

Faculty of Educational Sciences
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Voiceless Teachers in Education:

Intercultural Experiences and Perceptions of Chinese Immigrant Teachers in Finland

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Abstract

During the past decade, the demographic changes brought about by international mobility have diversified education in Finland. One type of diversification is the increasing number of teachers of immigrant background. However, how immigrant teachers experience the Finnish educational system has not yet been amongst the topics of full-scale academic research (Nishimura-Sahi, Wallin & Eskola, 2017). There is an emerging need to address this research gap by giving voice to immigrant teachers who are rarely heard. This doctoral thesis sets out to investigate the experiences and perceptions of immigrant teachers working in Finland, taking Chinese immigrant teachers of the Chinese language as a case study. The findings of this PhD study are presented in the form of three academic publications and an extended summary.

The first article looks into the social discourses on Finnish education in general and Chinese language education in particular, that could potentially influence immigrant Chinese teachers' presumptions and expectations about being a Chinese language teacher in Finland. The first article forms the background of the doctoral study. The second article and the third article examine the intercultural experiences and the perceptions of Chinese immigrant teachers in Finland. The second article reveals the multiple facets of immigrant teachers' experiences which are connected to how the teachers perceive their positions in Finland. The third article examines the teachers' cross-national comparisons on Chinese language education, which also reveal how the teachers perceive their positions in comparison with colleagues working in another context. The findings in all of the three publications suggest a strong link between experiences, perceptions and intercultural imaginations, as well as constructed discourses.

The findings of this doctoral study lead to both theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, a new model for understanding the experiences of immigrant teachers was developed. This model takes into account the multiple facets of immigrant teachers' experiences, the power relations in the context under review and their influence on intercultural imagination and discourses. Practically, the findings suggested that 1) stakeholders should listen to the needs and concerns of immigrant teachers and provide equal treatment to all kinds of teachers; 2) regular continued professional development training plays a very important role in helping teachers to update their subject knowledge and teaching skills, but also in providing opportunities for all types of teachers to learn together; 3) intercultural teacher education and training should also help the teachers to become aware of the ongoing discourses, and reflect critically on their own cultural assumptions.

Keywords: Chinese immigrant teachers, Chinese as a second language, discourses, culture, intercultural experiences

Haiqin Liu

Opettajat ilman ääntä koulutusjärjestelmässä

- Kiinalaisopettajien Kulttuurienvälinen Kokemuksia ja Käsityksiä Suomalaisessa

Avainsanat:

Viime vuosikymmenen aikana lisääntynyt kansainvälinen liikkuvuus on vaikuttanut väestörakenteen muutokseen, joka puolestaan on vaikuttanut koulutuksen moninaistumiseen. Yksi huomattava muutos on lisääntynyt maahanmuuttajataustaisten opettajien määrä. Aikaisempi tutkimus maahanmuuttajataustaisista opettajista ja heidän kokemuksistaan suomalaisessa koulutusjärjestelmässä on vähäistä (Nishimura-Sahi, Wallin and Eskola, 2017). Erityisen tärkeää on antaa näille opettajille mahdollisuus kertoa näistä kokemuksista ja tuoda esille heidän käsityksiään suomalaisesta koulutusjärjestelmästä. Tämä väitöskirjatutkimus on tapaustutkimus Suomessa työskentelevistä maahanmuuttajataustaisista opettajista, esimerkkinä kiinalaiset opettajat.

Ensimmäisessä artikkelissa tarkastellaan keskustelua suomalaisesta koulutusjärjestelmästä, erityisesti kiinan kielen opetuksen näkökulmasta. Tämä sosiaalinen diskurssi voi mahdollisesti vaikuttaa maahanmuuttajataustaisten kiinalaisten opettajien oletuksiin ja käsityksiin siitä, millainen kiinan kielen opettajan tulee olla Suomessa. Ensimmäinen artikkeli on johdatus väitöskirjatyöhön. Toisessa ja kolmannessa artikkelissa tarkastellaan Suomessa työskentelevien kiinalaisten maahanmuuttajaopettajien kokemuksia ja käsityksiä opettamisesta Suomessa. Toinen artikkeli tuo esille maahanmuuttajaopettajien moninaisia kokemuksia, jotka liittyvät siihen, miten opettajat kokevat oman asemansa suomalaisessa työelämässä. Kolmannessa artikkelissa tarkastellaan opettajien kansallisia rajoja ylittäviä kokemuksia kiinan kielen opettamisesta ja, kuinka nämä opettajat arvioivat omaa asemaansa Suomessa verrattuna kollegoihin, jotka työskentelevät eri kontekstissa. Kaikkien kolmen yksittäisten tutkimusten (artikkelien) tulokset viittaavat vahvaan yhteyteen kokemusten, käsitysten ja kulttuurienvälisten mielikuvien sekä niiden ympärille muodostuneiden diskurssien välillä.

