teachers and the pre-service teacher candidates.

The preceding information above provides an insight and well-rounded dialogue of the existing body of literature. The review of literature discussed a brief history of language education in China, the benefits of bilingual education and language immersion, the past and current issues in language education, the importance of teachers' beliefs and practices and the progressions for future implications. The insights into the academic achievement acknowledge the potential value of bilingual education and language immersion pedagogy. The literature also highlights an implementation gap between policy and practice between administration and teachers. Additionally, in order to address this problem, the literature calls for further investigation into the teachers' beliefs and practices about the English language curriculum. This particular study being presented aims to add to the existing body of literature by exploring the beliefs and practices from English as a foreign language teachers and pre-service teachers implementing/ learning English language education.

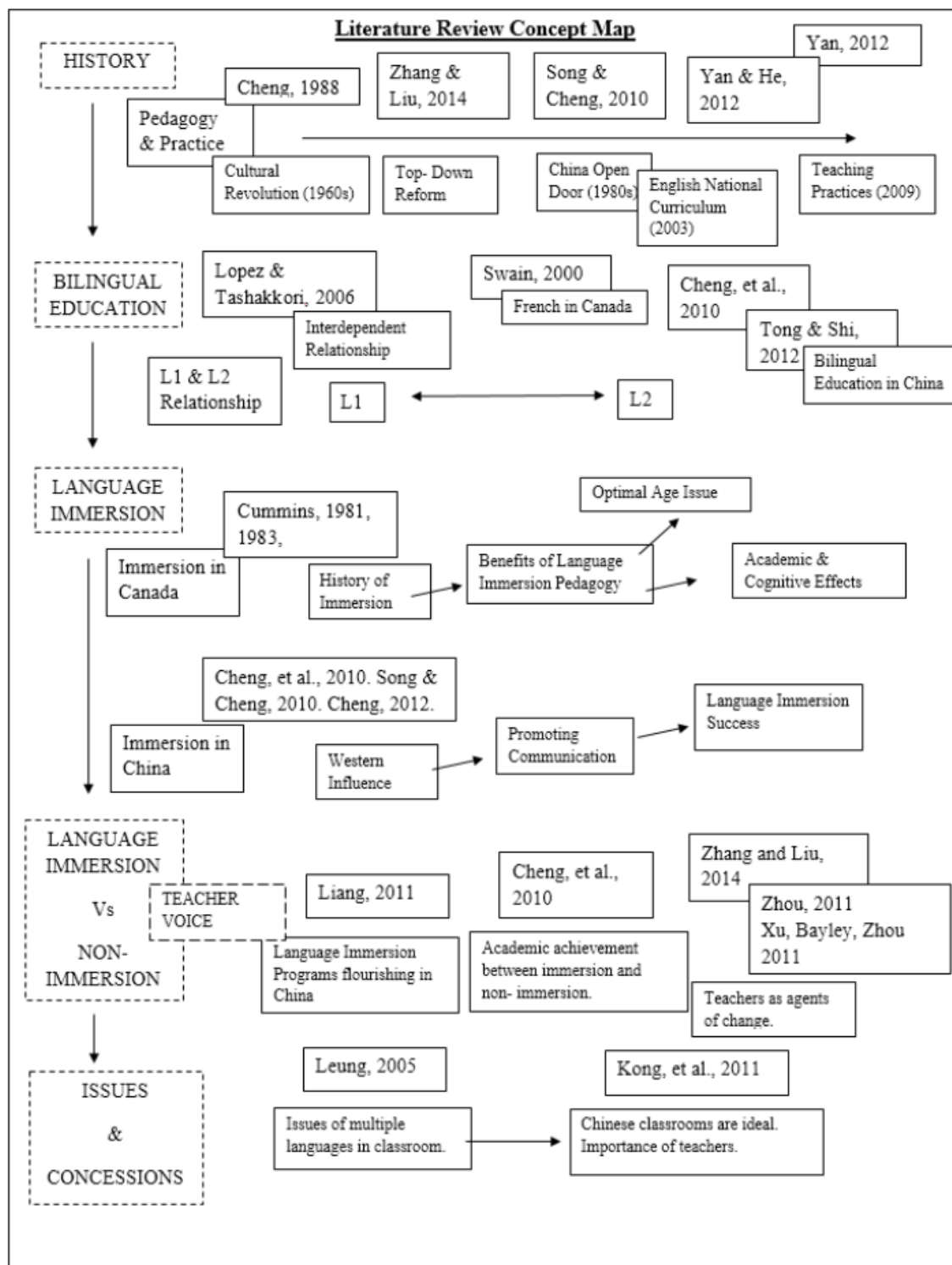
### **Summary**

Learning and reciprocally sharing from other countries such as Canada the nation of China has recently seen a quick development especially in the field of language education. Over

the past few decades, we can observe the remarkable efforts and research conducted in the field of second language acquisition. The review of literature presents the teaching and learning benefits of the unique and effective teaching methods such as bilingual education and language immersion. Moreover, the literature reveals the important roles teachers play in the development and integration of new curriculum mandates and teaching reforms in the teaching community. It is therefore important to explore the Chinese English as a foreign language teachers' beliefs and practices in order to gain insight of successful teaching practices and learn from it. Figure 1 below describes the literature review in a visual perspective.



Figure 1.



## CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

### The Research Study Design

#### Qualitative Research

The goal of this qualitative research study is to explore the beliefs and practices of two Chinese English as a Foreign Language teachers implementing English language learning strategies in their EFL classrooms. The study also seeks to explore the beliefs and practices of two Chinese English pre-service teachers exploring new English pedagogy and teaching methods. Given the specific nature and goal of the study, I have chosen to conduct the research using qualitative methods.

Wilson (1998) describes the aim of qualitative research as attempting to understand the world through the eyes of the participants. It is for this vital reason that qualitative research must occur within the natural setting of the world (Wilson, 1998). Qualitative research expert, John Creswell (2007) adds that qualitative research investigates into research problems by “inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (p. 37). The literature emphasizes the important role that people in their respective environments play in the qualitative research method. Additionally, researchers must be sensitive to the natural setting of people and places under study while the collection of data takes place (Creswell, 2007). Due to the methodological applications, this particular study and the results are specific to the time and place of the study. Therefore, the investigation is bounded to the school sites in the Beibei district of Chongqing, and is limited in its generalizability. Within the branch of qualitative research, I have conducted this research project using a narrative inquiry methodology, implementing a case study framework tri-utilizing data collection methods.

## Case Study

Per Creswell (2007) “case study research involves the study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system” (p. 73). A *bounded system* means the “case” that will be selected for study; is usually bounded by time and place including an event, a process, or in this case a set of individuals (Creswell, 2007). Case study research is a qualitative strategy where the investigator attempts to explore the “bounded case” by implementing multiple sources of in-depth data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2007). The case study design was beneficial in this research study because of the small participant pool anticipated. Additionally, case study research was implemented to obtain the most amounts of rich data from all of the participants, utilizing narrative inquiry as the predominant methodology for the study. The case study involved the tri-utilization of a narrative inquiry encompassing the data collection methods including observations, individual interviews, and document analysis.

The narrative research methodology was used as defining the text within the context of a mode of inquiry in the qualitative study with the support of a case study as a framework (Creswell, 2007). The research implemented the case study framework as a way of organizing the participants into a bounded system and determining what is to be studied. The narratives of each participant show the different perspectives of the case that is being studied. It is for these reasons that this study implemented a narrative inquiry methodology with support of a case study framework.

The narrative inquiry methodology is appropriate for the research study for examining the lived experiences of the participants involved and the environment they live and work in. Since this research study aims at exploring the beliefs and practices of two EFL teachers and two EFL

pre-service teacher candidates, I believe it was appropriate to focus on a narrative component of the research participants. Creswell (2007) defines narrative as a “mode of inquiry in qualitative research, with a focus on the stories told and lived by individuals” (p. 54). This narrative approach included the participants lived experiences and told stories revolving around their English teaching learning and teaching history (Creswell, 2007). I believe it is crucial to include the personal and unique stories behind the participants to successfully capture the beliefs and practices of the individuals. I will now continue to explore the methodology of narrative inquiry in further detail.

### **Narrative Inquiry**

**Experience and narrative inquiry.** This qualitative narrative inquiry study is shaped within a case study framework which has guided the methodology and data collection methods. Specifically, this narrative research study has followed the research based on Connelly and Clandinin’s framework of narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin 1990; Xu & Connelly, 2010).

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) characterize the concept of narrative inquiry as: “a way of understanding experience. It is a collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus” (p. 20). Clandinin and Connelly’s research is strongly influenced by the theories of John Dewey whose writings on *experience* provided them with a strong foundation. *Experience* is a key term and for Dewey its meaning was both personal and social (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Most importantly, experience is made up of *continuity*, “the notion that experiences grow out of other experiences, and experiences lead to further experiences” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p.2). For example,

people are individuals but not only individuals. People are individuals in relation to their social context, time, and place (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Furthermore, I find it extremely important, especially when studying humans in qualitative work, to understand people on a continuum; “each point has a past experiential base and leads to an experiential future” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p.2). I like to understand those involved in my research study as individuals who are shaped by their own lived experiences and those experiences continue to influence who they are today.

**Thinking narratively.** To continue, Xu and Connelly (2010) define a more focused practice approach to narrative inquiry for the study of practical school-based research settings. Xu and Connelly (2010) emphasize that: “narrative inquiry... is the experiential study of experience. If there is one key phrase that captures the idea of narrative inquiry for school-based research it is *experiencing experience*” (p. 354). In fact, narrative inquiry can be considered as both the phenomena and the method for school-based studies (Xu & Connelly, 2010). While I studied the participant experience as the phenomena I began to construct the narratives and stories of the individuals. “Story is not so much a structured answer to a question, or a way of accounting for actions and events, as it is a gateway, a portal for narrative inquiry into meaning and significance” (Xu & Connelly, 2010, p. 356). This meaning and significance can then be analyzed into a three-dimension space of time, personal/ social, and place (Xu & Connelly, 2010). Grasping this understanding as a narrative inquirer I could then begin to make meaning and sense of the research experience and the ‘data’.

**Narrative dimensions.** It is the goal of this study to capture the beliefs and practices of the EFL teachers and EFL pre-service teachers regarding language learning teaching pedagogy. Therefore, narrative inquiry has been implemented in order to appropriately describe the lived experiences of the participants. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) argue that the narrative inquiry approach holistically captures human stories with their lived experiences. Human beliefs, practices, and perceptions are deep human traits and qualities that can be expressed effectively through storytelling on a temporal and personal-social dimension. Storytelling sends a powerful message about the lived experiences from the participant's point of view and can describe how the stories shape an individual's beliefs and perceptions (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Finally, as a narrative inquirer the researcher should not observe the surroundings as it is in a given moment because time is always moving and things are always changing (Xu & Connelly, 2010).

**Narrative account.** My devotion to undertake a qualitative narrative inquiry study flourished in account with my educational background and the relationship with the SSHRC Partnership Grant Project. The choice to implement a narrative study myself was to follow in the foot steps of my research mentors including Dr. Connelly from the University of Toronto and Dr. Shijing Xu from the University of Windsor. Drs. Connelly and Xu, at the forefront of narrative inquiry research, continued to strongly utilize the narrative methodology in their research. While working closely with the project, I was inspired by all the learning that took place and decided to adopt the unique methodology within my own research study.

In summary, this qualitative research study utilized a narrative inquiry methodology implementing a case study framework of data collection involving observations, interviews, and

document analysis. I will continue to explain in further detail how each method was utilized within the context of the study.

### **The Research Context**

In order to appropriately describe the context of the research study I must elaborate on the participation within the Canada-China Reciprocal Learning Program with support from the Mitacs Globalink Research Award.

#### **The Canada-China Teacher Education Reciprocal Learning Program**

The Reciprocal Learning Program (RLP) plays a very important role in this particular research study. The RLP provided me with the opportunity to travel to the research site of Southwest University China and to interact with potential research participants in China. The purpose of the following section is to provide further detailed information concerning the important role of the RLP as well as the Mitacs award in this particular research project.

This study was completed in partnership with Xu and Connelly's (2013) larger project entitled *Reciprocal Learning in Teacher Education between Canada and China*. As mentioned within the introduction section, I have previous experience participating within the Reciprocal Learning Program (RLP) and my passion for my work inspired me to continue my role within the program. The *Teacher Education Reciprocal Learning Program* was first initiated in 2009 by Shijing Xu at the University of Windsor (UW) with Shijian Chen through the contact of Ling Li at Southwest University (SWU) (Xu et al., 2015). The program continues to grow and build strong relationships between the UW the SWU and the Greater Essex County District School Board (GECDSB) as a major partner (Xu et al., 2015). The goal of the program is to continue to broaden teacher candidates' horizons by providing a rich cross-cultural experience by engaging

international perspectives (Xu et al., 2015). Student participants for the RLP are selected from the pre-service teacher education programs from the University of Windsor in Canada and Southwest University in China (Xu et al., 2015). In the past, the Reciprocal Learning Program in partnership with the University of Windsor exchanged a team of Canadian teacher candidates to Southwest University China for approximately one and a half months. With the recent support of Mitacs, the Canadian pre-service teacher candidates participating in the RLP travel to SWU China for a period of three months during the winter/ spring semester of the school year. Additionally, Southwest University also sends a group of Chinese teacher candidates to the University of Windsor in Canada for the same duration of time during the fall semester of the school year. Even though these exchanges only take place for three months it takes the duration of a whole school year in order to prepare and cultivate the teacher candidates.

As a graduate student within the program I was given the opportunity to travel again to China in 2015 for a 12-week period in order to express my leadership and researcher roles. I also took the unique opportunity to stem from the larger project to embark on my own research endeavours. The RLP, in partnership with host Chinese institutions, Southwest University in Chongqing China, has helped guide my study by providing me with school placements that included the opportunity to observe Chinese primary and secondary schools. This 12-week research opportunity to China was made possible by the partnerships of the RLP and the Mitacs Globalink Research Award.

### **Mitacs Globalink Research Award**

Mitacs is a federally funded scholarship program in Canada that strives to promote and encourage research both nationally and internationally (Mitacs, 2015). In 2013, the Mitacs



‘Globalink Research Award’ (GRA) began to fund both senior undergraduate and graduate students to participate in a 12-24-week research project at universities in countries such as China, India, Brazil, and many more (Mitacs, 2015). This GRA scholarship began to support the Canadian students participating in the Reciprocal Learning Program. The GRA provides Canadian pre-service students in the program with \$5,000 to travel to China, stay at the host Southwest University, and in this case, all while participating in the Canada-China Reciprocal Learning Program.

The Globalink Research Award (GRA) involves an extensive application process which further develops research skills, cultural fluency, and most importantly, fosters collaboration between colleagues from local and foreign university from around the globe (Mitacs, 2015). The GRA also involves study and research by the student in a foreign university with a ‘host university academic supervisor’ and a ‘home university academic supervisor’. Additionally, the GRA application involves the applicant creating a research proposal and carrying out this research project in the country of study. These proposal applications are reviewed by the Mitacs application council, the home supervisor, host supervisor, and supporting faculty within the RLP at the University of Windsor.

I first developed my research proposal in my graduate course, “Qualitative Research Methodology” with Dr. Andrew Allen. With review and approval from Dr. Allen I received permission to submit that research proposal from class to the GRA and RLP. After months of review and delegation from faculty and staff my research proposal application to the GRA was completed. Since my application was this particular thesis proposal and consisted of extensive data collection methods I needed further approval from the University of Windsor Research Ethics Board (REB) for complete acceptance. With further work, amendments, and collaboration

with colleagues and faculty I was able to create an approved REB submission. This in turn provided me with a successful Mitacs Globalink Research Award.

### **Research Procedure Overview**

This qualitative research study attempts to explore the presented research questions by delving into the natural setting of the research phenomenon of second language learning in the context of the English as a Foreign Language program in China. The exploratory study aims to gain valuable data and information in order to then draw possible conclusions and meaning from the different methodologies (Wilson, 1998).

I chose the case study design for this project because I am able to obtain valuable, detailed, and in-depth research data from my participants (Creswell, 2007). The case study method was implemented in order to fully explore the phenomenon through two Chinese EFL teachers and two pre-service teachers. This particular case study design can be described as an instrumental case study because I explored the phenomenon utilizing one case involving four individuals within a bounded system implementing observations, individual interviews, and a document analysis to further illustrate the issue (Creswell, 2007). I argue that my research study utilizes the bounded system of the research sites and time of the research study. All participants are affiliated to the main research site of Southwest University either by having graduated from the university or by currently attending the university. This particular investigation relied heavily on the valuable information portrayed by the participants in their natural environment of the EFL classrooms and in their individual interviews. It is for this reason that a narrative component of research was implemented in order to appropriately capture the lived experiences of the participants in the case study design. The narrative inquiry provided me with the opportunity to

fully explore the participants lived experiences, as well as the passion surrounding English language learning. Using a mini-life story from the participants is an effective tool to provide the audience with a specific contextual focus and lens on the topic of study (Creswell, 2007). This is ideal when investigating the beliefs and practices of the English as a Foreign Language program from teachers and pre-service teacher candidates because these qualities are often rooted in a lifelong history from the individuals.

As the researcher using a narrative inquiry approach, I immersed myself within both the natural setting and the group of the classrooms in two Southwestern schools located in China. I became a participant observer within the school classrooms which served as the primary means of data collection for the study (Creswell, 2007). The observations and participation within the English as a Foreign Language classrooms served as a framework for the interview discussions from the two EFL teacher participants. Interviews with the EFL teachers gave valuable insight into the teachers' past and present teaching histories and through a personal lens provided pedagogical insight on the current English language learning program in China. The interviews with the two EFL pre-service teacher candidates served as an essential method of data collection in order to gain different perspectives from the teacher candidates. The document analysis also supported the data collection by providing evidence of teaching policy, practice, and most importantly teaching resources. The research methods chosen have helped me understand the environment and circumstance of the Chinese EFL context.

In order to successfully *triangulate* the data, I incorporated three means of data collection including observations, individual interviews and a document analysis. Triangulating the data collection process contributes to the validity of the research results by encompassing multiple methods and sources in the investigation (Farmer, Robinson, Elliott & Eyles, 2006).

Furthermore, there is great emphasis on the aspect of reciprocity with myself and the participants within the study. The idea of reciprocity is the exchange of information where both the researcher, participants, and even bystanders are taking away valuable information during the experience (Creswell, 2007). Taking all the information presented above into consideration the study utilizes a qualitative case study design exploring the chosen participants and research sites.

### **Research Sites and Participants**

**Research sites.** Through participating in the Canada-China Teacher Education Reciprocal Learning Program, with support from the University of Windsor and Southwest University (SWU), I was able to travel to the proposed site of study. To follow the three-month requirement of the Mitacs Globalink Research Award, Dr. Xu expanded the one and half month China study trip with Drs. Shijian Chen and Yibing Liu at SWU. This three-month study trip included two local school placements, involvement in SWU classes, and cultural learnings. In order to protect the identity of the research sites pseudonyms have been used. Therefore, the research sites have been established as Southwest University, Primary School, and Secondary School. The two school placements within Primary School and Secondary School served as a gateway into the data collection methods for my own research study. All gatekeepers such as school administrators, principals, and teachers were notified of the research study via invitation letters, consent forms, and the utilization of the established connection between the RLP. Southwest University (SWU) and the RLP have granted me access to the local schools.

Each school placement was conducted Monday to Friday ranging from a three to five-week period. Southwest University also acted as the main research site for the study because potential pre-service teacher participants were enrolled at SWU. Furthermore, all research

participants fall under the same bounded system of Southwest University, meaning that all participants and sites have a deep-rooted connection to the central institution of Southwest University. The university acts as a large community encompassing schools, teachers, professors and students.

**Primary school.** Primary School was my home for approximately 5 weeks. I made the 20-minute walk to school no matter the weather conditions, even through scorching humidity, rain, or fog. The school is situated in the heart of the Beibei district of Chongqing, China. A vast amount of tall apartment and business buildings surround the school campus with a lush green atmosphere in a sub-tropical climate. The gated and patrolled campus of the school encompasses three large buildings with hundreds of different classrooms and facilities. The main entrance of the campus has a patrolled gate allowing only permitted individuals inside the school.