Tämä tutkimus on merkittävä sekä teoreettisesta että käytännön työn kehittämisen näkökulmasta. Tutkimuksen pohjalta on luotu malli, joka auttaa maahanmuuttajataustaisten opettajien kokemusten analysoinnissa. Tämä malli ottaa huomioon maahanmuuttajaopettajien moninaiset kokemukset, valtasuhteet, jotka synnyttävät näitä diskursseja ja niiden vaikutukset interkulttuuristen mielikuvien rakentumiselle. Tutkimuksen tulokset osoittavat, että 1) eri sidosryhmien tulisi kuunnella maahanmuuttajaopettajien kokemuksia ja huolenaiheita sekä kohdella tasa-arvoisesti eri taustoista tulevia opettajia; 2) säännöllisellä opettajien täydennyskoulutuksella on erittäin tärkeä rooli, jotta opettajat pystyvät päivittämään sekä kontekstiosaamista että opetustaitojaan, mutta myös tarjota mahdollisuuksia erilaisille opettajille oppia yhdessä; 3) Interkulttuurisen opettajankoulutuksen tulisi myös auttaa opettajia tunnistamaan meneillään olevia diskursseja ja pohtimaan kriittisesti omia kulttuurisia oletuksiaan.

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Vantaa, 02.10.2020

Haiqin Liu

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1 Introduction

1.1 Research background: A ‘journey’ from language education to a sociological and intercultural perspective

When I started my PhD in Spring 2015, my initial plan for a PhD project was to investigate educational/pedagogical aspects of Chinese language education, that is, how the Chinese language is taught and learned in Finnish schools. The teaching and learning of the Chinese language is a relatively new phenomenon in Finland. My early motivation was both professional and personal. Having been a language teacher for quite many years myself and as a mother of a young child living in Finland, I wanted to know more about how the teaching and learning of Chinese as a second language was carried out in Finnish schools and what the factors influencing its current status and future development were. I discussed with my main supervisor Fred Dervin about my interests and initial research plan, and we both agreed that well-planned action research would help me to gather the data I wanted.

In 2015, just a few weeks before Finnish schoolchildren began their summer holidays, I contacted two Chinese language teachers working in a Finnish school that offers a Chinese-Finnish bilingual curriculum and Chinese language as A1¹ language. We had a brief meeting, in which I told them about my plan and that I would be very happy to offer any kind of assistance for teaching the Chinese language if needed. Both of the teachers agreed happily that I was welcomed to carry out the study at the beginning of the following Autumn term. They also suggested that I should contact their principal for permission. “I don’t think she will disagree”, they assured me. I then wrote an email

¹ A1 means the first compulsory foreign language. In Finland, by the time a student graduates from high school, they are required to learn at least two languages of their choice (A1 and B1) other than their first language. As of 2020, the new decree requires all first graders to start their first foreign language A1 in the spring. Most schools in Finland offer English as the A1 language. The study of the second foreign language B1 usually starts at grade 6 (For more detail about language education in Finnish schools, please see https://www.oph.fi/sites/default/files/documents/factsexpress1c_2019.pdf).

to the school principal and told her in detail about my plan for action research on Chinese language education in her school, and expressed my wish to discuss with her suggestions on how I could revise my research plan so that the school could also benefit from it. I did not get any reply from my first email, so I sent two other emails. But still no replies.

After the summer holiday, I contacted the teachers again about the research. They reluctantly said that they would need to discuss with their principal and get back to me. I waited for about a week, there was no news from them. I was a bit worried, so I made a telephone call to the principal after some more days. She replied that it was totally up to the teachers to decide whether they would host me for the research or not. I then contacted the two teachers again. This time they said because they were to have a very busy term, they would not be able to host me for the research. I restated that I would just observe most of the time, so I would not need their extra help or time. Instead, I could help them if they needed any assistance. They just refused politely without further explanation. I was very frustrated and confused. I had no idea what had happened during the summer and what could be the reasons that I was refused. But my interest in researching the phenomenon of Chinese language education in Finland was not discouraged.

Hoping to get more information, I got in contact with the coordinators of two Chinese language education projects funded by the Finnish Ministry of Education, one aimed at promoting Chinese language education at basic education level, the other at the upper secondary school level. I had a one-hour interview with each of them at different times. During one of the interviews, the coordinator of the basic education level project told me a story: He had been an English teacher for over ten years, and nobody had ever asked him whether he was aware of any political influence of the UK or US on students who learnt the English language. However, a few days after he took the coordinator position of the Chinese language project, some people came and reminded him to be

aware of the political influence of the Chinese government on Chinese language education.

During the autumn term of 2015, through Professor Fred Dervin, I had the opportunity to be involved in a professional development workshop for Chinese language teachers in Finland organized by the Confucius Institute of the University of Helsinki. There, I met many Chinese language teachers, who were all from Mainland China. When I asked why there was no Finnish or other Chinese language teachers, one teacher replied: “I’ve never seen them here, maybe they don’t want anything to do with the Confucius Institute, or maybe they believe they are better teachers and can’t learn anything new here”.

These two incidences triggered the shift of my research focus from language education (pedagogical aspects of Chinese language teaching and learning) to a more sociological and intercultural perspective. That is, I became interested in how Chinese language education is linked with immigration phenomena, the representations of China and the Chinese, and with Finnish society. In particular, I want to explore the circulating ideological discourses about Chinese language education in Finland, and how those who represent the major force in the profession - Chinese immigrant teachers - experience and perceive their roles in it. At this stage, ideology is understood as the socio-politically accepted and taken-for-granted ways of thinking, for example, about language and diversity (Shi-xu, 2001). I believe that the provision and consumption of foreign language education are inevitably influenced by and, themselves, influence the social construction of a given language, and teachers’ experiences and perceptions have a strong impact on how a language is taught and learned in practice.