Primary School contains approximately 3.5 thousand students on campus with 400 faculty, staff, and administration. The school accommodates grades 1-6 offering a wide variety of subjects from mathematics, Chinese, English, and music to society class, physical education, calligraphy, art, and many more. These classes are taught by skilled subject-specific teachers that move around rotating classrooms while the students usually remain in one classroom throughout majority of the school day. Additionally, the structure of the school itself is organized by grades and classes where each floor level of the building contains a different grade. This made it much easier to find my way around the school.

*I walked up the stairs with my Canadian pre-service teacher cohort and found that the entire school staff and students were outside in the main courtyard area. There were thousands of students all looking forward to the principal giving the weekly Monday morning announcements. The entire school then proceeded to sing not only the Chinese national anthem but also the school song. What is important to note is that this entire assembly was being done outside and even at 9 in the morning it was very hot! (April 20 2015, field notes).*

*A typical, hot, day at Primary School.* As I entered the school I found that the majority of the classrooms themselves looked fairly identical to each other. A classroom consistently contained rows of partner seated desks often organized in boy and girl partners. An average classroom in Primary School contained approximately 45-50 students. The walls of the classrooms were scarcely decorated and every class had a blackboard and smartboard with a projector at the front of the classroom. A television would always be positioned in the top front left corner of the classroom with a Chinese flag sitting at the front middle immediately above the chalkboard. As I had the opportunity to visit many different classrooms in the school, I observed that there would always be a small section on the wall for exemplary student work. However, this section was usually very small and only reserved for the best of the best.

The average school day would begin at 8:20 in the morning with some housekeeping items by the class head teacher and scheduled lessons would promptly commence at 8:30am. The subject specific teacher would arrive in the classroom and begin instruction immediately in order to use the entire 40-minute class time. The students, ranging from grades 1 to 6, often had six different subject classes per day with 4 in the morning and 2 in the afternoon. These subject classes would rotate throughout the week however subjects such as mathematics and Chinese took place every day. Other subjects such as society, physical education, music, calligraphy, art, and science were spread out during the week. Additionally, students had English class twice a week in grades 1 and 2 and three times a week in grades 3, 4, 5 and 6.

*The walls of the classroom are bleak white allowing the bright green and blue desks to stand out. The floors are that typical school tile with a murky green colour. Reminds me of my old school. The classroom contains some student work in a small section on the wall and there are some sort of colourful paper decorations streaming down from the fans. All the students have their own desks which are arranged in a 2, 4, 2 formation with a boy and girl sitting next to each other. (April 20 2015, field notes).*

As Primary School had subject specific teachers, the schedule for a teacher was different than that of a student. All the subject teachers had their own personal desks inside a teacher room specific for that subject. The subject teachers all resided in that room together and often organize lesson plans together, work together, and help each other when needed. A teacher normally teaches their subject 3 times a day to 3 different classes of the same grade. The teacher is required to bring all materials they need with them to the classroom and move around throughout the day. However, classes such as physical education, music, art, and science all have their own rooms or specific locations.

*Secondary School.* The walk to Secondary School took approximately 20 minutes up and down the mountainous region of the Beibei district. The walk also took me along a very distant bridge overlooking a ridge containing many flower and vegetable gardens underneath. Secondary School's campus spreads across a small hill overlooking the local Beibei Jialing River. Even though it is a secondary school the area is truly referred to as a campus containing two separate classroom buildings, sports fields, cafeterias, student accommodations, and teacher/administrative offices. The large campus meant I needed to present my badge at the patrolled front gate prior to entry. However, my face was usually obvious enough that I am no intruder.

The school encompassed thousands of students ranging from grades 7 to 12, and hundreds of school faculty and staff. Similar to Primary School, and nearly any other school in China for that matter, the teachers teach their specific subject to approximately 2-3 classes of one specific grade. In China, one grade can encompass enough students to separate into 8 classes of 50 students! The classrooms in Secondary School contained linear rows of desks and chairs that stretched all the way to the very back of the room and all face the front of the classroom. The

front of the room contained a TV in the top left corner, a cupboard containing books, then a projector screen with a computer in front of it, followed by the chalk board with the Chinese flag immediately in the middle, and then the door. Conveniently, the doorway was always situated at the front of the classroom so that the teacher can enter very easily. Now you may think I am describing just one classroom but this information can be transferred to all of the rooms as they looked nearly identical.

*... The walls of the room are all white with small pockets of exemplary student work. The desks and chairs are all the same brown colour and even the students often wear uniforms. It seems like a jungle of sameness! A foreign visitor can easily get lost in such a place. I really admire the layout of the classroom building as it is very open to the outside. (May 25 2015, field notes).*

Fortunately for me, my classes were all on the ground floor of the four-floored infrastructure. Each floor of the building was designated for a grade level from grade 7 to grade 10. The classrooms themselves were surrounded by walls but all of the hallways were actually outside. In fact, as soon as I stepped outside of the classroom, I was once again surrounded by a lush green and warm atmosphere.

*A 14-hour school day.* At Secondary School a typical school day for the students often stretched from 7:00am all the way to 10 at night. However, this did include many breaks throughout the day to eat and to rest. Students take core subject classes in the morning session of the school day. This means that subjects such as mathematics, English, and Chinese are in the morning with subjects such physical education, history, geography, music, art, and computers rotated in the afternoon portion of the school day. On average, teachers were responsible for providing lessons of their specific subject to 2-3 different classes of the same grade. These two classes range from single or double periods and the teacher may also be responsible for teaching an additional practice class in the morning. Nevertheless, most a teacher's school day was



consumed with marking work books, evaluating students, subject development, and lesson preparations.

*When I entered the ... classroom in the morning [on May 25th] at Secondary School I found the students hidden behind towering amounts of textbooks on their desks. I was informed that some of the students even lived on campus which meant that they would remain studying all the way to even 10pm. I remember my high school experience as being much more fun! (May 25 2015, field notes).*

**Research participants.** Participants of the study were selected from the research sites once access was granted by the RLP in accordance with Southwest University. Within the individual schools, I was allocated to an EFL classroom with an EFL teacher by the RLP and SWU. Potential EFL teacher participants were kindly approached and asked to participate in the study using the appropriate ethical documentation. One EFL teacher was selected from Primary School and one EFL teacher was selected from Secondary School. Once granted access into the research sites all students in the EFL classroom as well as other faculty and staff became bystanders to the research and its participants. The EFL teacher participants acted as the sole participants of the study within the specific school.

The pre-service teacher participants were selected from the Reciprocal Learning Program (RLP). The pre-service teacher candidates were current or past members of the RLP and were current students of the education program at Southwest University. This particular research study implemented a convenience sampling method. The chosen participants shared particular features and characteristics within the bounded system of Southwest University that enhanced the study's central themes, framework, and questions (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls & Ormston, 2014). The following Figure 2 provides a visual of the chosen participants and their school affiliation.

**Figure 2.** Research participant and their affiliated institution.

	Institution		
	Primary School	Secondary School	Southwest University
Teacher			
Ms. Li			
Ms. Chan			
Ms. Yeoh			
Mr. Lee			

*Ms. Li.* After graduating from local Southwest University Ms. Li immediately went to teach at Primary School. She has remained there for 10 years and has always taught English. Furthermore, she has taught English to all the different grades at the school. At the time of the study, Ms. Li taught in the primary division at Primary School. She was responsible for core English class in addition to extra-curricular English. By teaching the extra-curricular English class Ms. Li had the opportunity to teach all of the grades in the school. Similarly, to all the subject specific teachers at Primary School, Ms. Li moved from class to class having to bring all her teaching materials with her. Consistently having to walk the school stairs and hallways during transition time is not an easy task in such as large school with so many students. Ms. Li's minimal teaching materials brought from class to class usually consisted of teaching props such as flash cards and games and a simple USB containing the day's lesson. Ms. Li shared with me how she became deeply passionate about the English language during an interview:

*“Yeah, I think that when I’m a middle school student first I like English songs and so after that I like English because I want to know oh what does it mean about this song. So, I must study English more, yes like that... I like the English music so I want to learn study more English ...”*  
(Interview with Ms. Li, May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2015).

*The teacher seems very approachable. I was able to briefly meet Ms. Li today and introduce myself. It looked like she was very happy to meet me but she also seemed very busy. She quickly packed up her stuff in order to go to another class. (April 22 2015, field notes).*

**Ms. Chan.** Ms. Chan began working at Secondary School immediately following her graduation from the Faculty of Education at Southwest University. In fact, Ms. Chan completed her teaching placement at Secondary School and was hired immediately after graduation. This was Ms. Chan’s fourth year teaching English at the school and first year as a head teacher. Ms. Chan had been teaching the intermediate grades throughout her entire career at Secondary School. Ms. Chan was one of the English teachers responsible for teaching middle school aged classes. Ms. Chan had a very busy schedule throughout the day and maintained a strict regimen. Like the other subject-specific teachers at the school, Ms. Chan moved from class to class from her teacher office, bringing minimal teaching materials. During an interview, Ms. Chan told me how she first started teaching English:

*“English is my second choice but when learn English I find English interesting yeah. Before that time before I became an English major student, I fell in love with English I love it... I think the job [teacher] is suit for me. Yes, because I love I love being with children.”*  
(Interview with Ms. Chan, June 23, 2015).

**Ms. Yeoh.** At the time of the study Ms. Yeoh was a senior pre-service teacher education candidate at Southwest University. Ms. Yeoh had completed her school teaching placement at Secondary School and was continuing her teacher education program at Southwest University. Ms. Yeoh had a major in English education and as a 4<sup>th</sup> year education student had nearly completed her education program and was seeking a teaching position for fall of 2015. She also successfully participated in the Canada-China Reciprocal Learning Program and travelled to the

University of Windsor in fall 2014. Ms. Yeoh's interest for English language learning developed early and her teacher played an important role. In an interview, Ms. Yeoh shared with me her story of learning an important language and the influence of her English teacher:

*“During her [teacher] classes we had chances to get to know English movies, the plays and we watched English films... I think her unique personality and her unique ways of teaching English inspired me and encouraged me to learn better English because I gradually realized English is really an important language in the world....” (Interview with Ms. Yeoh, June 17, 2015)*

**Mr. Lee.** At the time of the study Mr. Lee was a senior pre-service teacher education candidate at Southwest University. He was in his first teaching placement located at Secondary School while also attending classes at Southwest university. Mr. Lee had a major in English education and was a 3<sup>rd</sup> year education student who was passionate about his learning and teaching. At the time of the summer of 2015, Mr. Lee was a new member of the Canada-China Reciprocal Learning Program and was very excited to travel to the University of Windsor, Canada for the 2015 fall semester. Mr. Lee's passion for learning the English language developed at an early age, influenced by school exposure and popular forms of English media in China. In an interview, Mr. Lee shared with me how his passion for English grew:

*“During my middle and primary school first of all I love I love English and I'm pretty sure the reason why I love English is because I love English music... I started to watch American TV series in at grade 6, like 6.” (Interview with Mr. Lee, June 25, 2015)*

Mr. Lee not only enjoyed to learn English but excelled in the subject as well:

*“Always my English grades is yeah is very good according to the examination and also my teachers always say I have a very good pronunciation. In my middle school, I was uh how you say, the delegate in the English subject a great helper of my English teacher.” (Interview with Mr. Lee, June 25, 2015)*

## **Data Collection Methods**

**Method 1: observations.** As mentioned above, I traveled to Southwest University, Chongqing, China alongside the Reciprocal Learning Program in order to take part in school placements and visits during May- July 2015. Two school placements were established with two different school sites. According to the schedule arranged by the RLP, the primary school visit lasted five weeks and the secondary school visit lasted three weeks. For the purpose of the study I became a participant observer which granted me the ability to observe the classroom daily as well as take part in the group's activities and shared experiences (Creswell, 2007). As a narrative inquirer begins a new research project they are in fact beginning a new story (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). "Following Dewey, our principal interest in experience is the growth and transformation in the life story that we as researchers and our participants author" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). While in the midst of conducting the observations, I focused on remembering that the lives of the participants and those I am observing did not begin the day I arrived. The lives of the participants simply continue and the places, communities, and schools are also in the midst when I arrived into the field (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Through my observations, I lived in the three-dimensional space of the lived experiences belonging to myself and the people around me.

During the classroom observations, I observed and recorded, via field note taking, the impact of the implementation of bilingual education and language immersion strategies. The goal when applying immersion in the EFL classrooms in China was to observe the utilization of the spoken language. Specifically, as the researcher, I was looking for student to student and teacher to student English language interactions. Furthermore, I was also looking for any changes in

classroom dynamics, such as student movement at their desks or around the classroom. I also observed the dynamics between males and females in the classroom. Students who were often vocal and would answer questions and participate in classroom discussions were also noted. Classroom leaders, procedures, and activities were also of interest to the study. I also attempted to observe the impact of bilingual education within the classroom discourse. The role of dual language usage and how each language impacts one another was of vital importance to the study. I also observed how the teachers implement the Chinese language as an assistive tool in order to help the understanding and comprehension of English for the students. The teaching resources the teacher used, how often they used them, and when they found it necessary to use them was also important.

Within the classrooms, the students served as bystanders to the study and the main focus was on the Chinese EFL teachers and their behaviours and dynamics in the classroom. Priority during class instruction was to become involved and immersed into the classroom culture rather than to simply be at the back of the classroom writing notes. Field notes were created briefly into a notebook during the class time; however, they were expanded on once observations had been concluded for the day. All field notes of classroom observations were organized as soon as possible after the English class had taken place and stored in a secure computer.

**Method 2: individual interviews.** As I became more familiar in the cultural sharing group of the classroom and gained further trust and rapport with the English teacher I was able to conduct individual interviews. Chinese English as a Foreign Language teachers were approached and kindly asked to participate in the interview process of the research study. The potential EFL teacher participants completed the appropriate ethical documentation prior to the commencement

of further research. This information has been expanded in further detail and can be found in the ethical section of this research project. One official individual interview was conducted with each of the two EFL teacher participants. The interviews with the EFL teachers were both conducted at their desk in their respective English teacher offices at their schools. Throughout the 12-week study duration at Southwest University I was also able to conduct one interview with each of the two Chinese English pre-service teacher participants. These interviews with the EFL pre-service teachers were conducted at a public location agreed upon by both parties, such as a local restaurant or a café.

The purpose of the individual interviews was to explore the teacher/ pre-service teacher beliefs and the existing practices towards implementing an English language learning education program. The EFL teacher was able to reflect and analyze their experiences and interpretations of the implementation of language immersion and bilingual education pedagogy. The interviews of the EFL teachers were built on the day-to-day observations conducted throughout the weeks in their respective classrooms. Additionally, the pre-service teacher participants were able to reflect and critically discuss potential English teaching pedagogy and strategies that they were currently learning or implementing for the first time. All individual interviews were audio recorded, transcribed and disseminated for the purpose of data analysis. Given the nature of the study, casual conversations also occurred throughout my time at the two research site schools. Casual conversations were not recorded and any significant information provided by the participant had gone through the member checking process.

**Method 3: document analysis.** Creswell (2007) recognizes the document analysis method as involving multiple sources of information for the data collection process. A document

can be defined as a source of information including written documents, photographs, posters and maps, oral recordings etc. (Caulley, 1983). In this particular case, all of the documents obtained were official sources of supportive information including teaching resources and materials. It is important to note that during this research investigation, all documents under analysis were supplied voluntarily by the participants to me as the researcher. As the research study was conducted in the country of China, not all documents were freely accessible to a visitor or even translated into the English language. Therefore, the documents used for the analysis were only taken into consideration if supplied by the teacher/ pre-service teacher and the document was written in the English language.

The documents that were examined included both primary and secondary teaching resource materials for English as a Foreign Language teachers and students. Specifically, the documents included English textbooks/ workbooks, power point slides, audio files, and video files for grade 2, grade 5, grade 6, and grade 7. The teaching resource written textbook documents were accompanied with digital audio, video, and power point presentations that were reported through observational notes.

The purpose of analysing the English teaching documents was to gain insight and perspective surrounding the support and direction provided to the EFL teachers. The type of documents included written documents as well as digital teaching supports. I was granted access to the teaching documents by the EFL teacher and their students. However, since an EFL teacher or current student was able to possess an English learning book, I had the opportunity to borrow a copy from a teacher and/ or a student. However, I did not have direct access to the English power point presentations, videos, and audio recordings provided to the teacher. I therefore relied on observational notes as the recording of the data. The document's content was coded and



organized into common themes and categories including unit organization, chapter exercises and activities, photo and digital support, and overall teacher/ student function.

***English teaching support documents.*** As mentioned above, the English teacher support documents were examined with access granted by both the teacher and the student. Both Primary School and Secondary School implemented a similar system where students are required to purchase an English textbook/ workbook where they complete their work throughout the year of lessons. Even though I will refer to these book as ‘textbooks’ they very much incorporate both features of a traditional textbook in addition to a student workbook. The books contained a vast amount of knowledge information in addition to a variety of exercises that the students were required to complete directly in the book. Each student was required to follow along in their personal textbook while the teacher was conducting their lesson. The textbook was developed separate for each grade level (1-12) by the local education governing body (Mr. Lee & Ms. Chan, Interview, 2015). The English teacher was also provided with a similar textbook however the teacher version contained the answers to the problems as well as further instructional materials such as lesson plans and worksheets. Since it is common in China for a teacher to be responsible for one grade level the teacher usually possessed only one grade level textbook.

The textbook itself was organized into a variety of different units depending on the grade level. Different chapters further divided the units into suitable topics and knowledge content. Additionally, the textbook also provided the student with many appendices including vocabulary words of each unit, songs, expressions, proverbs, short-plays, irregular verbs, pronunciation patterns, and more. The textbooks contained a variety of helpful, interactive, and educational items for both students and teachers alike. However, as the content of the textbooks changed

throughout the years, the organization and subsections of the textbooks remain very much similar. In fact, there is a very consistent pattern of exercises and tasks implemented in the textbooks.

### **Data Analysis**

After the completion of all observations, individual interviews, and document analysis, all raw data underwent thorough member checking in order to protect participants and to correct any mistakes. This also allowed the participant to review the information prior to the data analysis process and finalizing the data. All of the research data was organized into 3 main sections, including the classroom observational field notes, interview recordings and transcriptions, and finally the supporting documents analysis. The subsequent documents were thoroughly reviewed and analyzed using effective 'data targeting' in order to appropriately identify the most relevant and important information (Wholey, Hatry, & Newcomer, 2004). I made consistent reference to the established research questions and identified review of literature to guide the analysis/ interpretation process. The data interpretation process began by employing particular coding procedures. Coding involves dividing the data by assigning data clusters into categories using tags or labels of the descriptive information documented during the course of the study (Basit, 2003). 'Open coding' is the process of conceptualising and labeling data by breaking it down into separate units of meaning (Moghaddam, 2006). 'Axial coding' involves the systematic analysis of the separate units by constantly comparing and viewing relationships among the several codes in order gather and reduce them (Moghaddam, 2006). Furthermore, this stage of coding also sees the creation of concepts and ideas (Moghaddam, 2006). This particular

research study has implemented both open and axial coding during the data interpretation process.

**Interpretation of data.** Data analysis and interpretation first stemmed from the observations of the classroom discourses. Through the descriptions and field notes of the classroom group, I analyzed and coded the data in order to identify and develop common themes and categories. The research findings of observations were displayed into common themes which included, but were not limited to, the layout of the classroom, teaching methods, English language use, Chinese language use, teacher and student relationship, teaching materials, etc.

The individual interviews with the EFL teachers and the pre-service teacher candidates were transcribed and organized into a secure file on my personal password protected computer. The interviews were transcribed into a Word document from the audio recording device and were then organized into common themes, practices, attitudes, and beliefs (Creswell, 2007). Once the interviews were transcribed, all of the information was organized into common themes and categories which reflected the observational data collected. At this time, the interview and the observation data were intertwined and the common themes were blended together in order to create a lived experience or story in order to effectively communicate the participants' beliefs and practices of English language learning.

The data collected from the document analysis was used to support the primary data collection methods by adding to the identified themes or supplementing new themes. Educational documents analyzed brought forth new themes such as teacher and student resources, teacher reliance on resources, government mandated/ developed resources, government policies, government tests, etc.

## **Ethical Considerations**

The project of research has undergone successful ethical review from the Research Ethics Board (REB) at the University of Windsor. This particular study has completed an approved REB as a sub-project within the larger SSHRC partnership-grant project which has already received REB approval from the University of Windsor. Throughout the following section I intend to briefly summarize the primary component of the ethical considerations taken to make this research study possible.

I have conducted my research and collected data in the country of China within the Beibei district of Chongqing with the guidance of the Reciprocal Learning Program, home University of Windsor, host Southwest University, and Mitacs. There currently is no official ethics board at Southwest University or the local government so I was not required to have Chinese ethics documentation. However, because my study stems from the University of Windsor and because I personally felt it was necessary, I completed and passed an ethics review prior to the commencement of the research project. The REB application was built on and contextualized within the large SSHRC Partnership Project REB protocol.

Prior to any commencement of research, the research sites and participants were given an invitation letter and a consent form to participate in the research project describing the research and its components. The invitation letter briefly described the research project to the potential participant in both English and Chinese languages. I also required a completed consent form from all of the participants that acknowledged their willing consent to participate in the research project. The consent form included a summary of the research study and concluded with a section for the participant to sign. The consent form also included a section of participation that allowed the potential participant to select between classroom observations, individual interviews

or both components of research. Potential pre-service teacher candidates only had the option to participate in the individual interview component while the EFL teachers were able to participate in both components of research. Participation in research was completely voluntary and participants had the right to withdraw any time up until the point of data dissemination. I obtained oral and written informed consent prior to beginning research. Informed consent was monitored and continued through the member checking process.

Due to the nature of the study, participants and bystanders were informed of my presence as well as the role of a participant observer. All raw data collected from the three different collection methods had undergone member checking prior to data dissemination. The purpose of member checking with the participant was to verify and clarify all information for accuracy and consistency. This particular study presented minimal to low risk however all participants were informed of any potential social or psychological risk by partaking in the study. Anonymity was not achieved during the process of data collection. However, I have ensured confidentiality in all transcripts, data analysis, and research reports by using pseudonyms, so that participants' real identities will not be revealed. Any information that was obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with a participant will remain confidential and will not be disclosed to a third party. Finally, only completed and transcribed data will be shared with the Reciprocal Learning Program and the larger SSHRC partnership project.

## CHAPTER FOUR: THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

### Introduction

This qualitative case study has been built around the four participants, all either current or up-and-coming English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers having studied at Southwest University and teaching at local Primary School or Secondary School. The data was gathered for this study through extensive observations of the EFL teachers, in-depth interviews, and a supportive document analysis implementing a narrative inquiry. This research findings chapter will describe the data retrieved from the three data collection methods.

The Findings chapter begins by identifying the emerging themes and sub-themes from the data and provides valuable information on the various topics. The first section explores the theme of teachers' beliefs, including the importance of developing and maintaining the students' interest. The next section identifies the emerging teaching practices from the EFL teachers, such as the use of language immersion, utilization of bilingual education, and the implementation of unique teaching strategies. The third section examines the integration of EFL teaching resources in the English classroom. The final section concludes the Findings section by delving into a discourse revolving around the influence of English Curriculum Standards on teaching practice. The data developed in the observations, interviews, and document analysis were understood and analyzed within the three-dimension space of the narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). To protect all participants and school sites pseudonyms have been used in order to hide their identity.

## Teacher's Beliefs about EFL Pedagogy

### Student Interest is Paramount

**Developing the students' interest.** During the EFL class observations of Ms. Li and Ms. Chan I was able to take note of how the EFL teachers developed and maintained the students' interests during lessons and especially the English language.

The day was April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2015 and Ms. Li introduced a new restaurant unit to her class at Primary School. Ms. Li put on her chef hat and said "welcome to my new canteen" as she put up a poster displaying the name 'Happy Eating' (April 28, 2015, field notes). Chef Li then put up pictures of different food items such as a banana, an apple, rice, noodles, chicken and much more. She then invited any student that wanted to come visit her restaurant as customers. The hands from majority of the students shot up in the air. Ms. Li began the role play:

*Li: Are you thirsty or are you hungry?*

*Student: I am thirsty.*

*L: Do you want tea?*

*S: No thanks, I want juice.*

*L: Here you go.*

*S: Thank you!" (Drink imaginary beverage). (April 29 2015, field notes)*

Ms. Li even invited some volunteers to put on the chef hat and become the restaurant owner. There were as many as 10 students at the front of the classroom performing the best they could. Ms. Li remained on the side near the front assisting the students with their English phrases. Proceeding the role play activity at the front stage Ms. Li had all the students separate into what looked like pre-arranged groups. The groups consisted of 4 members comprised of 2 boys and 2 girls. Following the instructions in both English and Chinese, the students immediately stood up from their chairs and got together with their group mates. The task was to simply continue the restaurant activity within their groups. As I walked around the class I could see the students interacting with each other, pointing to food items in their books and on the

board, and pretending to eat and drink the restaurant items. I could also hear the English phrases being attempted mixed in with the native tongue of Chinese.

*Today's English class looked like a ton of fun for the students and even the teacher! At the end of the class I could hear all the ooohs and ahhs from the students as they were reluctant to end English class. Ms. Li clapped her hands twice yelled out SUPER with two thumbs up and concluded the class. (April 28 2015, field notes).*

During an interview with Ms. Li she shared a story about her belief of building students' interest in the English language as well as strengthening their intrinsic motivation:

*"... Last year I teach grade 6, yeah I told them that maybe you don't like English but you want to play the computer game always. I think almost every computer game yes, they write it in English if you want to be good play this game you must know more English... For some girls, I say do you like music, yeah, ok you can listen to some beautiful music I sing that song 'a little love' I teach the whole grade 6 this song. I think they like that music maybe they want to study more English and some students like they like playing sports like playing football or basketball. So, I say you like in your heart who is your superstar they say maybe he or she say that David Beckham oh yeah, he's, he is English he speaks English so if you like him study harder and harder maybe in the future you can go to England oh you meet oh David Beckham you can say hi!" (Interview with Ms. Li, May 4, 2015).*

During my observational time in Ms. Chan's classroom at Secondary School I could also see her attempting to capture the interest of her students. It was my first day observing one of Ms. Chan's English classes on Monday May 25<sup>th</sup> 2015. Ms. Chan began class with a very inspiring music video of the song entitled 'You Raise Me Up'. The class fell silent throughout the entirety of the music video even though there were English subtitles provided for the students. When the video was complete Ms. Chan asked the class what they thought of the song and what they thought it meant. Some of the answers from the students included; "I liked it", "It was sad", "It encourages me to work hard".

*... I even had goosebumps at the beginning of Ms. Chan's class today. She began class with such a touching introduction ... It was very fascinating to gain the perspectives from the students about what they thought of the song. Many students actually said it was very encouraging to work hard. After the video, Ms. Chan transitioned to her lesson. (May 25 2015, field notes).*



Ms. Chan began class with a music video often and another honourable mention has to be the song entitled 'See you Again'. Fast-forward to June 1st and Ms. Chan surprised the class by showing them pictures of a particular young scholar at the local Southwest University. In accordance with the specific unit, the students were encouraged to specifically describe the young woman in terms of physical appearance such as height, build, hair, and features. It was not before long the students realized that the person in the picture was in fact Ms. Chan! The whole class of 52 students had smiles on their faces and even turned towards their friends to make a quick chat.

*"... Yes, first I think student must be very tired after having several classes so it's a way for them to relax and second, I think umm singing songs can hmm can raise the interest the interest yeah and the third the third reason is I think it's a way to practice their oral English... Yeah, they know how to pronounce a word or maybe a sentence from learning the song, so that's the reason." (Interview with Ms. Chan, June 23, 2015).*

The two pre-service English as a Foreign Language teachers, Ms. Yeoh and Mr. Lee, also communicated their beliefs about the importance of developing the students' interest of the English language. In Mr. Lee's English higher grade lessons at Secondary School, he often emphasized gearing the lesson toward interesting concepts for his students. Mr. Lee often encouraged speaking English in class and allowed them to speak freely. In an interview, he pointed out some of his teaching strategies:

*"Interviewer: How do you emphasize the speaking in class?"*

*Mr. Lee: So, some topic that is close to their life but also associated with the passage we're reading or the listening. Sometimes its topic situations, some real-life situations, help to practice, and some very helpful expressions.*

*Interviewer: Do you help them [students] with their speaking like pronunciation?"*

*Mr. Lee: Oh, during the spoken English while their speaking I won't interrupt and I barely point out their grammatical mistakes. The only thing I want them to achieve is their fluency and their confidence to speak, yes so, I won't interrupt. I only appreciate their idea." (Interview with Mr. Lee, June 25, 2015)*

For Ms. Yeoh the concept of gaining the students' interest was of utmost importance. Especially in the lower grades Ms. Yeoh strove to make English fun and engaging.

*“They're all lower grade students so it's not about a lot of knowledge, it's about activities, it's about how you make the students love English and they want to join your activities.” (Interview with Ms. Yeoh, June 17, 2015)*

Both the experienced EFL teachers and the pre-service teacher candidates found it important to develop the English language learner's interest of the English language.

Furthermore, the EFL teachers also believed in the importance of not only developing the students' interest but also maintaining that interest for effective English language learning.

**Maintaining students' interest.** Throughout their English lesson and individual interviews the teachers believed that captivating the students' interest was a key method to engage the student into their English class. I was very impressed that the teachers not only began their lesson to motivate their students to learn but they also maintained this high level of participation throughout my time at their respective schools. In their view, student interest provided them with a framework to build upon the necessary vocabulary and grammar.

In addition to core English classes at Primary School, Ms. Li was also responsible for an extra-curricular English speaking class. This class contained students from grades 1-6 and with Ms. Li facilitating exciting lessons. On April 30<sup>th</sup>, Ms. Li entered the classroom, walked up to a student sitting nearby and prompted the start of the lesson immediately.

*“Ms. Li: Hello, how are you?  
Student: I'm fine thank you.” (April 30 2015, field notes)*

Ms. Li walked around the classroom and greeted many of the students. The students waved their hands in the air and began to stand as they prepared to be chosen by the teacher. Ms. Li then transitioned into a very enthusiastic song entitled 'How are you?' The song included many

repetitions of the greeting and every student was on their feet singing with Ms. Li. Even with over 50 students in the class I could still hear Ms. Li leading the way. The next song entitled ‘Angels Watching over me’ was first broken down by Ms. Li requiring the boys, girls, and different rows/ columns to repeat the lyrics. Once the music started and the students knew the lyrics there was a large smile on everyone’s face.

*“Because at this time they are very little they always want to oh I want to happy oh I want to play more games in English class. They like English class they like me because they can play some games interesting games in English class so they like English.” (Interview with Ms. Li, May 4, 2015).*

Let’s move forward towards the end of the observations in Ms. Chan’s class at Secondary School and we can still see how actively engaged the students continued to be. It was June 11<sup>th</sup> and the school year was slowly coming to a close. However, Ms. Chan’s English classes were only becoming more exciting! A group of four students began the oral English class by demonstrating a small play. One student emerged from the side of the room dressed as a wolf while another student came from the back of the class with a large red scarf over their head. The Power Point presentation came on entitled ‘Red Riding Hood’ and with the commencement of the English narration the group began telling us the old story. The audience members and even Ms. Chan giggled at times as they were captivated by the performance.

*“Act, act [role play] is just an activity to umm to what to raise student’s interests. Yeah because they are new learners so I think interests are very important for them. So yeah I have a lot of activities for them.” (Ms. Chan, June 23 2015, Interview).*

As the end of the school term was fast approaching, Ms. Chan continued the utilization of English into her core English class following the oral class. In fact, Ms. Chan conducted the entire lesson in English and encouraged more students to participate in new role-play communicative activities.

In front of the entire class two young pupils delivered their made-up restaurant themed conversation:

*“Student 1: Good afternoon. May I have your order?”*

*Student 2: Yes, please. I'd like some noodles.*

*S 1: What kind of noodles would you like?*

*S 2: I'd like beef and tomato noodles.*

*S 1: What size bowl of noodles would you like?*

*S 2: I'd like a medium bowl.*

*S 1: Ok. What else would you like?*

*S 2: I'd like some mutton, carrots and peas please.*

*S 1: Ok. Wait a moment. “ (June 11 2015, field notes)*

The conclusion of the performance was met with thunderous applause from the other students and especially Ms. Chan. As with all kinds of teaching, every day is not the same or even similar to a day like June 11<sup>th</sup> for Ms. Chan.

Maintaining and developing the students' interests of the English language and translating that into class participation was not always an easy task. It proved to be more difficult for Ms. Chan at the intermediate level than it proved to be for Ms. Li at the primary level. In her class, Ms. Chan often encouraged her students to participate in English role play activities, games, and discussions. However not every class was so successful.

On June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2015 Ms. Chan asked for volunteer pairs to present their conversations in front of the class. A calm silence fell over the class as no hands were lifted into the air. Ms. Chan took her time before she began to scold the class for not participating. She began to walk up and down in-between the desks of the classroom as she informed the students how it is important to participate in class and to use their English oral skills. This event made me reflect on my educational experience in Canada. At the age level of intermediate or high school I also remember limited participation from the class and even myself. Perhaps this was simply a phase for the students at that age. But what I do not remember was that same reaction from the teacher.

A Canadian teacher would seldom react like that towards the entire class and give them a scolding. Most often the Canadian teacher would simply move on to a different topic. Did Ms. Chan display a sort of passion for her students and subject that other teachers may have not?

*“... I think this problem always exists in our English classes. Actually, I think students can speak. Yeah, they can speak well but they are afraid of standing up maybe they think it’s shameful to hands up and stand up because someone will laugh at him or her. Yeah, students are really shy in their age. So, I have to encourage sometimes, sometimes umm push I think push them to speak, push them to hands up yeah because I like the classes which is very active... Yeah, yes so, I think then if students always keep quite they’re emotion may be kind of low. So, I think speak out and act out can make them to really join in the English and enjoy the class.” (Interview with Ms. Chan, June 23, 2015).*

As it is a common shared belief to develop and maintain the students’ English language learning interest, this can be a very challenging and demanding task for the EFL teachers.

**Interest is demanding.** Creating a unique, engaging, and fun class to gain and most importantly maintain the interests of the students is not a simple task. In fact, maintaining the interest of the students is very demanding for both EFL teachers Ms. Li and Ms. Chan. During the interviews both teachers explained to me how exhausted they have become whilst attempting to keep their students happy and interested in the English language.

Ms. Li shared with me how she feels tired after classes as she is responsible for so many students:

*“You see I’m very active but I think I’m a little tired because the students so many students one class we have so many students. In our classroom, there are so many students you see that not everyone ... always that not every student can speak and can remember the new knowledge the new words the new sentence ohh what can I do.” (Interview with Ms. Li, May 4, 2015).*

Similarly, Ms. Chan informs me that a lot of her teaching responsibilities need to be done at home during her free time in order to keep up with the high demands of lessons and homework:

*“Ms. Chan: ... Because I can't do everything at school. At school, hmm I just give the students lesson and mark homework. Because there is much homework and they are more than 100 students, yeah in the two classes so I have spent a lot of time marking the homework... yeah actually yes, it is umm every day I prepare my lesson at home.”*  
*(Interview with Ms. Chan, June 23, 2015).*

As demanding as teaching English and maintaining the students' interest can be, it can be done effectively in harmony with the curriculum and mandated teaching strategies. The interactive role plays, games, and discussions are excellent tools to use when implementing language learning teaching practices. The teacher's beliefs, classroom examples, and interview dialogues discussed throughout this section consistently influence and impact the teaching practices of the EFL teachers.

## **EFL Teachers' English Teaching Practices**

### **Language Immersion Practice in the Lessons**

**“I provide students a lot of chances to speak!** “At Primary School, especially in the primary grades, Ms. Li strongly believed that the students significantly benefited from being immersed in the English language through speaking and listening. During my time in Ms. Li's classroom I was able to observe the many times she incorporated language immersion strategies in order to engage the students in the English language.

The day was May 4th and Ms. Li walked into class skipping holding a shopping bag. Ms. Li informed the class that she went shopping yesterday and bought lots of new items! She arrived with many different coloured bags and asked the class to tell her what colour the bags were. Blue, yellow, green, and red the students called out from their seats. The students began to glare up from their seats in order to attempt to look what was in the shopping bags. Ms. Li asked the class to repeat the colours after her so the volume of the class increased even more. Ms. Li

reached into the bags and took out the different pictures of clothing items such as t-shirt, shorts, and pants and stuck them on the board. The clothing items and colours also appeared on the power point presentation and students began to repeat the colours and clothing items after Ms. Li. First row called out, second column called out, boys called out, girls called out and after the practice a new phrase appeared on the chalk board. ‘I like your blue shirt’, ‘I like your red dress’, ‘I like your yellow shorts’ etc. it sayed on the board. Not before long Ms. Li was walking around the classroom choosing different students to participate in conversation with her assistance.

*“Ms. Li: Do you like my blue shirt?  
Students: I like your blue shirt.  
Li: Thank you!”*

*“Ms. Li: Do you like my green t-shirt?  
Students: I like your green t-shirt?  
Li: Thank you!”(May 4 2015, field notes)*

*“Today’s English was very engaging. I can see that every student wanted to participate in Ms. Li’s role play activity. Even at the primary level Ms. Li spoke English for the entire class. She was able to use props or teaching resources to aid her lesson very well. (May 4 2015, field notes)*

At the intermediate grade in Ms. Chan’s class the persistent use of English during class time and lessons continued to remain very important. Ms. Chan focused her class time on engaging the class with listening and speaking exercises every day. It was May 26<sup>th</sup> 2015 and Ms. Chan began her class with an introductory music video promptly followed by communicative exercises. An audio recording played on the PowerPoint presentation describing a conversation about directions and locations:

*Male: Is there a supermarket near here?*

*Female: Yes, there is. Go along Bridge Street and turn left when you see the library. Go along Long Street and it’s on your right.*

*M: Thanks.*

*F: You’re welcome. (May 26 2015, field notes)*

Proceeding the recording, Ms. Chan had all of the student’s role play the activity with their seating partners. The students immediately began practicing their conversations with each other and Ms. Chan and I were able to facilitate the class by walking around the room. The following

conversation I heard was assisted by the audio recordings, the passages written in the student's English textbook, and using their own imagination:

*“Student 1: There is a clothes store near my home.*

*Student 2: Where is it?*

*S 1: It's next to the bank on bridge road.*

*S 2: How can I get there?*

*S 1: Go along Bridge Street and it's across from the library.*

*S 2: Thank you.” (May 26 2015, field notes)*

*“I think in my class the most important is listening and speaking at these stage ... so I focus more on listening and speaking and because we have a lot of exams we do pay attention to grammars, yeah we do a lot of exercises. Yeah, but when I teach in the new languages I provide students a lot of chances to speak and maybe act! Yeah so I think I pay much attention to listening and speaking.” (Interview with M. Chan, June 23, 2015).*

Fast forward a few days and it was May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2015. It was the continuation of a new unit and even the humidity and rain outside could not change the positive atmosphere inside the classroom. However, class that day began with a setback as the computer/ projector was not functioning adequately. While the technology was being repaired Ms. Chan improvised and began class with an engaging exercise. Ms. Chan thought of a student in the room and the students had to pose questions to her in order to correctly eliminate other students and correctly guess who she was thinking of. When the students eventually got the correct answer many of them cheered and slapped hands with their neighbour. Ms. Chan continued with this lesson by having elbow partners describe each other in their pair groups. Furthermore, Ms. Chan then chose volunteering partner groups to describe each other in front of the whole class. The 52 students in the class were focused on the presenters when it was their turn and even helped correct pronunciation and vocabulary.

*... Then Ms. Chan revealed the hidden name of the student who it was and the entire class cheered. The students really liked this activity and had a lot of fun with it. Following the Power Point Ms. Chan then got into the key learning points of the lesson such as the grammar and*



*tenses. For example, Ms. Chan went over wore vs. wears and has vs. had and is... (May 29 2015, field notes).*

## **The Practice of Bilingual Education**

The four Chinese English teachers, all developed a unique balance between the Chinese and the English languages. As English teachers, the educators focused on developing the students' English language interest by creating an immersing English classroom environment. Additionally, the teachers utilized the bilingual strategy whenever the students needed further instructions or assistance.