In qualitative research, it is always challenging to separate the researcher and the researched (Berger, 2015). In this PhD study, I am not aiming to discover the ‘truth’ or ‘purely objective knowledge’. Instead, I believe that my ideology and biases and those of my co-authors of the articles have an impact on our research interest, but also on the way we analyze and interpret my data. By offering this personal narrative about the

research process at the beginning of this thesis I hope I can help my readers to better understand my own positioning as a researcher and the important focus of this study.

1.2 Research context: Mixed discourses about Finland as a starting point

The context of my research is Finland, a Nordic country with a population of about 5.5 million. Finland is one of the most “celebrated” Nordic countries around the world for well-being, happiness, and top education. Finnish schools have become increasingly more multicultural over the past decades (Holm & Londen, 2010; Layne & Dervin, 2016). Researchers and policymakers have thus discussed the need to develop teachers’ intercultural sensitivity to better support the personal and academic growth of culturally diverse students (Jokikokko, 2005; 2009). Recruiting more teachers from diverse backgrounds was considered one of the solutions (Hahl & Paavola, 2015; Lefever, Paavola, Berman, Guðjónsdóttir & Gísladóttir, 2014). There is thus an increasing number of immigrant teachers, most of whom are language teachers, working in all education sectors in Finland (Lefever et al., 2014; Skhiri, 2016).

At the time I started this research, I was aware of several coexisting discourses in Finland that are highly relevant to my research interest. These include discourses on multicultural education, the quality and equality of Finnish education, foreign language education and the demand for learning the Chinese language.

The first discourse is related to the increasing diversity of education in Finland. As asserted earlier, over the past decades, schools in the Nordic countries have become increasingly multicultural (Hellman, Ragnarsdóttir, Lauritsen & Paavola, 2018). In Finland, the demographic changes brought about by different kinds of international mobility are said to have diversified its education (Holm & Londen 2010). Research about the need to develop teachers’ intercultural sensitivity to better support the personal and academic growth of students of diverse background (Jokikokko, 2005), and the need to recruit more teachers of diverse backgrounds to match the diversity of the students (Hahl & Paavola, 2015; Holm, & Londen, 2010) has emerged in Finland. Exact data on the diversity of the teaching force in Finland is scarce. Fragmented

information does imply that there is a significant and increasing number of teachers of immigrant background working in all education sectors in Finland (European Commission, 2016; Holm & Londen, 2010; Lefever, Paavola, Berman, Guðjónsdóttir, Talib & Gísladóttir, 2014; Skhiri, 2016). However, how these teachers experience the Finnish educational context has not yet been given the adequate academic investigation it deserves (Nishimura-Sahi, Wallin & Eskola, 2017). Current public debates about multicultural education still largely focus on immigrant learners, the fact that the staff is also increasingly multicultural in Finnish education has not been paid enough attention to. Although it is natural to place the focus on the wellbeing and development of learners - after all, this is the main purpose of education. It is also important to realize that the conditions of all teachers are closely tied to learners' wellbeing and achievement. Teachers should not be overlooked. It is thus time to extend our attention to the state of wellbeing at work and the feeling of belonging of teachers of immigrant background and ask why these teachers are next to invisible both in educational research and in everyday discussions in Finland.

The second background discourse is about the excellence of Finnish education and Finnish teachers. Finland has been praised worldwide for its education because of its outstanding results in the studies of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) at the beginning of this century (Niemi et al., 2012). The success of Finnish education makes it an interesting context to examine those who play a role in it, including immigrant teachers. One of the factors to this success is often attributed to Finnish teachers, who are said to be 'the best and most respected in the world' (Miettunen and Dervin, 2014). In daily societal and academic discussions about teachers in Finland, there seems to be an assumption that Finnish teachers are all white, middle-class and of Finnish origin, despite the fact that the teaching force in Finland is far more diverse than this shared image (Acquah, Tandon & Lempinen, 2016; Mansikka & Holm, 2011; Miettunen & Dervin, 2014). How about the "non-Finnish" teachers working in Finland, who do not fit into this shared imagined figure? Are they

equally respected? Do they feel that they are all in a “prestigious profession”, as is often claimed about the status of teachers in the Nordic country (Sahlberg, 2011: 11)?

The third discourse that helped me problematize my research topic is related to the rise of Chinese language worldwide and in Finland. The past decade has witnessed an increasing interest in learning Mandarin Chinese across the world (Du & Kirkebæk, 2012; Wang, 2009; Zhu & Li, 2014). The main reasons behind the growing interest are the emergence of China as an economic superpower in the world and its rapidly growing prominence in world affairs (Lo Bianco, 2011); the widespread of Chinese diaspora communities in different countries (Li, 2005; Zhang & Li, 2010); and the promotion of the Chinese language by the Chinese National Office of Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language, commonly known as Hanban. According to the *Confucius Institute Annual Development Report 2017*, by the end of 2017, Confucius Institutes around the world had 46,200 full-time and part-time native Chinese and local teachers working in different parts of the world. In addition to this figure, many native Chinese teachers are directly hired by local institutes and educational organizations to teach the language.