**Utilizing a balance of English and Chinese.** Continuing with the story from April 29<sup>th</sup> at Primary School, Ms. Li was in the process of playing the interactive video of the mouse food and drink party. After reviewing the video Ms. Li facilitated a group activity where student's role played the story of the mouse at the party. Instructions for the activity were first spoken by Ms. Li in English and then repeated in Chinese for clarification. During the activity, Ms. Li would walk up and down the narrow spaces between desks and monitor the student's speaking ability. Additionally, Ms. Li often assisted the students by encouraging them to speak slowly, repeat the word for them, and offer Chinese translations whenever needed. In an interview, Ms. Li expressed her thoughts on the fact that English is a foreign language in China and not often spoken outside the classroom:

*“When we say English in the class the students maybe some students cannot understand me. Ok so I say in Chinese because they can understand. In our China, we don't speak English everyday so for the students it's that, but I think in English class we speak English more I think it's better.” (Interview with Ms. Li, May 4, 2015).*

As a final task for the students Ms. Li divided the students into groups and they were expected to practice a role-play activity. The students were guided by the dialogue for the different

characters that was written within their textbook. Some of the groups even presented their role-play in front of the teacher and class the very same lesson. Ms. Li also approached students in order ask them to practice the phrases with her. During the English lectures, some of the students did not participate very much or very minimally. For these students, Ms. Li communicated with them in English and in Chinese on a more one on one basis.

*“I tell them[students] about that don’t be shy speak out say out. I always tell them that its ok you don’t know, that you must study you know, that you study what right so I hope they could speak more and be brave.” (Interview with Ms. Li, May 4, 2015).*

**“I speak English and speak Chinese less”.** Students at the intermediate level at Secondary School also require Chinese assistance when learning the English language. At Secondary School, Ms. Chan did use English much more than Ms. Li at Primary School. However, Ms. Chan always found it necessary to utilize the Chinese language as a bilingual support.

On the morning of May 27<sup>th</sup>, the tone to signify the start of class echoed throughout the building and Ms. Chan immediately followed into the room. She began with another music video and upon its completion, without hesitation, Ms. Chan began working on an English passage from the workbook. Ms. Chan first read through the passage in English making sure to read it aloud slowly while carefully enunciating each word. As this passage was a new phrase discussing new vocabulary and grammar about navigation Ms. Chan translated the passage out loud in Chinese. Ms. Chan often looked at individual students as she broke down the passage sentence by sentence and word by word. Speaking English Ms. Chan wrote on the board:

*Get-to someplace*

*Arrive-at/ in someplace*

*Reach-someplace*

*(May 27 2015, field notes)*

Ms. Chan moved through the passage very slowly and continued to pause to recognize grammar, define vocabulary, and allow students to practice saying the phrase aloud. Throughout the lecture, Ms. Chan remained at the front of the classroom while instructing in both English and Chinese.

*Ms. Chan is using more Chinese than normal during her lecture today. I believe that this must be a first-time lesson of this topic for the students. (May 27, field notes)*

Ms. Chan and I had a very detailed discussion about the bilingual component of English language learning during an interview. Ms. Chan shared with me her thoughts about using Chinese in the EFL setting:

*“Ms. Chan: I think because the students are in different levels yeah someone’s English is good but someone’s English is poor because some of them haven’t learned English before so if I always speak English they will be puzzled and they will lose confidence. I think so I think I most of the time I will translate. Yeah umm in this term I speak English and speak Chinese less but in the first term I always speak English and translate, yeah. And in this term if students don’t understand what I said I will translate again. Yeah if I ask student to do the activity but no one give me response I know that they didn’t understand me.*

*Researcher: What kind of response would they give you?*

*Chan: They just stay here and don’t say anything and don’t have umm expressions on their faces then I know they didn’t understand me yeah.”*

*(Interview with Ms. Chan, June 23, 2015)*

## **English Teaching Strategies**

**The little teacher.** As we continue to explore the weeks of observational notes and the individual interviews we have already learned some of the teaching strategies utilized by Ms. Li at Primary School and Ms. Chan at Secondary School. We will now take a closer look into one of Ms. Li’s most frequently used teaching strategy of using a teacher assistant known to her as the ‘little teacher’.

The day was April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015 which I recall being yet another very hot and humid day in the Beibei district of China. Even during my walk to school, I felt my pants begin to stick to my

legs. Ms. Li's presence was immediately known when she walked into the classroom as the soft tone to signal the beginning of class was heard throughout the school. She greeted us Canadians with a large smile and waved towards the back of the classroom where we were sitting eagerly awaiting the lesson. Ms. Li began class by inviting the pre-arranged "little teacher" (a teacher helper) to review some vocabulary from the unit and their previous class. The boy excitedly stood up in front of the entire class and began reciting "hungry", "thirsty", "juice", etc. The boy made sure to repeat each word twice and then allow his fellow classmates to do the same. Ms. Li thanked the helper and began a small applause followed by shouting out 'super' with two thumbs up with the class.

Ms. Li continued the lesson by calling out more vocabulary words and even some phrases. "Rice", "I'm hungry", "I'm thirsty" she would call out and wait for the class to repeat. Ms. Li walked up and down the little space in-between the rows of desks and asked only the boys to repeat, only the girls, only the first row, or only the first column of students etc. The doors of the room had to be shut as the teacher and the students were shouting loudly.

*Ms. Li walked around the entire classroom while reviewing the vocabulary words. Ms. Li had to squeeze through the narrow space but her excitement and joy encouraged all of the students to participate! She even put on a chef hat whilst going over the words as they were doing a restaurant unit. (Researcher, April 22 2015, field notes).*

In an interview with Ms. Li she informed me about some of her intentions for using the 'little teacher' strategy, some of her teaching struggles, and motivations:

*"I want to help him [struggling student] and I want to find him little teacher to help him but I think hmm ... the little teacher is very little very young yeah they're very little so I think I think I help him I think more use. But I have about 17 class each week I always say I'm not very free for about my time."*

*"I think it's just a little knowledge the words the sentences it's just a little simple. After I teach them the new knowledge we play some games and practice and make them happy and they want to use the new knowledge and the sentences." (Interview with Ms. Li, May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2015).*

**“After me please”.** With the intermediate level students Ms. Chan consistently attempted to relate the English language to the world of her students. By bringing English to them at their level Ms. Chan facilitated conversation with her students very freely.

It was May 26<sup>th</sup> and Ms. Chan’s English class came across an interesting passage within the English workbook. The statement was; ‘the best things in life are free’. Ms. Chan led the class in a conversation about what exactly did that statement really mean. Students responded by elaborating about their family and friends. Additionally, that same day Ms. Chan sparked another conversation revolving around the current unit of navigation. The students believed that it was important to learn directions and locations for travel and for communication. In an interview, Ms. Chan shared with me her opinion on taking a break from vocabulary and grammar and spending some time on the meaning of understanding:

*“From the curriculum, we know what we should teach yeah some maybe some skills some language points and maybe some hmm some cultural things, culture things. Yeah maybe some values.” (Interview with Ms. Chan, June 23, 2015).*

Ms. Chan also frequently utilized a call and repeat strategy to help her students pronounce English words while engaging the class conversation. The morning of May 26 began with a more grammar and vocabulary directed lesson. The class called out and repeated after Ms. Chan as she went through the vocabulary words from the English textbook. Ms. Chan used a similar strategy as she moved on to the more comprehensive English sentences. This particular unit involved communicating directions and locations. Ms. Chan called out “the bank is near my house”, “the supermarket is next to the bank”, “the restaurant is on your left across from the payphone”, “the hotel is on New Street” and the students repeated after her.

*All of the students are closely following along in their English workbooks as Ms. Chan reads out the English phrases. The students immediately repeat after her. The students actually repeat the phrase twice and to my amazement the class projects in absolute unity. (May 26 2015, field notes).*

On May 28<sup>th</sup>, with the start of a new unit, Ms. Chan walked into the classroom and dropped her teaching material on her desk. She quickly started up the computer and projector and began her lesson by introducing her class to new vocabulary and phrases. The new unit involved students describing people using physical features. Ms. Chan started the lesson:

*After me please; “He is... She Is... She has...” “Small build... Large build... Short... Tall... Glasses... Dark hair... Brown hair... Small nose... Large eyes...”*  
*The class repeats the phrases after Ms. Chan. (May 28 2015, field notes)*

Ms. Chan asked only the girls or the boys to repeat, then certain groups to repeat, or specific rows and columns to repeat. When a student raised their hand Ms. Chan also allowed the student to lead the class in the repeat exercise. This responsibility was passed to about three different students who would stand up and project loudly to the class when they were leading.

Throughout the previous section, we explored the different and unique teaching practice methods of the EFL teachers. We began to discover the connection between the primary teacher beliefs and how they translate into the EFL teacher’s teaching practices. The teachers consistently implemented English communication, bilingual balance, and unique teaching strategies that promoted class participation. In the next section, we begin to discover any possible influences of the EFL teaching resources.

### **Integration of EFL Teaching Resources**

**Using teaching resources in language immersion.** The utilization of teaching resources such as student textbooks and Power Point presentations in the English classroom was consistent throughout the different English classes. Both Ms. Li and Ms. Chan made use of these resources on a daily basis. On April 29<sup>th</sup>, Ms. Li provided me with a typical example of using her teaching resources.

Ms. Li entered the classroom as the tone prompts the start of the next class. The entire class of 50 students clapped their hands together and warmly welcomed their English teacher into the classroom. Ms. Li immediately began class by speaking English and welcoming the students back to her restaurant called ‘Happy Eating’. “After me everyone” (April 29, 2015, field notes) Ms. Li says to her students as they review the unit’s vocabulary. Ms. Li remained on the word ‘thirsty’, ‘I’m thirsty’ as the students were having troubles pronouncing the word. She also held up the pictures of the word and the picture for all the students to see. Ms. Li even came up to individual students in order to help with pronunciation. “Super!” double clap with thumbs up and Ms. Li concluded the vocabulary exercise.

At the front of the classroom Ms. Li proceeded to inform the students that they will be taking turns being the restaurant owner by putting on the chef hat and asking potential customers what items they would like to enjoy. Ms. Li paused and then repeated the instructions for the class in Chinese. The excitement from the students can be seen as they became restless in their chairs and quickly turn to their friends to make a comment. Ms. Li chose the first volunteer, put on their chef hat, and gave them their tray with the pictures of food. The volume in the class decreased as all of the students were looking toward the two presenters.

*“Student 1: Hello, are you hungry?”*

*Student 2: Yes*

*S1: Do you want chicken?*

*S2: No, I want noodles please.*

*S1: Here.*

*S2: Thank you.”*

*(April 29 2015, field notes)*

Ms. Li then prepared the power point presentation to play the interactive video of a mouse food and drink party. The students quickly turned to the corresponding page in their textbooks in order to follow along with the video. Fortunately for our thirsty protagonist mouse this party included lots of different kinds of drinks such milk, tea, juice etc. However, the party was cut short with





The grade six English textbook welcomes the reader with a cover containing a boy and some cute animals. Additionally, the table of contents introduces the reader to the different units and even the different characters they will meet throughout the book such as Wu Yifan, Amy, Mike, Sarah, Robin the Robot, and even Zip the squirrel.

Unit one entitled, “How tall are you?” contained many English language learning practice exercises that are consistent with the English textbooks all throughout the primary grades. The predominant learning goals of the textbooks focus on English listening, writing, speaking, and reading skills by engaging the students through various activities. These activities include exercises such as ‘let’s try’ (listen & circle), ‘let’s talk’ (speaking exercise), ‘let’s learn’ (listening), ‘read and write’ (writing), ‘let’s check’ (listen & answer), and much more. In unit one these exercises follow a common learning theme such as communicating sizes of people, animals, and things. Unit one allows the students to follow along the characters in the books as they guide them through the exercises while discussing the topic of sizes including vocabulary such as bigger, stronger, thinner, and heavier. Figures 3 and 4 give an example of student learning exercises found within the grade 6 English student textbooks.

Figure 3

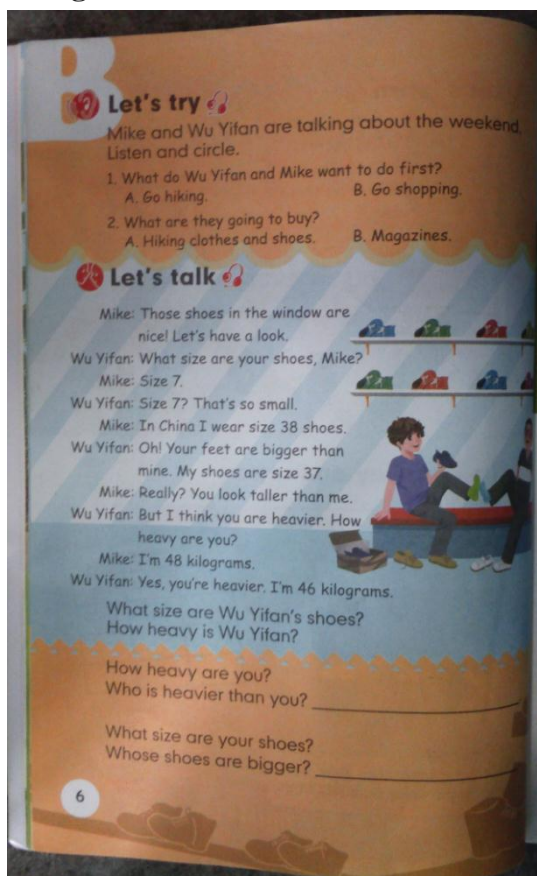
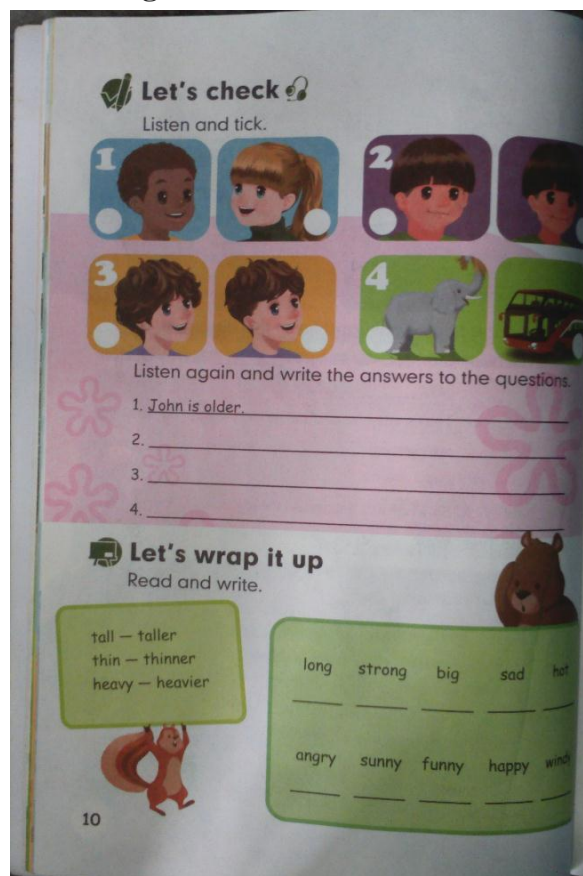


Figure 4



As Ms. Chan and Ms. Li used the textbook in class everyday it was not the only teaching resource used by the teachers. Both EFL teachers often needed to use their own resources they gathered during their teaching preparation time. The textbook alone was not suitable for the lessons the teachers wanted to conduct. Additionally, the teachers often used the textbook as a guide but did not follow it strictly chapter to chapter. In an interview with Ms. Chan, she expressed to me her beliefs and feelings about the English textbook used by the English teacher and the students:

*“Ms. Chan: ...in normal English class we have to use the textbooks and maybe I didn't do every activity of this of every unit.*

*Interviewer: But you're free to make that decision?*

*Ms. Chan: Yes, yes umm. That's about how I design the class, yes... “The textbook I think the textbook is hmmm is good it's good. The first part [each unit] is about vocabulary then sentence*

*patterns then practice and this is longer conversation grammar some practice and section b also new words listening sentence patterns and long passage.*

*Interviewer: And uh any other resources that you use?*

*Ms. Chan: Umm I will find some resources in the internet for example some video some song and some pictures. Yes.*

*Interviewer: Ok but you have to find that yourself?*

*Ms. Chan: Yes, yes because the resources in the textbook are limited. Are limited, yeah. Just some exercise some activities.” (Interview with Ms. Chan, June 23, 2015)*

**Teaching resources in the mix.** As mentioned above, the English teacher and student resources are heavily used in the EFL class. Having used the English textbook as a student growing up, studying the textbook at the university level, and then used the English textbook as a teacher Mr. Lee shared with me some of his beliefs about the English resources:

*“Usually in our daily class we mostly use the activities in the textbook... of course you have to re order them [textbook chapters] it’s very messing the textbook it’s not good, it’s not a good textbook. Sometimes you have to skip one or two [chapters] because of the time into consideration because you know we have to finish one chapter one module in like in 7 classes, 7 period one module including the examination the test, and all the homework looking over its very tough its very tight.” (Interview with Mr. Lee, June 25, 2015)*

For Ms. Yeoh, the English textbook could be holding back the teacher’s creativity and flexibility in making exciting English lessons. Ms. Yeoh shared one of her teaching experiences of developing her own English lessons:

*“I actually did a lot of games in my class. I mean you know it’s really difficult to teach high school English grammar. And I would make the grammar knowledge really easier and we would do a lot of games to help the students to remember the knowledge... Like a role play we did, we did the whole story about a shepherd boy. It took a lot of time to think of it. Yeah and to think how to do it, how to choose the story and I have to do the PPT, it takes a lot of time and a lot of energy... But for most of the regular teachers they’re a bit busy with a lot of other things and sometimes they don’t really use too much creativity.” (Interview with Ms. Yeoh, June 17, 2015)*

The EFL teaching resources such as the primary resource that is the English textbook was heavily utilized in the EFL classrooms by all four of the English teachers. The English textbook along with the compatible power point presentations and audio files were English teaching tools

implemented by the teachers nearly everyday of lessons. These English education resources were the first examples of the influence of the Chinese English Curriculum Standards on the EFL teachers' and their teaching practice.

### **The Influence of Chinese English Curriculum Standards on Teaching Practice**

The previous Findings sections were able to identify some of the teachers' beliefs and how those beliefs began to relate to their teaching practices. The belief of capturing and maintaining students' interest of the English language influenced the teachers' teaching practice in terms of English oral communication, student participation, and the utilization of Chinese in English class. Additionally, the consistent utilization of the English teaching resources was a preliminary sign of the influence of the Chinese English Curriculum Standards (ECS). The following section aims at gaining further detail into the influence of the Chinese ECS on the teacher's teaching practice.

**Pedagogical English curriculum learnings at the university level.** Throughout the Findings chapter the EFL teachers, Ms. Li and Ms. Chan, continued to stress importance on gaining and maintaining the students' interest of the English language. It is now no surprise that both of the pre-service teacher candidates, Ms. Yeoh and Mr. Lee, developed their aspiration for English language teaching through their love and passion for English. This passion grew to pedagogical learnings at Southwest University. At the time of the study both Mr. Lee and Ms. Yeoh were senior education pre-service teacher candidates at Southwest University. Ms. Yeoh had completed her school teaching placement while Mr. Lee was currently in the middle of his teaching placement. Additionally, both pre-service teacher candidates majored in 'English' and

English as a Foreign Language teaching. Since the high school level, they streamed their educational paths toward English and teaching.