Although the Chinese language is still a “small” language (a language of a relatively small number of learners) in Finland, it is increasingly seen as a valuable language. During the past decade, a number of initiatives (i.e. the Yanzu project, Popkiina project and Lezhi project) were funded by the Finnish government to promote the teaching and learning of the Chinese language. By the end of 2017, about 30 primary and secondary schools, 20 higher education institutions and several cultural clubs and adult education institutions were offering Chinese courses. With the increasing demand for learning the Chinese language, the issue of supplying qualified teachers arises. Currently, teachers of Chinese working in Finland consist of a small number of certified teachers who were educated in Finland (most of whom are Finnish nationals), and the rest are immigrant teachers who were born and educated outside Finland. This PhD study focuses specifically on Chinese immigrant teachers. As Chinese immigrant teachers

are often constructed both in academic and non-academic discourses to be coming from an educational culture that is very different from the Western one, it is important to understand how they experience and navigate Finnish education while teaching the Chinese language, and how they perceive their position in Finland.

At this point, it is essential to explain who the immigrant teachers under review are. Many different terms have been used to refer to immigrant teachers with slightly different emphases, such as *foreign-born teachers* (Boyd, 2003; Virta, 2015), *internationally educated teachers* (Walsh, Brigham & Wang, 2011), *overseas trained teachers* (Murray, Riazi & Cross, 2012), *teachers with an immigrant background* (Lefever et al., 2014), to name just a few. In Finland, the word *immigrant* (*maahanmuuttaja* in Finnish) is used as an umbrella term that covers several overlapping groups, namely: foreign citizens, persons born abroad, foreign-language speakers, and persons with a foreign background (Statistics Finland, 2017). Due to this overlap, it is thus difficult to have an accurate number of the population of immigrants in Finland. According to Statistics Finland, in 2017, there were 384,123 persons with a foreign background (including first and second generations) living in Finland, which is less than 10 percent of its population. However, in the most densely populated metropolitan areas of Finland, the percentage of persons of foreign background is much higher. In this PhD study, I will use the term *Chinese immigrant teachers* to describe the specific group of people under investigation. The term immigrant teachers corresponds to the common understanding of immigrants who are foreign language speakers born outside the borders of Finland. Chinese immigrant teachers refer specifically to the participants in this study, who were born and educated up to the tertiary level in China, speak the Chinese language as their first language and work as teachers of the Chinese language in Finland.

Gu and Schweisfurth (2006: 75) point out that ‘the phrase “the Chinese learner” invites us to see this group as homogenous, and their needs and responses as determined by their cultural background.’ This reminds us that that there is a danger of falling into the

trap of essentialism, which the belief that there is an essential ‘culture’ to make people what they are, by giving a label to a group of remarkably diverse teachers (Spack, 1997) who have different backgrounds, goals, motivations and many other individual differences. However, as researchers, we often need to use technical terms to begin our investigation. The most important thing is to keep in mind that they do not represent a homogenous group of people and that their personal experiences and specific contexts should be taken into account when researching them.

1.3 Research aims and research questions

This PhD project investigates the experiences and perceptions of Chinese immigrant teachers working in Finland. More specifically, it examines the circulating discourses related to Chinese language education, the perceptions of Chinese immigrant teachers about their work, how they are positioned in the Finnish education context, and how their perception influences the ways they talk about their work - the teaching of the Chinese language in Finland. It explores how the meanings of Chinese language education are constructed in the Finnish context; how and why Chinese immigrant teachers of Chinese reconstruct and contribute to existing discourses; what beliefs and ideologies are manifested in their discourses and what they tell us about their experiences of working in the Nordic country.

This thesis is based on a compilation of three peer-reviewed articles. Each article has a specific set of research questions. The articles are referred to as Articles I, II, and III in the following sections:

- Article I - Ideologies of the Chinese language in Finland-A critical analysis of policy documents and news articles, 2018
- Article II - A Transdisciplinary Approach to Examining and Confidence-Boosting the Experiences of Chinese Teachers of Chinese in Finland, 2017
- Article III - “They Have It Better There”: Chinese Immigrant Teachers’ Beliefs, Imaginaries and Ideologies in Cross-National Comparisons, 2019

Article I sets the social, cultural and political backgrounds of the entire research. It looks into how Finland, a small bilingual (Finnish and Swedish) country where English is used as a second language, deals with the growing prominence of the Chinese language. Drawing on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (e.g. Fairclough, 2003; Wodak, 2001), this study examines the discourses on the Chinese language presented in policy documents and two of the main news outlets in Finland—Finland National Public Broadcasting Company (Yleisradio, Yle) and the largest subscription newspaper in Finland, Helsingin Sanomat (HS). By analysing how Chinese is presented in governmental and educational policy documents and news reports, the article aims to reveal the presentation and construction of discourses and explores public assumptions on the Chinese language in Finland. The results of this study reveal four prevailing categories of ideological discourses of the Chinese language: Chinese as a useful language, Chinese as a world/global language, Chinese as an increasingly popular language, and Chinese as a different and/or difficult language. It demonstrates that despite the multiple societal meanings the Chinese language appears to have in the policy documents and news articles, the discourses are related to the economic allure of China and share similar ideological roots that emphasize the symbolic capital of the Chinese language.

Article II investigates how Chinese teachers of the Chinese language, who represent the majority of the workforce for the instruction in this language in Finland, perceive the position of Chinese language education and their role in it. Using an analysis of multivoicedness, which was developed from dialogism (Aveling, Gillespie, & Cornish, 2014), several positions assumed/taken up by the teachers and others in their discourses are identified. The finding of this article leads to the proposal of a critical intercultural approach to Chinese teacher education or professional development based on transdisciplinarity, which relies on problem-solving that recognizes an important triad: educational contexts—teachers’ experiences—society (McGregor & Volckmann, 2011).

Article III represents a critical analysis of teachers’ cross-national comparative discourses on Chinese language teaching. Based on a critical intercultural theoretical perspective, which moves beyond typical “culture shock” and “adaptation” models of understanding and explaining migrants’ experiences, this paper makes use of the concepts of teacher beliefs, ideologies and imaginaries (Holliday, 2010; Dervin, 2016) in considering how Finland-based Chinese migrant teachers perceive and compare the position of being teachers of Chinese in a different context (Finland and Australia in this article). Analysis of data from group discussions during a teacher training workshop indicates that these teachers constructed “utopic” (Australia) and “dystopic” (Finland) for Chinese language teaching, and reveals that multiple factors have influenced these migrant teachers’ perceptions and experiences. Findings provide information for teacher educators and stakeholders to better understand and support Chinese immigrant teachers of the Chinese language, but also other immigrant teachers from various linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

Three research questions are asked: a) What are the circulating discourses about (the) Chinese language (education) in Finland?; b) What discourses do Chinese immigrant teachers construct about their experiences in Finland and how?; and c) what beliefs and ideologies are manifested in all these discourses? These questions are then broken down into several sub-questions and dealt with in three sub-studies, which are presented in Table 1:

Articles	Research questions
Article 1 Ideologies of the Chinese language in Finland-a critical analysis of policy documents and news articles, 2018	1. How is the Chinese language constructed in policy documents and news articles in Finland? 2. What ideologies of the Chinese language are embedded in these discourses?

<p>Article 2 A Transdisciplinary Approach to Examining and Confidence-Boosting the Experiences of Chinese Teachers of Chinese in Finland, 2017</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How do Chinese teachers depict and construct their experiences of teaching Chinese in Finnish institutions? 2. How do these teachers perceive their position as Chinese instructors of Chinese in Finland? 3. What do they say about how others perceive them? And how much of what they say seems to reflect a critical intercultural position?
<p>Article 3 “They Have It Better There”: Chinese Immigrant Teachers’ Beliefs, Imaginaries and Ideologies in Cross-National Comparisons, 2019</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What discourses do Finland-based Chinese immigrant teachers construct about being teachers of the Chinese language in different contexts (Australia and Finland)? 2. What are the factors contributing to the construction of these discourses?

Table 1 Overview of the articles and research questions in each study

1.4 Thesis structure

The outline of this summary flows from literature review to theoretical considerations, and then to methodology and findings. I begin with a literature review on immigrant teachers in general and immigrant Chinese teachers in particular. Then I move on to discuss the research paradigm and theoretical considerations for this doctoral study. Here, I discuss the shift from a positivist paradigm to a critical intercultural perspective in intercultural studies, and the debate about the need for Asiancentric approaches in researching immigrant Chinese teachers. The methodology I argue for is a critical and dialogical analysis of discourses on Chinese language education in Finland and of the utterances of immigrant Chinese teachers on their experiences of teaching the Chinese language in the Finnish education system. The methodological section will bring all of

the thesis articles together, by discussing the research design and analysis of each article. In the final sections of this thesis, I outline the implications of the findings in the professional development of Chinese immigrant teachers and the development of Chinese language education in Finland. Although these sections deal with the Finnish context, they are also relevant for dealing with the same topic in other countries. In this section, I also outline some recommendations arising from the results of this thesis. All of the arguments made in this thesis are drawn from the three published articles discussed in this introduction.

2 Literature review

As international mobility or migration of teachers has become a common phenomenon in today's world (Bense, 2016; Reid, Collins, & Singh, 2013), more and more immigrant teachers work in different kinds of educational settings. Before discussing the theoretical framework, it is important to do a literature review on immigrant teacher research and to identify research gaps. In what follows, I will first review previous studies on immigrant teachers in other countries and Finland, then studies that focus on Chinese immigrant teachers. It is hoped that the literature review will help situate the present study and its findings within the larger body of immigrant teacher research.

2.1 Global research literature: Immigrant teachers face somewhat similar problems

Teachers' global mobility has increasingly attracted research attention during recent years. Researchers have investigated the phenomenon of teacher mobility from different perspectives. Bense (2016) and other researchers (Niyubahwe, Mukamurera & Jutras, 2013) reviewed and well summarized current research efforts on immigrant teachers.