During our interviews, the pre-service teacher candidates were both able to share some of their beliefs and stories from their learning experiences at Southwest University. The pre-service students provided a framework of English Curriculum Standards by discussing the different practices encouraged in the teaching education program. English lesson preparation and delivery is all taught and practiced diligently at the university teacher education program. Ms. Yeoh told me some of her beliefs and practices pertaining to presenting English lessons:

*“Ms. Yeoh: Usually when the students, when a student teacher, does giving the lesson; the teacher and the other students would observe. After we finish, the English teacher would talk something out of her own opinions and so the student teacher can revise her lesson or his lesson ... And use some standard English teacher words...”*

*Interviewer: Yeah, what’s some standard English teacher words?*

*Ms. Yeoh: Like some really boring words like ‘okay’ ‘good answer’... Like ‘good, let’s see what would happen next’. ‘Ok were finished here now let’s move on to the second part’. Yeah things like that.” (Interview with Ms. Yeoh, June 17, 2015)*

Ms. Yeoh continued:

*“Yeah, I preferred my own way but I also use these words because I want to show my respect to my students and also my supervisor who would sit in the back of the classroom and observe me.” (Interview with Ms. Yeoh, June 17, 2015)*

Mr. Lee described to me a very similar story of his experiences in the teacher education program at Southwest University. He informed me how his learning at school translates into the classroom:

*“... Every time we learn the theory we can practice it ... imagining your classmates is your students... The theory part is mostly English and we have many chapters about like classroom management, teaching method, different types of lessons. We got to learn different types of teaching method; different methods for different types of classes like reading, grammar, writing etc.” (Interview with Mr. Lee, June 25, 2015)*

Mr. Lee expanded on a certain type of lesson by explaining the 7 stages of a reading lesson learned at the English major teacher education school:

*“We got 7 stages in a class first is getting ready for learning and then is review, pre-reading, while-reading, post-reading, summary, and homework assignment.” (Interview with Mr. Lee, June 25, 2015)*

Mr. Lee continued into further detail of the 7-staged lesson very enthusiastically:

*“So, during the getting ready for learning the first stage, it’s more the same for different types of lesson. They all got getting ready for learning and the first one is always informal chatting like ‘good morning everyone’ or ‘how’s it going today’ ... Review, so then we review the content of our last lesson and hopefully we can find some common points some same to get a transition a transition to the new thing...*

*Sometimes, we might let students to learn all the new words they might meet they might encounter in the reading text [pre-reading] ... In the reading comprehension, we have our focus; sometimes we want the students to just pay attention to the general idea to practice their skimming.*

*Sometimes we need them to pay attention to the details... Sometimes I ask the students to pay attention to some transitional sentences... recognize the function of sentences [while-reading].”(Interview with Mr. Lee, June 25, 2015)*

Mr. Lee paused to think and continued immediately thereafter on the next stages:

*“Then post reading part, the reading part is input so the post reading part is output, there are so many ways to output... So, output is speaking or writing, so usually its speaking a lot more often because writing takes a lot of time so often we just speak; we create situations, interesting situations, real situations for them [students] to talk.” (Interview with Mr. Lee, June 25, 2015)*

Mr. Lee was able to provide me with a very detailed idea of a common lesson structure he learned at the faculty of education. He then transitioned his learnings from the university classroom to his practice teaching at Secondary School. However, Ms. Yeoh was able to inform me about some of the discrepancies that may exist between the faculty of education and the practice teaching setting in schools:

*“For the university teachers, they wanted us to do our model classes of high school all in English but for the high school English teachers they wanted us to use some Chinese so the students can understand better.” (Interview with Ms. Yeoh, June 17, 2015)*

Upon further investigation with the pre-service English teachers I was able to discover more discrepancies between the pedagogical English Curriculum Standards learnings and the beliefs and practices of the teachers.

**Chinese in English class.** The pre-service teacher candidates, Ms. Yeoh and Mr. Lee, both shared with me in their interviews that during their learning of English Curriculum Standards at Southwest University they are not encouraged to use the Chinese language in the EFL setting. Or, as a last resort if at all. Mr. Lee was able to describe to me the steps he was advised to take when his future students are struggling with English understanding:

*“First of all, all the instructions I’m giving will be on the PPT in words and I will shout out the instructions. All the instructions clearly, slowly, and loudly to make sure all the students can understand. But still some of them can’t and I will check; ‘are you clear’ ‘do you understand’ and if the students say no then I will repeat in English. If it’s too hard maybe it’s some problems of the teacher. Maybe, I didn’t give clear instructions and there’s some new words some words they can’t understand. Then I will use Chinese at the end, the last place. As a final choice ... I think officially we’re not encouraged to speak Chinese in English class but it depends on the level of your students and the proficiency of your students. Demonstrate, repeat paraphrases, demonstrate and speak Chinese that’s the steps.” (Interview with Mr. Lee, June 25, 2015)*

Ms. Yeoh shared with me a very similar comment about the use of Chinese in English class:

*“Yeah for me, now I teach in a primary school. So even for students in grade 3 4 5 I speak English first before I give them directions in Chinese.” (Interview with Ms. Yeoh, June 17, 2015)*

Even at a very early stage of their careers the pre-service teacher candidates, Ms. Yeoh and Mr. Lee, understood the need for Chinese in the EFL classroom. Not only that but they also expressed their thoughts on the importance of establishing the students’ interests and passion for learning the English language. Additionally, this interest for English language learning grows from utilizing spoken English in the classroom. As I explored the possible influence of the English Curriculum Standards on the EFL teachers’ beliefs and practice I was immediately able to observe a possible disconnect.

## Summary

The above findings sections presented information about the EFL teacher and pre- service teacher participants, the school sites, the day- to- day observations of the EFL classroom, individual interviews, and English teaching resources. The EFL lessons told a story of current English language learning phenomena with the influence of the past and future teaching strategies and pedagogy. The participating EFL teachers shared their lived experiences reflecting their personal and professional beliefs and practices in respect to EFL teaching and learning. Additionally, the pre- service teacher candidates were able to critically analyze the English teaching education at the university level and how their learning transfers into their future classrooms. The findings were examined through a narrative space of temporal, personal- social, and place.

Throughout the findings section I discovered that the themes and topics blended together and complemented each other very well. The English as a Foreign Language teachers and pre- service teacher candidates believed that gaining and maintaining the students' interest of the English language was of primary importance. This was often achieved by implementing a form of language immersion emphasizing English speaking in the classroom. Students were encouraged through role- play activities, games, songs, performances and much more to participate and engage in English.

Though English speaking was perceived as being of major importance it was not always feasible or practical to use English in the classroom. All the teachers often had to resort to Chinese translations using a variety of teaching strategies. Furthermore, the use of teaching resources such as textbooks, Power Point, video & audio clips, was consistent in the EFL



classroom. Even though the teachers were flexible with the use of the teaching resources they were always relied upon nearly every class.

The following chapter will examine all of the research findings presented in the different sections and sub- themes and develop a well-rounded discussion. In the Discussion chapter, I will further explore the key findings in order to discover the underlying meaning of the mentioned concepts. The next chapter will also highlight the importance of the study while providing study implications, limitations, and insights for future research studies in the field.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSING THE RESEARCH & CONCLUDING REMARKS**

### **Discussion**

#### **Introduction**

This current project presented a case study of two Chinese English as a Foreign Language teachers and two pre-service teachers utilizing qualitative methodologies and a narrative inquiry. The analysis presented highlighted information of related literature, observations, interviews and supporting documents. The discussion section stems from the findings gathered from the two observational classrooms at Primary School and Secondary School, the many shared stories from the four research participants, and the data gathered from the document analysis. Additionally, I will discuss the common outcomes and themes arising from the subsequent findings and how they connect to the literature and purpose of this particular study.

#### **EFL Teacher Beliefs**

By implementing a narrative inquiry for this study, I was able to explore the English as a Foreign Language teacher's classroom, teaching practice, pedagogy, and strategies. Using narrative inquiry, I also learned that a teacher's present teaching philosophy or pedagogy is a temporal construct which is influenced by the person's past experience, the present mind and body, and the person's future intentions (Connelly and Clandinin, 1988). These life experiences influence a teacher's beliefs and practices.

#### **Nurturing Students' Interest**

Both of the English teacher and pre-service teacher participants displayed a great passion towards teaching and English language learning. Even though the teachers taught very different

grade levels they implemented very similar teaching styles, strategies, and pedagogy. The belief to gain and maintain students' interest of the English language was unanimously important for all of the English teacher participants.

The findings suggest that the Chinese English teacher's responsibility has grown to develop and promote nurturing of 'happy and interested' students. As all of the participants indicated that they began teaching English because of their own love, passion, and interest for the subject they found it of utmost importance to emphasize and share this passion in their classrooms. The EFL teachers maintained a belief that interested students were able to learn the English language more effectively which is congruent with the findings in previous studies on the important role of interest in the learning process (Wisniewska, 2013). Wisniewska (2013) states that student interest affects what is being learnt and to what degree; "interest motivates learning and exploration, thus helping people build broad knowledge, and attain skills and experience" (pg. 212). Furthermore, interest is a source of intrinsic motivation that can be gained from the educator and can persist in the students' life (Wisniewska, 2013). Through teaching experience combined with life experiences the EFL teachers and pre-service teachers were able to identify that developing and maintaining the students' interest was important to learning success. The teachers attempted to gain this interest of the English language by creating a positive teaching environment that promoted interaction and engagement. This belief of developing and maintaining students' interest of English language learning transitioned into their teaching practice.

### **Play in English Learning**

In accordance with the findings mentioned above, Dai (2013) elaborates that in an environment of play students have more opportunities to practice what they have learned within social learning activities. The analysis and discussion of the supporting teaching documents echoes this phenomenon.

Both the English Language Curriculum with the English textbook and resources promote and encourage a fun, interactive, and inviting learning experience yielding a positive outlook on the English language and culture. This interactive learning experience was observed in the classrooms of Ms. Li and Ms. Chan and thoroughly discussed with all of the English teacher participants. The EFL teachers consistently demonstrated and spoke of their belief and passion to create a fun and interactive English class. For example, the teachers welcomed their students to class with English music, created an imaginary restaurant environment, created an environment for relaxed discussion, and much more. These concepts are echoed in the stories by the pre-service teachers, Ms. Yeoh and Mr. Lee, where they described that their own English interest grew from fun songs, activities, videos, and movies. These points align with the goal of the new English Curriculum Standards (ECS) which intend to implement interactive pedagogical approaches to teaching and learning (Zhang & Liu, 2014). I argue that this important objective for the ECS aligns well with the already established teacher's beliefs.

### **Encouraging Participation**

The utilization of a fun and interactive classroom alone does not promote an engaging atmosphere of learning. All of the participant teachers of the study mentioned their belief to develop and maintain their students' interests by promoting English class participation. The

teachers' goal was to create a positive and safe space for English language learning where students can practice their spoken English. However, the teachers shared a common view that this task to encourage class participation was not easy with a class size of approximately 50 students. In an interview, Ms. Li informed me that she has over 17 English lessons a week with close to 200 students and she finds it very difficult to interact and engage with each student. Zhou (2011) argues that the teachers' beliefs and understanding about an education context such as students' participation in learning was found to have an impact on their teaching practice.

Furthermore, all of the aforementioned beliefs, thoughts, and experiences of the EFL teachers and pre-service teacher candidates play an important role in the teachers' pedagogical teaching practice. This is consistent with the information presented by Zhang and Liu (2014) stating that a teacher's beliefs heavily influence the success of new educational reforms, curriculums, and policies. Therefore, this study made serious consideration of the teachers' beliefs when exploring their practices.

## **Instructional Teaching Practices**

### **Language Immersion Practice and Pedagogy**

Congruent with Zhou (2011) and her study's teacher participants, this study similarly found that the English teacher's beliefs shaped their teaching practice and instructional behaviours. These factors impacted the teachers' personal teaching strategies, use of language immersion and use of bilingual education. In this next section I will discuss the participants' teaching strategies with focus on the theoretical frameworks of language immersion and bilingual education along with exploring issues that emerged from their teaching practice.

**A blended learning experience.** All of the teachers recognized the importance of speaking English as a primary method of instruction in their EFL classroom and encouraged their students to speak English as often as possible. The teachers attempted to ‘immerse’ their students by emphasizing and demonstrating the importance of English listening, communication, and participation in their classes. Their teaching practice reflected their teaching beliefs.

Additionally, the teachers consistently implemented interactive listening and speaking activities in order to develop the learner’s communicative competence and learner autonomy which follows the 2001, 2003, 2009 English Curriculum Standards (Zhang & Liu, 2014; Zheng & Borg, 2014; Yan & He, 2012). The classroom observations in Primary School and Secondary School and individual interviews with all of the EFL teachers demonstrated the effective and consistent use of role-play activities, games, and discussions to promote English speaking in English class. Additionally, the teachers developed teaching strategies such as the ‘little teacher’ and ‘call-and-repeat’ tools to encourage participation from the students. This finding suggests that the teachers provide their students with the opportunity of *situated practice*. The situated practice can be considered the application of communicative language speaking constituting a meaningful immersion environment in a community of learners (Cope & Kalantzis, 1999; Kalantzis & Cope, 2008).

The Literature Review chapter explored the various benefits of language immersion such as interpersonal communication, greater cognitive flexibility and creative thinking at no cost to the students’ first language (Cummins, 1983; Cheng, 2012; Song & Cheng, 2010). Coherent to Song and Cheng (2010), I argue that the EFL teachers modeled English immersion to develop the students’ language ability by promoting natural and meaningful communication in the classroom. However, I cannot identify the language immersion model being used in the EFL

setting as one of the models defined by Cummins. The utilization of English in the mainstream education system in China does not fit into total, partial, or even limited immersion models defined by Cummins (1986; 2007; 2011). With this being said it does not mean that the EFL English immersion strategy is not effective. We must remember that according to Cummins (1983) studies have found a small significant gap between students' foreign language abilities in partial vs full immersion programs. I strongly argue and advocate that even a small amount of effective language immersion can benefit a student's foreign language proficiency.

**Identifying the issues.** The English as a Foreign Language program in China continues to be exactly that; learning of a foreign language. The EFL program in mainstream education is mandatory for most grade 1s and all grade 3s but it is not a core-subject. This means that English is taught to grade 3-10s approximately 2-3 times a week. Consequently, throughout my observations and in the individual interviews, the teachers expressed frustrations of a diminishing language ability. The teachers often had to re-teach and remind the students of certain English vocabulary, rules, and grammar as the students would often forget. Additionally, a discrepancy exists once English class is complete in that the immersion of the English language does not leave the classroom with the students or with the teacher. The English teaching and learning more often than not remained within the physical boundaries of the EFL classroom. The teachers always identified themselves as English educators however English communication did not continue outside of the room itself.

**An existing gap between EFL and ESL.** As mentioned above, I noted that I strongly argue that the language immersion model defined by Cummins' research does not fit the English as a Foreign Language learning model in mainstream schools in China. Immersing students in a language requires the efforts from a multitude of resources and environments which are lacking in the Chinese mainstream schools; such as the school community, other teachers and administrators, parents, multiple subjects, etc. As described in Cummins' (1986; 2007; 2011) work throughout the years, the immersion model is effectively utilized in the Canadian French Immersion Program or English as a Second Language programs where students spend a significant part of the school day surrounded by the additional language. The additional language is used in the classroom, in the hallways and school community, and even encouraged at home. Even though the Chinese English Curriculum Standards emphasize the importance of English language learning in the EFL context of mainstream education it is simply not enough in order to effectively describe the learning experience as immersion. However, English language immersion can be observed in a different aspect of the Chinese education system.

There are many institutions such as Depu Foreign Language School in Chongqing, China or Maple Leaf Educational Systems China that provide their students with an English language immersion model. For example, students at Maple Leaf International High Schools are taught every major subject in the English language (Maple Leaf Education Systems, 2017). Additionally, Maple Leaf (2017) high school students are immersed in an English environment by implementing a boarding school system. Graduating students receive a Canadian high school diploma allowing them to apply to Canadian universities. And most importantly, students graduate with English communicative capabilities by participating in an English environment.



Taking this example in consideration, I continue to argue that the findings of this study suggest an implementation gap between significant ESL concepts in the west such as language immersion into the EFL mainstream context of the east.

The language immersion model was not the only teaching strategy implemented by the teachers. As identified in the observations and interview, the participating EFL teachers and pre-service teachers indicated the reliance of the Chinese language in English class. The next section will discuss the utilization of Chinese and bilingual education in the EFL classroom.

### **The Bilingual Model in Chinese English Classrooms**

In this study, the bilingual model was described as the development of two languages promoted by a school program or classroom (Cummins & Swain, 1986). The model strives at developing the student's additional language by working in harmony with their primary language (Cummins & Swain, 1986). The key aspect described by Cummins and Swain (1986) is the factor of the languages working in harmony together.

**Chinese EFL in a unique position.** In the Literature Review chapter, the literature explored four major types of bilingual models used in China; described by Tong and Shi (2012). The four different models use English and Chinese in a variety of different ways and include: *foreign language teaching in mainstream, transitional bilingual mode, maintenance bilingual instruction, and immersion bilingual instruction*. According to the data presented I argue that the bilingual education strategy used by the teachers inside the classroom can be defined using Tong and Shi's (2012) *maintenance bilingual instruction* model for mainstream education. In which

English is used more frequently as a language of instruction while Chinese encompasses 10-50% of the curriculum time for the explanation of difficult concepts (Tong & Shi, 2012).

In this study, the EFL teachers also emphasized the importance of speaking Chinese for the purpose of student understanding of instruction and important concepts. EFL teachers in China are in a unique and arguably beneficial position as they are able to utilize two languages for learning within the classroom.

**Chinese as a median.** The findings of this study were able to explore the use of Chinese as a facilitator between English language learning and used only when necessary. Most of the time the teachers utilized English as the primary language of communication and instruction in the EFL classes. Additionally, the participating teachers indicated that they believe the English language should be the predominant method of communication and instruction in the EFL classroom. However, the EFL teachers found it necessary to use Chinese in order to assist struggling students and to clarify instruction. As Mr. Lee described in an individual interview, there is a hierarchy of using Chinese in class with using the Chinese language at the bottom of this list. This finding reveals vacancy for further effective bilingual use in the EFL classroom.

The learning and use of the target English language alone often does not flourish or develop lifelong English speakers. Studies suggest that the learning of the target language is entirely compatible with the learner's primary language (Crawford, 2004). Furthermore, the primary language is often an effective learning mediator to develop collaborative dialogues as an interlingua process (Crawford, 2004). Consequently, a monolingual learning focus on the target language may lead to primary language resentment or even frustration (Crawford, 2004). Zhou (2011) found a similar phenomenon where Chinese EFL teachers' focus was so dominant on the

target English language and the corresponding culture that the Chinese learner's home culture was diminishing.

### **Impact of English Curriculum Standards on Teaching Practice**

In the following section I will discuss the various impacts of the English curriculum in China with focus on the English subject in the Chinese curriculum and the English teacher resources.

### **Impact of Curriculum on English Teaching & Learning**

The Literature Review section discussed the topic that the change to the Chinese English curriculum is one of the most ambitious and radical changes in China's education history (Yan, 2012). As Yan (2012) explains, the reform would seek to change the Chinese more traditional teacher-centred approach with a more student-centred pedagogy putting lots of responsibility on the teacher to change their teaching strategies. In this study, we can see the development of teachers' student-centred approach. However, this is not always the case when there are many factors influencing the teacher's ability to make this change such as age, educational history, location, and government tests.

Government tests are an issue that English teachers find to hinder their teaching flexibility. Some of the EFL teachers of older students such as Mr. Lee mention the fact that his communicative approach to English teaching had to be minimized during the time of the national university entrance examinations. The College Entrance Examination, Gaokao, taken during the final year of high school maintains its position as a mechanism of higher education opportunities (Liu, 2013). Additionally, in order for Chinese students to complete college/ university and

receive a bachelor's degree they must successfully pass the English Test Band FOUR (CET-4) and higher qualifications for exceptional institutions and English majors (Dai, 2013). These tests continue to promote vocabulary, grammar, multiple-choice, and writing which forces teachers and students to focus on English scores rather than real-world communicative applications (Dai, 2013). Promisingly, in recent news, throughout years of policy adjustment, the year 2016 will see significant changes to the Gaokao examination in terms of English. The importance or weight of English within the examination will be significantly reduced in order to make way for increased value of Chinese and mathematics, promoting the fundamental importance of the mother tongue (Kaiman, 2013).

In China, similarly to any other subject, teaching English as a Foreign Language class can be extremely daunting and exhausting for the teachers. The teachers in this study made consistent comment towards contextual circumstances such as class size, mixed abilities, marking and additional responsibilities, and significant time pressures consuming all non-teaching time from the teachers' schedule. The large examinations in China also impacted the teaching practice of the teachers. This was ever more predominant in the upper grades at the Secondary School where there was a greater influence of tests and the Chinese English Curriculum Standards (Mr. Lee, June 25, 2015).

### **Impact of English Teacher Resources**

The next topic of discussion will include the supporting document analysis and the English teaching resources provided to the English as a Foreign Language teachers. By studying the teaching documents, I was able to discover impacts of the government mandated English textbooks and media of the teaching beliefs and practice of the EFL teachers.