Niyubahwe, Mukamurera and Jutras (2013) reviewed the literature on the professional integration of teachers recently immigrated to Canada and other Western countries. Their findings show that these studies present both the challenges and the favourable factors for immigrant teachers' integration into the school system. According to Niyubahwe and colleagues (2013), immigrant teachers across several countries share similar integration challenges: 1) problems related to employment; 2) problems linked to professional integration into the school culture and the teaching team; 3) problems related to non-recognition of competencies previously acquired in their countries of origin; and 4) problems related to the teaching task. The first type of problems relates to the difficulty immigrant teachers face in accessing employment in their host country. These problems include but are not limited to qualification recognition, access to

professional education and training, and proficiency of the teaching language in the schools. The second type of problems relates to culture and professional networks. The literature reviewed emphasised that the problems arise because of the negative and uncooperative attitude from the local teachers and administrations. The immigrant teachers are reported to have experienced distance, hostility, indifference, isolation, mistrust and racial discrimination in these studies. The third type of problems relates to the denial or distrust the teachers' competence gain from previous experiences in teaching. Teachers were reported to have to undergo retraining or face prejudices, a high level of expectations regarding their competency, inferior status and systematic exclusion in comparison to the local counterparts. The problems linked to the teaching tasks concerned mainly teaching practices and classroom management. Immigrant teachers are reported to have to change and adapt to local norms of teaching practices, in terms of teaching materials supply, teaching methods and learning assessment. They also experience difficulties in classroom management because of the different perceptions of teachers' role and power, disrespect and mistrust from the students, or simply because they are given the most difficult classes to teach.

Niyubahwe, Mukamurera and Jutras's (2013) review did not just focus on the challenges recent immigrant teachers encounter in their host environment, but it also identified in the reviewed documents some of the initiatives to enhance the professional integration of immigrant teachers. For example, several countries have taken procedures aimed at increasing immigrant teachers' access to employment. This includes funding support and provision of education and training that lead to re-certification. However, they critically point out that these initiatives have not adequately addressed the different obstacles to certification faced by immigrant teachers. This also depends on the openness and cooperation of the school administration. What is more, their analysis shows that the reasons of the success of professional integration of immigrant teachers emphasized by most authors were: the quality of the reception and collaboration; support given by the administration and

colleagues; the relationship between them and their mentors in the schools; and acceptance from the school community and the students' parents.

Another more recent and larger-scale review by Bense (2016) shows that the large majority of studies on immigrant teachers were carried out in countries with high levels of teacher inflows or long histories of migration such as Australia, Canada, and the United States of America. Bense identifies similar challenges that immigrant teachers face as Niyubahwe, Mukamurera and Jutras (2013) found in their review. However, she added more challenges to the list. For example, Niyubahwe, Mukamurera and Jutras's (2013) analysis shows that immigrant teachers were given difficult classes to teach (in terms of classroom discipline), Bense's review further presents that immigrant teachers could also be hired in school areas where no local teachers would work, or assigned to teach levels that they were overqualified for. Furthermore, Bense (2016) points out that an overall lack of professional support seems to be making already testing times for migrant teachers even more challenging.

Based on her review of a large number of studies on immigrant teachers, Bense (2016) made recommendations for improving current support strategies for immigrant teachers. Firstly, support practices should take into consideration immigrant teachers' previous experiences. For example, preparation courses should be tailored to immigrant teachers' needs. Secondly, approaches to professional support for migrant teachers have to be designed as long-term strategies. Thirdly, immigrant teachers can better assist each other through difficulties and to access professional support from more knowledgeable and experienced migrant teachers through networks of peers who share similar backgrounds.

Previous scholarship detailing the experiences and perceptions of the immigrant teachers working in Finland is scarce. Only a few studies are focusing on the lives of immigrant teachers in the Finnish context. Latomaa (2010) identifies two main challenges immigrant teachers who teach heritage languages to immigrant pupils in Finnish Schools face. Firstly, native language learning is voluntary for students and is

often organized as extra subjects outside of school hours, so pupils are not motivated or committed to learning their mother tongue. Secondly, these immigrant teachers often have to teach in several schools during the day, which means that they often do not have many opportunities to participate in staff meetings and other school activities, and therefore often remain isolated from the school community. In their comparative study about immigrant teachers working in Finland and Iceland, Lefever, Paavola, Berman, Guðjónsdóttir, Talib and Gísladóttir (2014: 80) found that, in general, immigrant teachers in both countries made positive contributions to their workplaces. However, as they report, the gatekeeping role of language was especially evident in the Finnish context. That is, immigrant teachers in Finland feared for their continued employment due to their perceived lack of proficiency in the majority language of Finland. These teachers also encountered discrimination due to their nationality, language background and skin colour, and their diverse backgrounds were considered to be disadvantages rather than resources.

Koskinen-Sinisalo (2015) has looked into immigrant teachers' 'journeys' to becoming a teacher in Finland by examining the life stories of student teachers who participated in a class teacher education programme meant for students with an immigrant background at Tampere University in Southern Finland. Similar to research findings about immigrant teachers in other contexts, her research recognizes that the challenges immigrant teachers encountered in Finland are related to the acknowledgement of their professional skills, the availability of work, but also bureaucracy. She further argues that immigrant teachers in Finland face the challenge of gaining a strong professional identity and that they are vulnerable to discrimination and marginalization.

Hahl and Paavola (2016) investigated how immigrant teachers perceived their employability in Finland. Based on data collected through online questionnaires and focus group discussions among two student cohorts, who graduated from English-medium teacher education in Finland after a year, Hahl and Paavola (2016) found out several factors that promote or hinder employment opportunities for immigrant

teachers. These include: the scope of teaching qualifications, limited experiences as substitute teachers, and language skills. The language factors echo the findings in Lefever et al's (2014) study. Hahl & Paavola's (2016) analysis shows that lacking "strong enough" Finnish skills or native English skills was experienced as the main hindrance for immigrant teachers' employability.

Finnish education has been praised worldwide as an educational utopia due to its past success in the OECD PISA Tests (Dervin, 2012; Itkonen & Dervin, 2017). The circulating discourses attribute this success to, among others, the equality and high degree of trust and respect to teachers. However, as part of the Finnish education ecology, immigrant teachers seem to enjoy less of these favours, as the aforementioned studies show.

2.2 Literature on Chinese immigrant teachers of the Chinese language: Beyond culturalist approaches?

As this PhD study focuses on Chinese immigrant teachers of the Chinese language working in Finland as a case study, in this section, I review in more details the international literature and cross-disciplinary empirical work on the lived experiences of Chinese immigrant teachers of the Chinese language working abroad and how existing studies contribute to the construction of discourses on this group of teachers.

To find references matching the focus of this review, I first used the combination of the following keywords: "Chinese teachers", "Chinese immigrant teachers", "teachers of Chinese as a foreign language", and "identity", to search for related articles. Different search engines, to which I had access when I did the review, were employed: *Google Scholar*, *the University of Helsinki library*, and *the Jönköping University library*. The second step was to sort through the research papers that were found during step one in order to select the most relevant studies. This was done by reading the abstracts and, whenever necessary, the whole paper, to decide whether the paper fell into the scope of this review. The final step involved the analysis of 33 articles and book chapters published between 2004 and 2019 (a period of 15 years; 2004 being the

year when Chinese became of interest in Finnish education). Among them, 12 focus on the US, 7 Australian, 4 Denmark, 4 New Zealand, 3 UK, 2 Hong Kong, and 1 on returned teachers from different countries. The research contexts of the vast majority of these papers focus on English-speaking “Western” countries except for the ones on Hong Kong and one on returnee Chinese teachers. The main themes discussed in these articles include teacher beliefs, teacher identity, teacher (intercultural) experiences, teacher’s efficacy, teachers’ cultural scripts, and challenges Chinese immigrant teachers face.

I present the three main findings of this literature review in what follows.

2.2.1 Omnipresence of cultural claims

An analysis of the selected literature shows that there are omnipresent cultural claims: *Chinese teachers do this because of their Chinese culture; Chinese immigrant teachers do that because they were educated in traditional Chinese culture*. Culture is seen as something that doesn't change and has clear national boundaries. Let’s look at the following excerpt from a study about Chinese immigrant teachers teaching in Australian schools:

“As students previously nurtured in Chinese education systems, the teacher-researchers’ belief about teaching is profoundly influenced by Chinese educational culture. However, as reflected in their theses, drawing upon these beliefs to teach Australian students turns out to be unproductive.” (Chen, 2015)

The term “Chinese educational culture” is never explained throughout the whole article, neither is what the author means by “the teacher-researchers’ belief about teaching”. Yet the two concepts seem to be conveniently used to explain the Chinese immigrant teachers’ undesirable teaching outcomes. Another example in which the understanding of culture is bounded, closed, and represented by people coming from the geographical location of that particular “culture” was identified in Ho (2004:337):

“the dominant culture in Australia follows very closely the western cultural heritage based on individualism... while Hong Kong is a Chinese collectivistic society, where education is very much under the influence of Confucian values despite its colonial history”

In this excerpt, the author draws a clear line between the two geographical locations, Australia and Hong Kong, in terms of culture. Australia is defined using the words “Western”, “individualism”, while Hong Kong is defined through “Confucian values” and “collectivism”. What is interesting is that within this ‘solid’ way of understanding culture (Dervin, 2011), there are contradictions as to who gets to represent “Chinese culture”. While the above example taken from Ho (2004) regards teachers from Hong Kong (and Taiwan) as the representatives of collective and Confucian values, they are seen as ‘less Chinese’ and ‘more Western’ than the teachers coming from mainland China in another study:

A number of teachers had either, as younger teachers, trained in Australian universities (T2, T3), or experienced early exposure to a more western style teaching (e.g. T6 from Taiwan, T7 from Hong Kong) We see the tenets of western constructivist thinking described above, strongly influencing their attitudes and pedagogical choices. (Moloney & Xu, 2015: 8)

In another study about teachers from mainland China working in Hong Kong, the author is trying to show that there is a wide gap between the culture in mainland China and the Hong Kong culture.