In the year 2001, the Chinese Ministry of Education developed a framework of English Language Curriculum (ELC) including five domains namely language skills, language knowledge, emotion and attitude, learning strategies, and cultural awareness (Ma, 2012). Chinese English resources such as the textbooks reflect these five domains and are easily “the major, if not only resource material used by the English teachers in China.” (Ma, 2012, p. 237). This information is echoed by Ms. Chan when she stated in the interview session that “in normal English class we must use the textbook” (Ms. Chan, June 23 2015, interview). Recent literature revolving around the five domains in the ELC seem to focus their attention on the third domain of emotion and attitude. The research conducted by Ma (2012) is no different and her focus on the ‘emotion and attitude’ domain points out key target objectives of the English textbooks. In respects to teaching, the domain emphasizes the involvement of “spoken English interaction, fun or creative expressions such as playing games, storytelling, chanting rhymes and singing” that can be seen in the Chinese English textbooks (Ma, 2012, p. 235). Furthermore, the research conducted by Chen (2010) also emphasises the ‘emotional and attitude’ goals of the English Curriculum Standards and the relationship of happiness and positive attitudes for the students. “It is found that images in textbooks play an important role in realizing a great variety of emotion and attitude curriculum goals” (Chen, 2010, p. 72). In fact, cartoons are predominant in primary and junior secondary textbooks at 97.9% and 89.6% respectively (Chen, 2010). The language-image relationships not only explain the English learning content but also promote student’s positive emotions in learning English (Chen 2010).

With this being said the study participants could agree that the English textbooks and resources were not perfect and needed to be adjusted. Ms. Chan and Mr. Lee both mentioned the fact that they had to implement and utilize the textbook and resources with an open-mind. During

interview sessions they pointed out that as facilitators of their classroom they needed to rearrange the order of the textbook accommodating for time and student progression; “yes of course, you have to re-order them [units] it’s very messy” (Mr. Lee, pre-service teacher, June 15 interview); “maybe I didn’t do every activity of this of every unit just choose some... and maybe the order, my teaching is different than the order in the textbook... sometimes you have to skip one or two [units] because of the time into consideration” (Ms. Chan, June 23 2015, interview).

### **Teachers as Curriculum Planners**

When reviewing the relationship between the teachers’ teaching practices and beliefs with their national curriculum standards and their teaching resources I began to uncover a pattern of teacher responsibility and power. The teachers often had the ability to evolve their own teaching curriculum by diverting to their personal beliefs and practices of teaching. Connelly and Clandinin (1988) refer to this concept as; teachers as curriculum planners. They viewed curriculum and curriculum development as a very personal concept influenced by the individual’s past and present experiences. I found that when the teacher participants and even the pre- service teachers had the opportunity to do so that they often resorted back to their own teaching strategies and practices which reflected their beliefs.

### **Summary and Concluding Remarks**

Before I advance to the next section I will pause to deliver a short summary of the discussions thus far. The Discussion section began with identifying that all of the participating EFL teachers strived on developing their students’ interest in the English language by creating a learning environment of play and participation. This idea illustrates the point made by

Wisniewska (2013) stating that teaching to interested and happy students is very effective and yields positive results. As I continued to examine the beliefs of the EFL teachers I was able to observe a clear connection between the teacher beliefs and their teaching practices. Their beliefs of appropriate teaching strategies and methods consistently seeped into their teaching practice.

The research findings demonstrate that the EFL teachers utilized an English language immersion strategy within their classroom as much as possible with the aid of Chinese as a bilingual model. The past literature emphasized that immersion is helpful when learning a target language and using a primary language in harmony with the target language has positive learning outcomes (Cummins, 1983; Cummins & Swain 1986; Crawford, 2004; Cheng, 2012; Song & Cheng, 2010). However, the influence of the English Curriculum Standards presents an impact to the teaching strategies. The research demonstrated that the teachers often resorted back to traditional Chinese teaching methods. This phenomenon seems to be consistent with Zhang and Liu's (2014) literature describing the difficulty in changing a teacher's values, goals, and beliefs.

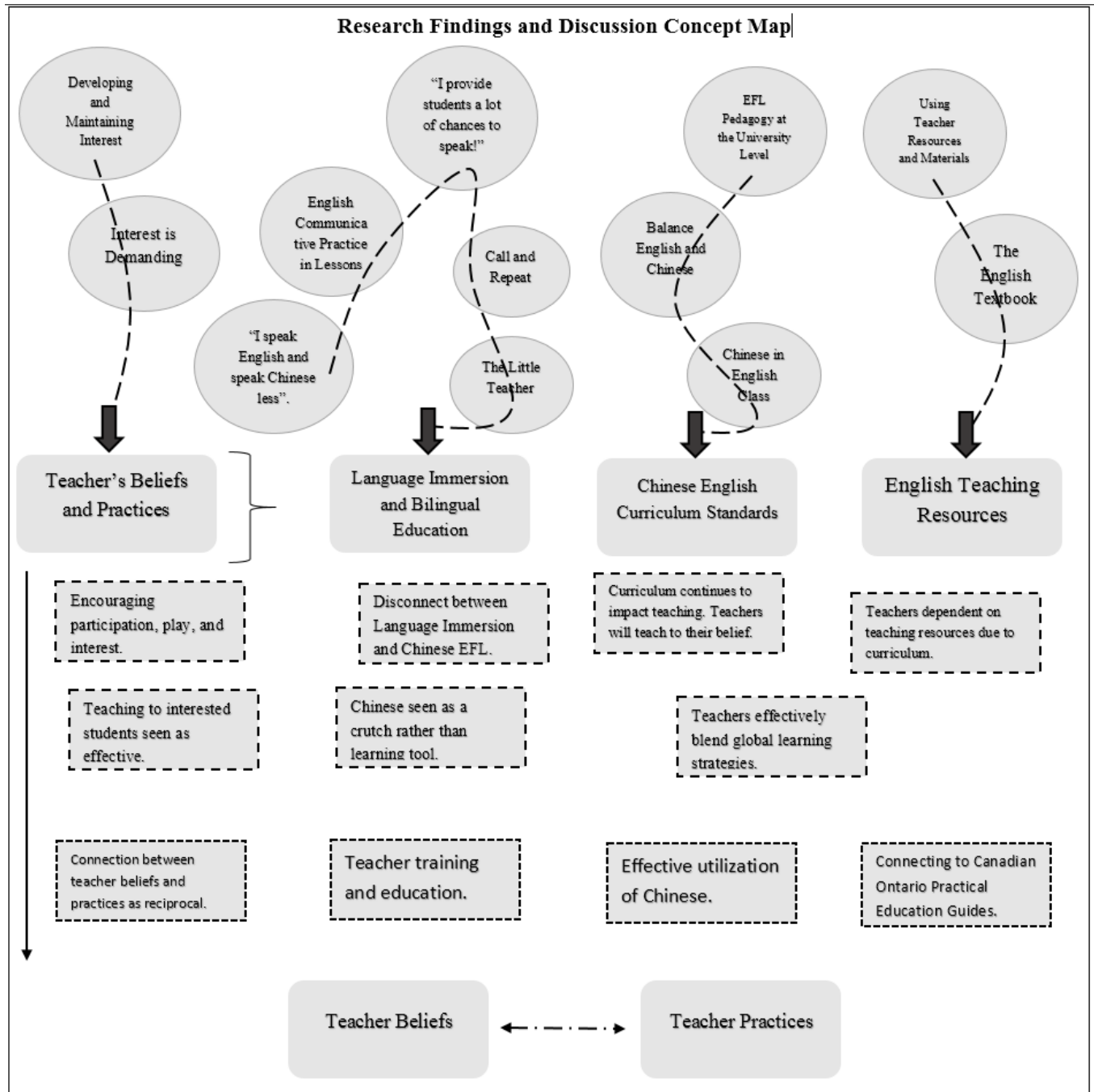
I argue that the analysis of data continues to imply that the beliefs and practices of teachers are multi-faceted. Where on one side, the teachers strive to promote English language communication, collaboration, and interaction. While on the other side they are molded to embrace, traditional beliefs utilizing teacher-centred, textbook based instruction, focus on grammar and vocabulary, recitation and imitation, and teacher authority (Zhang & Liu, 2014). Upon investigating the data, I was able to discover a disconnect between the Chinese English Curriculum Standards (ECS) such as examinations and the English textbooks with the beliefs and practices of the teachers. Even with this being the case, the teachers' beliefs consistently dominated the ECS and the teacher often resorted to their personal beliefs of teaching English. However, this was found to be more predominant in the Primary School where the teachers had

more flexibility compared to the higher grades in Secondary School often influenced by important tests.

The findings of this study advocate that the Chinese English teachers can be very versatile and accommodating while there may be possible gaps between their own beliefs and the curriculum initiatives. The teachers seem to be able to effectively blend Western-based teaching strategies with traditional teaching methods that are more suitable for the realities of teaching in China. Additionally, teachers could select the most appropriate teaching strategies that align with their own beliefs, perceptions, practices and personalities all while maintaining a close relationship with the curriculum and teaching materials. Figure 5 below illustrates the findings and discussions using a visual representation.



Figure 5



## **Narrative Inquiry: A Discussion of the Participants and the Researcher**

### **The Life Space of the Participants**

In addition to exploring the beliefs and practices of the EFL teachers and the pre-service teacher candidates including the topics of language immersion, bilingual education, English curriculum, and teacher resources I was able to understand where some of these beliefs came from.

With over 10 years of English teaching experience Ms. Li's passion for the English language and teaching came at the middle school age. She became entwined with English language songs, movies, and culture. This eventually grew to an appreciation for the English language and a devotion to spread her interest in teaching. Ms. Li grew up during a time of a more teacher-centred oriented Chinese curriculum however strives to engage her students using a student-centred approach. As a teacher at Primary School, Ms. Li, consistently brought joy, fun, and laughter to her lessons while maintaining an environment of language learning and understanding. During an interview, Ms. Li shared her aspiration to reach and help every single student in her classes. However, throughout the study she was able to reflect on some of the challenges presented in the realities of teaching in China.

A commonality with Ms. Li, Ms. Chan also developed a passion for the English language through media and pop-culture. The teachers share the same desire to spread their passion by growing the student's interests of the English language. In Ms. Chan's EFL lesson she provided students with a safe environment in order to practice their oral English skills through role-plays, interactive activities, and classroom discussions. As a new head teacher, Ms. Chan devoted herself to the success of students and was often seen spending her preparation time assisting students. Throughout the period of the research study Ms. Chan often sought my advice or

opinion of her English lessons. We were able to work together on her lessons and she also permitted me to deliver my own English lessons for her students.

Similarly, the pre-service teacher candidates were also able to think critically about their past education, present teacher education, and their future teaching philosophy. Both Ms. Yeoh and Mr. Lee grew up learning and loving the English language from their favourite songs, movies, television programs, and passion to travel. In an interview, Ms. Yeoh was able to share with me how important her early English teachers were and the role they played in the success of her education career. Ms. Yeoh experienced a variety of interactions and teaching experiences that have forged a path for her future teaching career. During his interview, Mr. Lee reflected on his education learnings at the faculty of education and how they applied to his practice teaching. Mr. Lee often had to accommodate his lessons to the needs of the students and the realities of the Chinese classroom.

All together the shared experiences, stories, actions, theories, ideas all contribute to the existing life space of the EFL teachers and pre-service teacher candidates (Xu & Connelly, 2010). Every individuals' experiences and stories molds them to who they are and reflects their beliefs into their practice. Their path is on a temporal continuum that represents their past, present, and future. As the narrative inquirer, I entered this life space to *experience the experience* of others (Xu & Connelly, 2010). With me I brought my own narrative histories, my own stories, and my own background. Throughout the study, I was also able to critically analyze and reflect on my current foreign environment, how my past experiences influence my perceptions, and how I was able to grow.

## **A Personal Narrative**

Prior to arriving in China, for the second time, in order to conduct my research study my mind was full with perceived thoughts and understandings of the Chinese education system. I believed that I had some grasp to the English language learning strategies and the beliefs of the teachers. I was surprised to see how many teachers had a strong passion for the English language and how much they wanted to share that passion with their students.

When I reflect on my international case study research experience I am able to understand the massive amounts of efforts and understandings that come with conducting research in a foreign environment. Not only did I enter a new location for research but I entered a new world in China. It took me time and space in order to settle myself in my new environment. One of the most important lessons I have learned in conducting research with human participants is to be patient and understanding with all of your participants. Many of the research aspects took longer than expected but in the end, it was well worth it since I was able to truly connect with my research sites and participants, who I would now refer to as my colleagues.

For this study, I had the unique opportunity to work in partnership with the Reciprocal Learning Program and Southwest University along with partnering schools. I was blessed to be permitted access into the many different schools. I was treated with fantastic hospitality that I could only hope to reciprocate in the future. It is my hope that I was polite, gracious, and kind enough at the research sites to receive their welcome. Conducting research in a foreign country presented many obstacles such as living conditions, weather and location, and especially language barriers. With determination and focus I was able to make it work utilizing all resources at my disposal.

Overall this experience has taught me to push the boundaries and learn from all moments in my life. I learned to challenge the term *toleration* in the context of cross-cultures and surpass the expression by accepting, welcoming, and learning from new ideas and concepts from around the globe. As this research study is contextualized within the work done in the SSHRC Partnership Grant Project and the Reciprocal Learning Program I could not have succeeded without the massive amount of support. It is my hope to maintain my academic career and continue research in the field of second language acquisition. It is my goal to further gain information and data in the current English teaching methodologies by pursuing teachers and learners of the English as an Second Language (ESL) program in Canada. I hope to explore the learning experiences of newcomers to Canada and their teachers in order to gain a complex story of the ESL experience. Combined with my efforts in China exploring the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) system I aim at melding the two concepts together. I am curiously discovering the possibility of combining the ESL and EFL concepts and identifying the possibility of working together.

## CHAPTER SIX: IMPLICATIONS & SUGGESTIONS

### Implications

The purpose of this international case study was to explore the beliefs and practices of English as a Foreign Language teachers and pre-service teachers in China. The findings of the study indicate that the English teaching strategies are developing well in some areas and are lacking in some other areas. The following sections aim to identify possible implications, suggest for the future, and ideas for further research brought forth from the study.

### Continued Teacher Education

The case study revealed a need for further consistent in-service teacher training and education highlighting English teaching strategies. In particular, this study explored the use of language immersion and bilingual education models in foreign language instruction. I argue that English as a Foreign Language teachers would stand to benefit from deepening their knowledge of language immersion and bilingual education understanding as related to the English language curriculum in China. With this being said, I do not believe that the teachers need this in-service training in order to conform or persuade all of the teachers to certain teaching strategies. The findings suggest that the teachers have an internal belief and passion to use these strategies. Further teacher training and professional development would allow the teachers to explore the reasoning, benefits, and effective implementation of the teaching strategies.

The EFL teacher's implementation of language immersion and the use of English in the Chinese classroom is developing well. The study points out on numerous occasions that all of the teachers support developing the English language learners' interest through communicative practice. The teachers in this study all employ consistent methods of oral English communication

using various different activities and strategies. It is recommended that the English as a Foreign Language teachers are provided with opportunities to participate in programs to enrich the teacher's immersion experience. I mentioned earlier in the Introduction chapter how international education projects pose great benefit and value towards individuals understanding and knowledge (Creemers, 2006). Some of these programs are already in place at the university level and are growing to the primary and secondary school level. For example, the Teacher Education Reciprocal Learning Program (RLP) under the larger SSHRC Partnership Project provides pre-service teacher candidates from Southwest University China an opportunity to travel to Canada to learn culture, education, and language (Xu & Connelly, 2013). Former RLP participants, Ms. Yeoh and Mr. Lee, benefited greatly from the rich and authentic international experience. Furthermore, the SSHRC Partnership Project has developed the Sister Schools Project which connects partnering schools from the Toronto District School Board and the Greater Essex County District School Board in Canada to local schools in Chongqing and Beijing, China (Xu & Connelly, 2013). The project has already seen the international exchange of administrators and teachers from Canada and China.

Participating teacher's classroom observations, lived stories, and testimonials from the individual interviews suggest that the Chinese language is being used to aid English language learning. I argue that Chinese in the EFL classroom is being used more so as a 'crutch' rather than a learning tool. The review of relevant literature identifies that two languages working in harmony promote positive benefits for language learning. The teacher training and professional development would provide teachers opportunity to reflect and communicate together in order to develop methods in order to utilize Chinese in English class effectively. In the Canadian French immersion programs, French is solely taught as the primary language of instruction (Mady,

2014). English is introduced into the program in grades 3/4 and the benefits of bilingual education are “enhanced with explicit attention as provided by a teacher drawing students’ attention to commonalities between the languages” (Mady, 2012, p. 330). For example, the teacher may refer to the root of a word so a student may discover the meaning themselves. In the United States, reading in the *transitional bilingual education* model is taught first in the student’s native language for a period of time; they transition to English reading instruction in grade 3/4 using various strategies such as a bilingual story book (Slavin & Cheung, 2005). In truth, this strategy may be difficult for Chinese language teachers as I believe the languages between English and Chinese are vastly different. It is my suggestion that further research is conducted into this area in order to gain a better understanding.

### **Teacher Resources and Curriculum**

The findings of this particular study point out that the English as a Foreign Language teachers are heavily dependent on the EFL teaching resources such as the English textbooks, Power Point presentations, and video and audio clips. The document analysis shows that the textbook and corresponding media is developing well. However, the EFL teacher and pre-service teacher participants have mixed reviews about the textbook. The teachers are in need of a textbook that corresponds with the beliefs and passions of the English teachers and as well as the English language learners. Additionally, according to Zhou (2014), the current EFL textbooks tend to represent the target cultures, particularly the American and British cultures, which encourages students to view the world from a western perspective which can hinder their knowledge of Chinese and non-English cultures. This study’s findings and further research calls for a balance.



Zhang and Liu (2014) state that the new English Curriculum Standards encourage and promote the importance of enhancing the English language learners' communicative abilities through the utilization of a student-centred teaching approach. The study participants shared difficulties in adhering with this reform as it does not seem to coincide with the continued grammar intensive textbook, homework assignments, and examinations that determine the success of the student in the English subject. These implications for this particular topic from the study seem to draw more questions than answers. I wonder if the teachers rely so heavily on the teaching resources because they are mandated to use them or because of the possibility of minimal external resources?

Hence, it is suggested that the National English Curriculum could stand to benefit to see policy makers, textbook developers, and classroom teacher representatives working together to develop new teaching resources.

### **The Canadian Context**

This particular international case study has implications for teacher and curriculum development locally in Canada. The findings of this study implicate appropriate and effective methods of language instruction and learning. Further exploration into the suggested fields of study would benefit the areas of interest even further. Specifically, this study has implications to promote effective teaching and learning for Chinese immigrant students in Canada especially with the large population of Chinese immigrants in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). According to the Canadian Magazine of Immigration (2016), the 2011 immigrant population of Canada comprised 20.6% of the entire Canadian population. Furthermore, the number of Chinese immigrants grew 63.8% in 2011 with over 49% of Chinese residing in Ontario and 85% of them

living in the GTA (Canadian Magazine of Immigration, 2016). By exploring the different language learning strategies for potential new comers of Ontario we can better help prepare our curriculum and educators for our future classroom demographics.

**English Language Learning in Ontario Schools.** This particular research provides Canadian educators with an additional resource of new English language learners and the strategies implemented by language teachers. This study provides Ontario educators a connection with Ministry of Education documents such as *Supporting English Language Learners with Limited Prior School*, *Supporting English Language Learners*, and *Many Roots Many Voices Supporting English language learners in every classroom*; practical guides for Ontario educators (Ontario Ministry of Education 2005, 2008, & 2008). On page 8 of Ministry of Education (2008) document entitled *Supporting English Language Learners* it informs the Ontario educator reader the importance of understanding the bilingual advantage. English is viewed as an addition to the new comer student's first language rather than a substitution (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008). According to the document (2008), the learning and teaching of English should constitute respect and the use of the learners' first language which will develop a confident learner. This research study addresses this exact point by providing the Ontario educator with valuable and real-life situations and informative literature revolving around the topic of effective utilization of bilingual education. In the Ontario Ministry of Education (2005) document entitled *Many Roots Many Voices* the Tips for the Classroom section clearly identifies the value of dual-language use and the value of oral language skills within the classroom. The informative practical document informs Ontario educators of the importance of building on prior knowledge and the dual-language approach using the student's first language while simultaneously establishing a safe

and supportive environment for students to participate orally in class (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2005). This research study echoes the key messages emphasized in the Ontario Ministry of Education practical guides for Ontario educators while also supplementing ideas and strategies from an international context.

The new immigrants and new-comers of Canada are the building blocks of our future generations. Xu and Connelly (2010) “argue that new minorities need be viewed as rich intellectual resources for reconstruction and enrichment of the mainstream culture (as cited in Zhou, 2011, p.181-182). Canadian research has determined that “high school immigrant students outperformed both the Canadian-born bilingual group and the Canadian-born monolingual group on measures of French as a Second Language (FSL) proficiency (Mady, 2014, p. 332). Additionally, immigrant students to Canada were able to meet success in French immersion in partly due to the support of parents of FSL learning (Mady, 2014). International research studies such as this particular research project promote the environment of global knowledge and pushes the boundaries of immigrant ‘toleration’ to understanding.

It was the goal of this study to prompt a discourse of language acquisition and language learning strategies in both Canada and China by working in harmony with the Teacher Education Reciprocal Learning Program at the University of Windsor, Canada and Southwest University, China. I was determined to continue to help build a bridge between the two countries and institutions. It is also an overarching research goal of mine to explore the connection between EFL aboard and ESL nationally.

### **Suggestions for Future Studies**

One of the major constraints of this particular study was the limitation of time. Being in a foreign country and a foreign school it took time to establish an ideal rapport and professional relationship with potential research participants. Therefore, only one formal individual interview was conducted with each of the participants. The project could have benefitted and provided stronger basis for claims with additional interview session as well as further insight into the Chinese teaching documents and resources. With this being said I believe the study strived from continued observations and informal conversations. The building of trust and rapport with myself and the participants created a positive environment for when the interview took place. The individual interview felt more as an everyday conversation rather than a question and answer period. Furthermore, I continued to stay in communication with one of the teacher participants and even visited her class on my third study trip to China. I plan to follow up with all of the research participants in the future.

The language barrier between myself and the participants provided me with many challenges and hurdles to overcome. As I did make sure that all potential participants had the ability to speak, read, and write in the English language it did not mean that all points were getting across in both directions. It is entirely possible that miscommunication, misinterpretation, or communication got 'lost of translation' throughout the study. I would encourage all Chinese researchers in the field of education to continue to pursue the research topics discussed throughout this document in order to build on the relevant data. I would be very keen to communicate or assist in the development with future studies.

The low participant pool of the study made my first study very manageable and at the same time very small. The participant pool of the study was low and the research project cannot

make generalized claims about the English as a Foreign Language program in China based on the four cases presented in the study. I attempted to focus this particular research study on the cognition and learning in language education by gathering narrative data sets from the participants. The low participant pool made this goal very attainable and manageable. For future studies, I aim at pursuing a relatable study diverting the focus toward the social critical aspects of language learning and education.

This international case study was effectively able to highlight the beliefs and practices of two Chinese EFL teachers and two EFL pre-service teacher candidates implementing language learning strategies in their English language learning classes. The study provides valuable discourse which reflects previous research literature and will resonate within the Chinese and Canadian Context.

## References

1. Basit, T.N., (2003). Manual or electronic? The role of coding in qualitative data analysis. *Educational Research*, vol. 45, no. 2, p. 143-154.
2. Canadian Magazine of Immigration, (2016). *Chinese Immigrants to Canada*, Source: *Statistic Canada*. Retrieved from <http://canadaimmigrants.com/chinese-immigrants-to-canada/>.
3. Caulley, D.N., (1983). Document analysis in program evaluation. *Evaluation and Program Planning*, vol. 6, pp. 19- 29.
4. Chen, Y., (2010). The semiotic construal of attitudinal curriculum goals: Evidence from EFL textbooks in China. *Linguistics and Education*, vol. 21. Pp. 60-74.
5. Cheng, H. P. (1988). Teaching English as a Foreign Language in China. *TESL Canada Journal*, vol. 5, no. 2.
6. Cheng, L. (2012). English immersion schools in China: evidence from students and teachers. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, vol. 33, no. 4, p. 379-391.
7. Cheng, L., Li, M., Kirby, J. R., Qiang, H., & Wade- Woolley, L. (2010). English language immersion and students' academic achievement in English, Chinese and mathematics. *Evaluation & Research in Education*, vol. 23, no. 3, p. 151- 169.
8. Clandinin, D.J. & Connelly, F, M. (2000). *Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
9. Crawford, J. (2004). *Language Choices in the Foreign Language Classroom: Target Language or the learners' First Language?* The Continuum Publishing Group Ltd. Retrieved from [http://journals1.scholarsportal.info.ezproxy.uwindsor.ca/pdf/00336882/v35i0001/5\\_lcitflotlfl.xml](http://journals1.scholarsportal.info.ezproxy.uwindsor.ca/pdf/00336882/v35i0001/5_lcitflotlfl.xml).
10. Creemers, B.P.M. (2006). The importance and perspectives of international studies in educational effectiveness. *Educational Research and Evaluation*, vol. 12, no. 6, p. 499-511.
11. Creswell, W. J., (2007). *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc.

12. Collingridge, D. S. & Gantt, E. E., (2008). The Quality of Qualitative Research. *American Journal of Medical Quality*, vol. 23, No 5.
13. Connelly, F.M. & Clandinin, D.J. (1988). *Teachers as curriculum planners: Narratives of experience*. New York: Teachers College Press.
14. Connelly, F.M. & Clandinin, D. J., (1990). Stories of Experience and Narrative Inquiry. *Educational Researcher*, vol. 19, no. 5, pp. 2-14.
15. Cope, B. & Kalantzis, M. (1999). *Multiliteracies, Literacy Learning and the Design of Social Futures*. Routledge.
16. Cummins, J. (1976). The Influence of Bilingualism on Cognitive Growth: A Synthesis of Research Findings and Explanatory Hypothesis. *Ontario Inst. For Studies in Education, Toronto*.
17. Cummins, J. (1977). Cognitive Factors Associated with the Attainment of Intermediate Levels of Bilingual Skills. *Modern Language Journal*, vol. 61, no 1-2.
18. Cummins, J. (1981). The Empirical and Theoretical Underpinnings of Bilingual Education. *The Journal of Education*, vol. 163, no. 1, *Bilingual/ Bicultural Education*.
19. Cummins, J. (1983). Bilingualism and Special Education: Program and Pedagogical Issues. *Learning Disability Quarterly*, Vol. 6, No. 4, pp. 373- 386.
20. Cummins, J. & Swain, M. (1986). *Bilingualism in education: aspects of theory, research, and practice*. *Applied linguistics and language study*. Longman, 1986 publications.
21. Cummins, J. (2007). Rethinking monolingual instructional strategies in multilingual classrooms. *Canadian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, vol. 10, no. 2.
22. Cummins, J. (2011). The intersection of cognitive and sociocultural factors in the development of reading comprehension among immigrant students. *Read Write*, 25, 1973-1990.
23. Cummins, J., Mirza, R., Stille, S. (2012). English language learners in Canadian schools: Emerging directions for school-based policies. *TESL Canada Journal*, 29(6), p. 25-48.

24. Dai, J. (2013). Teaching English through Play in a Chinese Classroom. *The Educational Forum*, vol. 77, p. 330-335.
25. Farmer, T., Robinson, K., Elliott, S. J., & Eyles, J., (2006). Developing and Implementing a Triangulation Protocol for Qualitative Health Research. *Qualitative Health Research*, vol. 16, no. 3, p.377-394.
26. Guo, Y. (2012). Diversity in Public Education: Acknowledging Immigrant Parent Knowledge. *Canadian Journal of Education/ Revue Canadienne de l'éducation*, vol. 35, no. 2, p. 120- 140.
27. Kaiman, J. (2013, 10, 22). China to downgrade English section of college admissions test. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/oct/22/china-english-college-test-gaokao>
28. Kalantzis, M., & Cope, B. (2008). 'Language Education and Multiliteracies', in Stephen May and Nancy H. Hornberger (Eds), *Encyclopedia of Language and Education*, vol. 1, Springer, p. 195-211.
29. Kong, S., Hoare, P., & Chi, Y., (2011). Immersion Education in China: Teachers' Perspectives. *Front. Education China*, vol. 6, no. 1, p. 68-91.
30. Leung, C. (2005). Language and content in bilingual education. *Linguistics and Education*, vol. 16, p. 238-252.
31. Liang, X. (2011). An Analysis of the Nature of Classroom Activities: A Comparative Study of an Immersion English Class and a Non- Immersion English Class in the Mainland of China. *Front. Education. China*, vol. 6, no. 2, p. 310- 330.
32. Lillis, T. (2008). Ethnography as Method, Methodology, and "Deep Theorizing": Closing the Gap Between Text and Context in Academic Writing Research. *Written Communication*, vol. 25, no. 3.
33. Lin, G. H.C. &Chien, P.S.C (2010). *An Introduction to English Teaching, a Textbook for English Educators*. Saarbrucken, Germany: VDM Verlag Dr. Muller Aktiengesellschaft & Co. KG
34. Liu, Y. (2013). Meritocracy and the Gaokao: a survey study of higher education selection and socio- economic participation in East China. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, vol. 34, nos. 5-6, p. 868-887.



35. Lopez, M. G., & Tashakkori, A. (2006). Differential Outcomes of Two Bilingual Education Programs on English Language Learners. *Bilingual Research Journal*, vol. 30, no. 1.
36. Ma, A. (2012). A study of the shaping of the 'emotion and attitude' domain in the new English language curriculum of China through an EFL textbook. *Pedagogy, Culture, & Society*, vol. 20, no. 2, pp. 231- 250.
37. Mady, C. (2014). Learning French as a second official Language in Canada: comparing monolingual and bilingual students at Grade 6. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, vol. 17, no. 3, p. 330-344.
38. Maple Leaf Educational Systems, (2017). Maple leaf Educational Systems. Retrieved from <http://www.mapleleafschools.com/homepage.php>.
39. Mitacs, (2015). About Mitacs. Retrieved from <https://www.mitacs.ca/en/about-mitacs>.
40. Moghaddam, A. (2006). Coding issues in grounded theory. *Issues in Education Research*, vol. 16 (1), p. 52-66.
41. Nordquist, R. (2014). English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Retrieved from <http://grammar.about.com/od/e/g/English-As-A-Foreign-Language-Efl.htm>
42. Ontario Ministry of Education (2001). *The Ontario Curriculum Grades 1-8: English as a Second Language and English Literacy Development*. Retrieved from <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/curricul/esl18.pdf>
43. Ontario Ministry of Education (2005). *Many Roots, Many Voices: Supporting English Language Learners in Every Classroom*. Retrieved from <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/manyroots/manyroots.pdf>
44. Ontario Ministry of Education (2006). *The Ontario Curriculum Grades 1-8: Language*. Retrieved from <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/language18currb.pdf>.
45. Ontario Ministry of Education (2007). *The Ontario Curriculum Grades 9-12: English as a Second Language and English Literacy Development*. Retrieved from <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/secondary/esl912currb.pdf>

46. Ontario Ministry of Education (2007). *English Language Learners: ESL and ELD Programs and Services*. Retrieved from <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/esleldprograms/esleldprograms.pdf>
47. Ontario Ministry of Education (2008). *Supporting English Language Learners: A Practical Guide for Ontario Educators Grade 1-8*. Retrieved from <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/esleldprograms/guide.pdf>
48. Ontario Ministry of Education (2008). *Supporting English Language Learners with Limited Prior Schooling: A Practical Guide for Ontario Educators Grades 3-12*. Retrieved from [http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/manyroots/ELL\\_LPS.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/manyroots/ELL_LPS.pdf)
49. Qiang, H. & Kang, Y. (2011). English Immersion in China as a Case of Educational Transfer. *Front. Education China*, vol. 6, no. 1, p. 8-36.
50. Ritchie, J., Lewis, J., Nicholls, C. M., & Ormston, R., (2014). *Qualitative Research Practice: A guide for social science students and researchers*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc.
51. Schwandt, T.A., (2000). Three Epistemological Stances for Qualitative Inquiry: Interpretivism, Hermeneutics, and Social Constructionism. In Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (Eds), *Handbook of Qualitative Research Second Edition*, p. 189-213, Sage Publications Inc.
52. Slavin, R.E & Cheung, A. (2005). A Synthesis of Research on Language of Reading Instruction for English Language Learners. *Review of Educational Research*, vol. 75, no. 2, p. 247-284.
53. Song, X. & Cheng, L. (2011). Investigating primary English immersion teachers in China: background, instructional contexts, professional development and perceptions. *Asia- Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, vol. 39, no. 2, p. 97- 112.
54. Statistics Canada. (2015). *Population growth: Migratory increase overtakes natural increase*. Ottawa: Statistics Canada. Retrieved from: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-630-x/11-630-x2014001-eng.htm>.
55. Swain, M. (2000). French Immersion Research in Canada: Recent Contributions to SLA and Applied Linguistics. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, vol. 20, p. 199-212.

56. Tong, F. & Shi, Q. (2012). Chinese- English bilingual education in China: a case study of college science majors. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, vol. 15, no. 2, p. 165- 182.
57. Wholey, S.J., Hatry, P.H., & Newcomer., (2004). *Handbook of practical program evaluation*. Jossey- Bass publishers 2<sup>nd</sup> edition.
58. Wilson, A.V., (1998). Qualitative Research: An Introduction. Purposes, Methodology, Criteria for Judgement, and a Rationale for Mixed Methodology. Retrieved from <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED423285>.
59. Wisniewska, D., (2013). Interest and interest- enhancing strategies of adolescent EFL learners. *ELT Journal*, vol. 76, no. 2.
60. Xu, S.J., & Connelly, F.M. (2010). Narrative inquiry for school-based research. *Narrative Inquiry*, vol. 20, no. 2, p. 249-370.
61. Zhou, Y., Xu, S.J., & Bayley, J. (2011). Intercultural Competence and EFL Teaching in China. In Lixian Jin and Martin Cortazzi (Eds). *Researching Chinese Learners- skills, perceptions & intercultural adaptation*, p. 138-166. Palgrave Macmillan, a division of Macmillan Publishers, Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, UK.
62. Xu, S.J., & Connelly, F.M. (2013). *Reciprocal learning in teacher education and school education between Canada and China. Partnership Grant Proposal Package*. Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) Partnership Program.
63. Xu, S.J., Chen, S., & Huang, Ju. (2015). *Pedagogies of working with diversity: West-East reciprocal learning in preservice teacher education*.
64. Xue, M. (2013). Effects of Group Work on English Communicative Competence of Chinese International Graduates in United States Institutions of Higher Education. *The Qualitative Report*, vol. 18.
65. Yan, C. (2012). ‘We can only change in a small way’: A study of secondary English teacher’ implementation of curriculum reform in China. *J Education Change*, vol. 12, p. 431- 447.
66. Yan, C. & He, C. (2012). Bridging the implementation gap: an ethnographic study of English teachers’ implementation of the curriculum reform in China. *Ethnography and Education*, vol. 7, no. 1, p. 1-19.

67. Zhang, F. & Liu, Y. (2014). A study of secondary school English teachers' beliefs in the context of curriculum reform in China. *Language Teaching Research*, vol. 18, no. 2, p. 197-204.
68. Zheng, X. & Borg, S. (2014). Task- based learning and teaching in China: Secondary school teacher's beliefs and practices. *Language Teaching Research*, vol. 18, no. 2, p. 205-221
69. Zhou, Y. (2011). *A Study of Chinese University EFL Teacher and Their Intercultural Competence Teaching*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Windsor, Windsor.

## Appendix A: Consent to Participate in Research



[Observation & Interview]

### CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

**Title of Study:** *Language immersion in the EFL program*

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by David Potocek, from the Faculty of Education and Academic Development at the University of Windsor. This study is built on and contextualized in David Potocek's supervisor: Dr. Shijing Xu's Teacher Education Reciprocal Learning Program between University of Windsor and Southwest University China, which is part of the SSHRC Partnership Grant Project (2013-2020), entitled *Reciprocal Learning in Teacher Education and School Education between Canada and China*.

If you have any questions or concerns about this qualitative study, please feel free to contact David Potocek, or the thesis supervisor, Dr. Shijing Xu at 519-253-3000 ext. 3808. As the primary investigator, I will be in China for the duration of the study, please feel free to contact me via email: [potocekd@uwindsor.ca](mailto:potocekd@uwindsor.ca). I am also open to exchanging WeChat information for additional means of communication.

#### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of the study is to examine the implementation of English language immersion in the Chinese English as a Foreign Language (EFL) program. English language immersion will be explored through the communicative use within the classroom. The goal is to observe how teachers and students interact and engage in their EFL classes using the English language. The research will primarily be conducted through observations of the EFL classroom. The observations will attempt to explore teacher/ student interaction by means of the English language. Individual interviews will also be conducted in order to support the observation method. Interviews will be conducted with EFL teachers and Chinese student teachers. Additionally, the goal is for the researcher and participants to learn from each other.

#### **PROCEDURES**

Based on your willingness and consent to participate I would like to observe your class, participate in the classroom culture and engage in simple dialogue with you as an EFL teacher. Based on your participation in my research, I would also like to invite you to participate in an approximate one hour interview session. As a teacher participant, you will be invited for up to

three interview sessions. However, you will have the choice to participate in either the observation component, interview component, or both aspects of the research proposal presented.

As a Chinese student teacher, I would like to invite you to participate in an approximate one hour interview session. As a student teacher participant, you will be invited for two interview sessions. The purpose of the interview is to learn of your prior English as Foreign Language learning experiences.

Participation is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time up until the beginning of transcript creation from the field notes without consequences of any kind.

### **POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

Your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time up until the beginning of transcript creation from the field notes without consequences of any kind. I will do my best to minimize the risks and discomforts by making the research a positive learning experience for you. Potential risks in participating in the research could include reputation, nervousness or anxiety, and embarrassment. After completion of the data and creation of a final paper, the findings may be shared with Dr. Xu and the Reciprocal Learning Program as an additional resource. Only disseminated de-identified data will be shared with the Reciprocal Learning Program.

### **POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

As an English as Foreign Language teacher in either an elementary or secondary school you will have the opportunity to share and reflect on the English education learning experience. I hope to share my Canadian education and teaching experience. I also hope to work together to solve common problems and issues with discussion and dialogue. Additionally, I would like to share and exchange any public Canadian English as a Second Language (ESL) curriculum documents and resources as our working relationship will grow. As people with common interests to help English language learners (ELL) I look forward in our future collaborations.

As a Chinese student teacher you will be able to reflect on your personal learning or teaching experience of the English language and the effect of language immersion. Your cultural and intercultural knowledge and experience will be valued, which will in turn contribute to the success of building a reciprocal learning environment between Canada and China.

### **COMPENSATION FOR PARTICIPATION**

There is no direct financial compensation to you.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Due to the fact that I have constant contact with you as participants, anonymity will not be achieved during the process of data collection. However, I will ensure anonymity in field notes, data analysis and research reports by using pseudonyms, so that your real identities will not be revealed. Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be

identified with you will remain confidential and will not be disclosed to a third party. Additionally, due to the size of the study individuals in the community may be able to identify participants based on the context of the information. Confidentiality will be minimized and maintained through the use of pseudonyms of names and the use of general descriptors for any locations. Only my primary supervisor and I will have access to the raw data. If any issues do arise please feel free to bring them to my attention. After completion of the data and creation of a final paper, the findings may be shared with Dr. Xu and the Reciprocal Learning Program as an additional resource. All necessary actions will be taken in order to promote on- going anonymity with participant names and locations during this course of action. All parties that will have access to the data include me as the principal investigator, supervisor Dr. Xu at the University of Windsor. Supervisors Dr. Shijian Chen and Dan Xiao at Southwest University will have access to disseminated de-identified data only. Due to the size of the study and small number of participants the information may be identifiable by local community members. In addition to the use of pseudonyms I will only write about trends and tendencies found within the data and not specific information. Frequent member checking with participants will also be conducted in order to ensure accuracy before any data will be finalized.

### **PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to participate in the observation, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. Participants may withdraw from the study anytime up until the beginning of transcript creation from the field notes without consequences of any kind.

### **FEEDBACK OF THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY TO THE PARTICIPANTS**

The research findings from this study will be available to you on the University of Windsor REB webpage ([www.uwindsor.ca/reb](http://www.uwindsor.ca/reb)) .

### **SUBSEQUENT USE OF DATA**

These data may be used in subsequent studies, in publications and in presentations.

### **RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS**

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact: Research Ethics Coordinator, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario N9B 3P4; Telephone: 519-253-3000, ext. 3948; e-mail: [ethics@uwindsor.ca](mailto:ethics@uwindsor.ca)

### **SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT/LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE**

I understand the information provided for the study: *Language immersion in the EFL program*  
My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

As a potential participant of the study I choose to participate in:

Observation component (Applies to Teacher Participants only)

Individual interview component

Both components of the study

\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

**SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR**

These are the terms under which I will conduct research.

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Investigator

\_\_\_\_\_

Date



## Appendix B: Letter of Information for Consent to Participate in Research



[Observation & Interview]

### LETTER OF INFORMATION FOR CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

**Title of Study:** *Language immersion in the EFL program*

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by David Potocek, from the Faculty of Education and Academic Development at the University of Windsor. This study is built on and contextualized in David Potocek's supervisor: Dr. Shijing Xu's Teacher Education Reciprocal Learning Program between University of Windsor and Southwest University China, which is part of the SSHRC Partnership Grant Project (2013-2020), entitled *Reciprocal Learning in Teacher Education and School Education between Canada and China*.

If you have any questions or concerns about this qualitative study, please feel free to contact David Potocek or the thesis supervisor, Dr. Shijing Xu at 519-253-3000 ext. 3808. As the primary investigator, I will be in China for the duration of the study, please feel free to contact me via email: [potocekd@uwindsor.ca](mailto:potocekd@uwindsor.ca). I am also open to exchanging WeChat information for additional means of communication.

#### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of the study is to examine the implementation of English language immersion in the Chinese English as a Foreign Language (EFL) program. English language immersion will be explored through the communicative use within the classroom. The goal is to observe how teachers and students interact and engage in their EFL classes using the English language. The research will primarily be conducted through observations of the EFL classroom. The observations will attempt to explore teacher/ student interaction by means of the English language. Individual interviews will also be conducted in order to support the observation method. Interviews will be conducted with EFL teachers and Chinese student teachers. Additionally, the goal is for the researcher and participants to learn from each other.

#### **PROCEDURES**

Based on your willingness and consent to participate I would like to observe your class, participate in the classroom culture and engage in simple dialogue with you as an EFL teacher. Based on your participation in my research, I would also like to invite you to participate in an approximate one hour interview session. As a teacher participant, you will be invited for up to

three interview sessions. However, you will have the choice to participate in either the observation component, interview component, or both aspects of the research proposal presented.

As a Chinese student teacher, I would like to invite you to participate in an approximate one hour interview session. As a student teacher participant, you will be invited for two interview sessions. The purpose of the interview is to learn of your prior English as Foreign Language learning experiences.

Participation is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time.

### **POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

Your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. I will do my best to minimize the risks and discomforts by making the research a positive learning experience for you. Potential risks in participating in the research could include reputation, nervousness or anxiety, and embarrassment. After completion of the data and creation of a final paper, the findings may be shared with Dr. Xu and the Reciprocal Learning Program as an additional resource. Only disseminated de-identified data will be shared with the Reciprocal Learning Program.

### **POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

As an English as Foreign Language teacher in either an elementary or secondary school you will have the opportunity to share and reflect on the English education learning experience. I hope to share my Canadian education and teaching experience. I also hope to work together to solve common problems and issues with discussion and dialogue. Additionally, I would like to share and exchange any public Canadian English as a Second Language (ESL) curriculum documents and resources as our working relationship will grow. As people with common interests to help English language learners (ELL) I look forward in our future collaborations.

As a Chinese student teacher you will be able to reflect on your personal learning or teaching experience of the English language and the effect of language immersion. Your cultural and intercultural knowledge and experience will be valued, which will in turn contribute to the success of building a reciprocal learning environment between Canada and China.

### **COMPENSATION FOR PARTICIPATION**

There is no direct financial compensation to you.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Due to the fact that I have constant contact with you as participants, anonymity will not be achieved during the process of data collection. However, I will ensure anonymity in field notes, data analysis and research reports by using pseudonyms, so that your real identities will not be revealed. Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will not be disclosed to a third party.

Additionally, due to the size of the study individuals in the community may be able to identify

participants based on the context of the information. Confidentiality will be minimized and maintained through the use of pseudonyms of names and the use of general descriptors for any locations. Only my primary supervisor and I will have access to the raw data. If any issues do arise please feel free to bring them to my attention. After completion of the data and creation of a final paper, the findings may be shared with Dr. Xu and the Reciprocal Learning Program as an additional resource. All necessary actions will be taken in order to promote on- going anonymity with participant names and locations during this course of action. All parties that will have access to the data include me as the principal investigator, supervisor Dr. Xu at the University of Windsor. Supervisors Dr. Shijian Chen and Dan Xiao at Southwest University will have access to completed data only. Due to the size of the study and small number of participants the information may be identifiable by local community members. In addition to the use of pseudonyms I will only write about trends and tendencies found within the data and not specific information. Frequent member checking with participants will also be conducted in order to ensure accuracy before any data will be finalized.

#### **PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to participate in the observation, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. Participants may withdraw from the study anytime up until the beginning of transcript creation from the field notes without consequences of any kind.

#### **FEEDBACK OF THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY TO THE PARTICIPANTS**

The research findings from this study will be available to you on the University of Windsor REB webpage ([www.uwindsor.ca/reb](http://www.uwindsor.ca/reb)) .

#### **SUBSEQUENT USE OF DATA**

These data may be used in subsequent studies, in publications and in presentations.

#### **RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS**

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact: Research Ethics Coordinator, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario N9B 3P4; Telephone: 519-253-3000, ext. 3948; e-mail: [ethics@uwindsor.ca](mailto:ethics@uwindsor.ca)

**SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR**

These are the terms under which I will conduct research.

---

Signature of Investigator

---

Date

**Appendix C: Consent for Audio Taping**

University  
of Windsor

**CONSENT FOR AUDIO TAPING**

[Individual Interview]

Research Participant Name:

Title of the Project: Language immersion in the EFL program

I consent to the audio-taping of the individual interviews.

I understand these are voluntary procedures and that I am free to withdraw at any time by requesting that the taping be stopped. I also understand that my name will not be revealed to anyone and that taping will be kept confidential. Tapes are filed by number only and store in a locked cabinet.

I understand that confidentiality will be respected and that the audio tape will be for professional use only.

---

(Signature of Research Participant)

(Date)

## Appendix D: Invitation Letter to Participate in Research

### English Teacher (English)

#### Invitation Letter to Participate in Research: English Teacher

**Title of Study:** Language Immersion in the EFL Program

**Principal Investigator:** David R Potocek, Graduate Student, Education Department, University of Windsor, Ontario, Canada.

**Faculty Advisor:** Dr. Shijing Xu, Faculty Member, Education Department, University of Windsor, Ontario, Canada.

Dear Sir/ Madam,

I, David Roman Potocek and Dr. Shijing Xu, graduate student and faculty advisor, from the Department of Education, University of Windsor, invite you to participate in a research project entitled *Language Immersion in the EFL Program*.

The purpose of this research project is to examine the implementation of English language immersion in the Chinese English as a Foreign Language (EFL) program. English language immersion will be explored through the communicative use within the classroom. The research will primarily be conducted through observations of the EFL classroom. The observations will attempt to explore teacher/ student interaction by means of the English language. Individual interviews will also be conducted in order to support the observation method. Interviews will be conducted with EFL teachers and Chinese student teachers. Ideally, interviews will be conducted once a week for up to 3 interviews per placement. Additionally, the goal is for the research and participants to learn from each other. Should you choose to participate, you will be asked to engage in your regular class activities and under your consent in individual interviews.

The expected duration to stay within your classroom will be determined by Southwest University and is estimated between 2- 5 weeks. The research should benefit the primary investigator, the research participants and future readers of the research as the goal of this investigation is to learn from both Canadian and Chinese English language teaching methods and approaches.

This particular research study will be sponsored in part by Mitacs Globalink Research Award. Mitacs is a Canadian research grant offering travel funding between Canada and international partners. Sites of the research project include Southwest University, Elementary School Affiliated to SWU, and Junior High School Affiliated to SWU.

If you have any pertinent questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the University of Windsor Research Ethics Office (519-253-3000 ex. 3948, ethics@uwindsor.ca)

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through University of Windsor Research Ethics Board [number to come].

If you have any question, please feel free to contact me. We look forward to your involvement.

Sincerely,

---

David R Potocek  
Language Immersion in the EFL Program

## Appendix E: Invitation Letter to Participate in Research

### English Teacher (Chinese)

#### 参与研究邀请函:

#### 英语教师

**课题名称:**英语外语教学中的语言浸没

**主要研究者:**加拿大安大略省温莎大学教育学院研究生：David R Potocek

**学院导师:**加拿大安大略省温莎大学教育学院教授：许世静博士

尊敬的先生/女士,

本人，David R Potocek（加拿大安大略省温莎大学教育学院研究生）以及许世静博士（加拿大安大略省温莎大学教育学院教授），共同邀请您参与此项名为“英语外语教学中的语言浸没”的研究。

此项研究的目的是考察英语语言浸没教学法在中国英语外语教学中的运用情况，并将主要着眼于课堂内语言浸没教学法的交际性运用，因此，研究活动也将主要在对英语外语教学课堂的观察中开展。我们的课堂观察将试图探究师生间的英语语言互动，同时，作为对课堂观察手段的支持和辅助，我们还将开展个体采访。采访主要针对从事英语外语教学的在职教师和包括非英语专业实习教师在内的中方实习教师。关于采访的频率，我们的理想设定是：每周1次，每个实习期共3次。此外要补充说明的是，此项目旨在促进研究者和参与研究者的相互学习。如果您选择了参与我们的研究，您将被要求充分参与到您的日常课堂教学活动和在您授权下的个人采访当中。



我们参与到您课堂中的时限是由西南大学授权决定的，持续时长预计在2~5周左右。作为此项研究的最根本目的，我们希望无论是此项目的主要研究者、参与者还是未来的读者，都可以通过同时了解加、中两国的英语教学手段和方法获益。

此项特别研究的部分经费是由Mitacs Globalink研究奖赞助提供的。Mitacs是一项提供往返加拿大和其他国际合作伙伴间交通费用的加方科研拨款。

作为该项目研究场所的单位包括：西南大学、西南大学附属小学和西南大学附属中学。

如果您有任何关于您作为此项目参与者的权益的问题，请联系温莎大学学术道德办公室(519-253-3000 ex. 3948, ethics@uwindsor.ca)

此项目已通过温莎大学学术道德委员会的复审并获得其颁发的研究许可证。

如果您有任何疑问，欢迎随时与我联系。我们期待着您的参与。

此致

敬礼

---

David R Potocek

“英语外语教学中的语言浸没”课题组

## Appendix F: Invitation Letter to Participate in Research

### Student Teacher (English)

#### Invitation Letter to Participate in Research: Student Teacher

**Title of Study:** Language Immersion in the EFL Program

**Principal Investigator:** David R Potocek, Graduate Student, Education Department, University of Windsor, Ontario, Canada.

**Faculty Advisor:** Dr. Shijing Xu, Faculty Member, Education Department, University of Windsor, Ontario, Canada.

Dear Sir/ Madam,

I, David Roman Potocek and Dr. Shijing Xu, graduate student and faculty advisor, from the Department of Education, University of Windsor, invite you to participate in a research project entitled *Language Immersion in the EFL Program*.

The purpose of this research project is to examine the implementation of English language immersion in the Chinese English as a Foreign Language (EFL) program. English language immersion will be explored through the communicative use within the classroom. The research will primarily be conducted through observations of the EFL classroom. The observations will attempt to explore teacher/ student interaction by means of the English language. Individual interviews will also be conducted in order to support the observation method. Interviews will be conducted with EFL teachers and Chinese student teachers. Additionally, the goal is for the research and participants to learn from each other. Should you consent and choose to participate, you will be asked to engage in individual interviews in order to gage your English language learning experience.

The expected number of interviews conducted with you will be two one hour sessions at two different times. The research should benefit the primary investigator, the research participants and future readers of the research as the goal of this investigation is to learn from both Canadian and Chinese English language teaching methods and approaches.

This particular research study will be sponsored in part by Mitacs Globalink Research Award. Mitacs is a Canadian research grant offering travel funding between Canada and international partners. Sites of the research project include Southwest University, Elementary School Affiliated to SWU, and Junior High School Affiliated to SWU.

If you have any pertinent questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the University of Windsor Research Ethics Office (519-253-3000 ex. 3948, [ethics@uwindsor.ca](mailto:ethics@uwindsor.ca))

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through University of Windsor Research Ethics Board [number to come].

If you have any question, please feel free to contact me. We look forward to your involvement.

Sincerely,

---

David R Potocek  
Language Immersion in the EFL Program

## Appendix G: Invitation Letter to Participate in Research

### Student Teacher (Chinese)

#### 参与研究邀请函:

#### 实习教师

**课题名称:**英语外语教学中的语言浸没

**主要研究者:**加拿大安大略省温莎大学教育学院研究生：David R Potocek

**学院导师:**加拿大安大略省温莎大学教育学院教授：许世静博士

尊敬的先生/女士,

本人，David R Potocek（加拿大安大略省温莎大学教育学院研究生）以及许世静博士（加拿大安大略省温莎大学教育学院教授），共同邀请您参与此项名为“英语外语教学中的语言浸没”的研究。

此项研究的目的是考察英语语言浸没教学法在中国英语外语教学中的运用情况，并将主要着眼于课堂内语言浸没教学法的交际性运用，因此，研究活动也将主要在对英语外语教学课堂的观察中开展。我们的课堂观察将试图探究师生间的英语语言互动，同时，作为对课堂观察手段的支持和辅助，我们还将开展个体采访。采访主要针对从事英语外语教学的在职教师和包括非英语专业实习教师在内的中方实习教师。此外要补充说明的是，此项目旨在促进研究者和参与研究者的相互学习。如果您准许并选择了参与我们的研究，您将被要求充分参与到个人采访当中以便我们充分了解您的英语学习经验。

作为此项研究的最根本目的，我们希望无论是此项目的主要研究者、参与者还是未来的读者，都可以通过同时了解加、中两国的英语教学手段和方法获益。

此项**特别研究的部分经费**是由Mitacs Globalink研究奖赞助提供的. Mitacs是一项提供往返加拿大和其他国际合作伙伴间交通费用的加方科研拨款。

作为该项目研究场所的单位包括：西南大学、西南大学附属小学和西南大学附属中学。

如果您有任何关于您作为此项目参与者的权益的问题，请联系温莎大学学术道德办公室(519-253-3000 ex. 3948, ethics@uwindsor.ca)

此项目已通过温莎大学学术道德委员会的复审并获得其颁发的研究许可证。

如果您有任何疑问，欢迎随时与我联系。我们期待着您的参与。

此致

敬礼

---

David R Potocek

“英语外语教学中的语言浸没”课题组

## Appendix H: Outline of Interview

### Teacher Participant

#### Outline of Interview

### Teacher Participant

**Title of Study:** Language Immersion in the EFL Program

**Principal Investigator:** David R Potocek, Graduate Student, Education Department, University of Windsor, Ontario, Canada.

**Faculty Advisor:** Dr. Shijing Xu, Faculty Member, Education Department, University of Windsor, Ontario, Canada.

The goal with the individual interviews with the teacher participants is to expand on the on-going ethnographic observations within the classroom.

- 1) The interviewer will begin the interview by asking the interviewee how the day went and briefly chat about the day's activities.
- 2) How long have you been working as an EFL teacher and what has steered you toward this path?
- 3) How long have you been working in this particular school? If applicable, how similar or different is this particular school from other schools previously worked at?
- 4) Please describe the teaching pedagogy used as a foundation for your classroom. What kind of relationship do you have with the students?
- 5) Have you ever used a communicative/ immersion approach to English language learning? Why or why not?
- 6) What are some effective teaching strategies you used that you found really worked? Can you elaborate on one of these?
- 7) What sorts of classroom dynamics affect the English language learning? Possible topics to explore include, the use of textbooks, student engagement, student leadership, male and female classroom dynamics and much more.
- 8) What are possible implications of English language learning at the elementary or junior high school level? What role does the English language play to your students?
- 9) Where do you see English language learning in China in approximately 10 years and why?

## Appendix I: Outline of Interview

### Student Teacher Participant

#### Outline of Interview Student Teacher Participant

**Title of Study:** Language Immersion in the EFL Program

**Principal Investigator:** David R Potocek, Graduate Student, Education Department, University of Windsor, Ontario, Canada.

**Faculty Advisor:** Dr. Shijing Xu, Faculty Member, Education Department, University of Windsor, Ontario, Canada.

The goal with the individual interviews with the student teacher participants is to delve in the unique experience the student teacher had learning English as a foreign language throughout their educational career.

- 1) The interviewer will begin the interview by asking the interviewee to further introduce themselves.
- 2) As a member of the Reciprocal Learning Program and a student at Southwest University you must have passed multiple rigorous English tests. How has your English language learning in schools prepared you for these tests?
- 3) How long do you think you have been studying English? How often do you think you use it and in what context?
- 4) Can you please provide a brief history of your English language learning experience in your previous schools? Guiding questions include: was English language learning mandatory in your school? How often were you learning English?
- 5) Have you ever experienced a communicative/ immersion strategy of learning the English language? If yes, can you further describe your experience? If no, why not?
- 6) As a student teacher at Southwest University how do you think your English language learning influence your teaching strategies, if at all?
- 7) As a future teacher in China (English teacher or not) how do you value the English language learning within the schools?
- 8) Has learning English as a foreign language aided your overall learning experience? Do you believe that speaking the English language is a beneficial skill to have in China?

## **Appendix J: Research Introductory Script**

### **Teacher**

#### Research Introductory Script

#### (Teacher)

Hello, my name is David Potocek and I am a student at the University of Windsor, Ontario, Canada. I am currently a master's student intending to begin work on my thesis project. My research interests include second language acquisition, multiliteracies engagement, and language immersion. As a second language learner myself I have become very passionate about my research endeavours.

As a graduate student participating in the Reciprocal Learning Program I am conducting my own research study. My research study sets to examine the implementation of English language immersion in the Chinese English as a Foreign Language (EFL) program. I plan to observe and explore the use of the English language within the classroom. This research study is not a part of the Reciprocal Learning Program and I invite you to participate in future interviews in order to discuss what we have explored in the classroom.

The purpose of the study is to examine the utilization of language immersion. As my research interested include second language learning I hope that my study sets the potential for reciprocal learning between the researcher and potential participants. I hope to have collaborative discussions about effective English language learning strategies.

You may find additional information about my study within the consent form. I am open to answer any questions and discuss any possible issues or concerns you may have.



## **Appendix K: Research Introductory Script**

### **Student Teacher**

#### Research Introductory Script

#### (Student Teacher)

Hello, my name is David Potocek and I am a student at the University of Windsor, Ontario, Canada. I am currently a master's student intending to begin work on my thesis project. My research interests include second language acquisition, multiliteracies engagement, and language immersion. As a second language learner myself I have become very passionate about my research endeavours.

As a graduate student participating in the Reciprocal Learning Program I am conducting my own research study. My research study sets to examine the implementation of English language immersion in the Chinese English as a Foreign Language (EFL) program. I plan to observe and explore the use of the English language within the classroom. This research study is not a part of the Reciprocal Learning Program and I invite you to participate in future interviews in order to discuss your past English language learning experiences. We may also discuss your possible thoughts and aspirations with the English language and the Reciprocal Learning Program.

The purpose of the study is to examine the utilization of language immersion. As my research interested include second language learning I hope that my study sets the potential for reciprocal learning between the researcher and potential participants. I hope to have collaborative discussions about your experience learning the English language in China.

You may find additional information about my study within the consent form. I am open to answer any questions and discuss any possible issues or concerns you may have.

**Vita Auctoris**

**Name:** David R. Potocek

**Place of birth:** Cornwall, Ontario, Canada.

**Year of birth:** 1990

**Education:** University of Windsor, B.H.K., Windsor, ON, Canada, 2012  
University of Windsor, B.Ed., Windsor, ON, Canada, 2014  
University of Windsor, M.Ed., Windsor, ON, Canada, 2017