This study involves interactions between pre-service teachers from different language groups and different culture...(Gu, 2013: 409)

Twelve out of 16 participants interviewed felt that their lack of knowledge of local cultures and their accented Cantonese prevented them from communicating effectively and smoothly with local peers, and made it difficult for them to gain a legitimate position in the learning community. (Gu, 2013: 413)

This contradiction shows that there is indeed *diverse diversity* (Dervin, 2012), diversity within the so-called “Confucian culture”. Cultural claims, without any critical scientific backing, could be found in many of the reviewed studies (Chen & Yeung, 2015; Gao, 2012; Han & Han, 2019, Meloney, 2013; Sun, 2011; Zhang, 2018). Culture or Chinese culture of learning (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996) has become the “cosy blanket” (Eriksen, 2001) in which individuals’ behaviours can be defined and constrained.

2.2.2 Culturalist comparative approaches frequently employed

In addition to the taken-for-granted ways of understanding culture and culture of learning, this review also identified the frequent use of culturalist comparative approaches (Dervin, 2011; Holliday 1999) in the experiences of Chinese immigrant teachers (Chen, 2015; Han & Han, 2019; Moloney & Xu, 2015; Wang & Jensen, 2013). In this oppositional framework, the Western culture of learning and the Chinese culture of learning (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996) are usually placed at two different sides of a continuum. The Chinese culture of learning is regarded as deficient, backwards and unfit for the much developed, advanced Western classrooms. The Chinese immigrant teachers, seen as representatives of the Chinese culture of learning, often have to take the main responsibility for the unsuccessful learning outcome of the students.

The Hofstedian model (Hofstede, 1986, 1991, 2010), which sees cultures as separate entities and aims to overcome difficulties involved in intercultural encounters by helping people to ‘bridge’ these cultural differences through learning the other culture, is often used as a template for the contested concept of “cultural shock” were employed in several studies to guide their reading of data (Ye & Edwards, 2018; Zhang, 2018; Zhou & Li, 2015; Zhou & Li, 2016). G. Hofstede (1980) developed a model of cultural dimensions based on an analysis of a large survey of people working in the local subsidiaries of one large multinational corporation, IBM, in over 50 countries. The use of this model often results in cultural categorizations and cultural hierarchies. It

dominated the field of intercultural studies and is still very influential today (Piller, 2011).

In Zhu and Li (2014), the authors make use of the Hofstedian model and state that:

influenced by Chinese cultural practice of valuing the goals, duties and benefits of the whole group more than individual interests (Hofstede, 1986), Chinese teachers expect and teach students to behave in accordance with the greater benefit of the whole class (Zhu & Li, 2014:19).

And they reported that their finding:

reveals that the teachers experienced cultural mismatches between their Chinese cultural expectations and American students' actual classroom behaviour and struggled with challenges of understanding the demands of American classroom management, lack of effective strategies for managing American classroom, and language barriers (Zhu & Li, 2014: 26).

However, the information of the participants shows that all of these teachers had less than 3 years of teaching experience, most of them less than 1 year. One could ask: is it really culture *à la Hofstede* or a lack of experience in teaching that has caused the challenges in classroom management?

In Zhang's study (2018), what is contradictory is that, while the researcher is critical of Chinese immigrant language teachers taking a static view of culture when they teach, Zhang treats these participant teachers as representatives of "their culture" and their beliefs about teaching determined by "their culture". In this study, the author claims that:

without a good command of the local language and a certain level of familiarity with the infrastructure, legal system, cultural values, and social norms in the host country, the new-coming VCTs [Volunteer Chinese Teachers] encountered many 'culture shocks' after arriving in the host country, especially

when they were assigned to a country not of their own choice. (Zhang, 2018: 214)

Zhang (2018) then proceeds to provide two examples of “cultural shocks”. One is that a volunteer Chinese teacher of Confucius Institute based in Israel was scared when she saw a passenger sitting across with a gun in hand. The other is a volunteer teacher based in New Zealand recorded that when his friend drove him in a red BMW to withdraw money from an ATM, a beggar crashed into them, and asked for money outrageously. The same teacher was also told that “it was common” that local people yell and spit and be rude to “them” even if they “had done nothing impolite or inappropriate” (Zhang, 2018: 206). These indeed are shocking experiences to the participating teachers. However, it is unclear how the author defines “culture shocks”. Is carrying a gun on the bus part of general Israeli culture or are robbing, yelling and spitting to foreigners a ‘culture’ of New Zealand?

2.2.3 Alternative approaches emerging

Although the majority of the reviewed studies see Chinese culture as static and unchanged and a defining characteristic of Chinese immigrant teachers (which I referred to as ‘culturalist’), some studies (Liu & Sayer, 2016; Xiang, 2019; Zhang, 2015) take a more critical stance to culture and Chinese immigrant teachers’ experiences. For example, in Xiang’s (2019) study, the host school community and the Hanban community impose sometimes competing demands on the teachers concerning what and how should they teach, what they are accountable for, and what their roles and responsibilities are. Xiang’s (2019) points out that the teachers are not merely subject to the imposed expectations but demonstrate their agency and actively negotiate their roles. Similarly, Liu and Sayer (2016) find in their study that educational and social contexts influence the experiences of teachers and instead of using national culture to explain the teachers’ behaviours, they see external factors such as finances

and pressure on making sure that students perform well to be as important, see more important in understanding immigrant teachers' behaviours and attitudes.

Finally, Wang and Du's (2016) study on Chinese language teachers' beliefs find that the prevalent hierarchical, authoritarian and pastoral roles noted in previous studies of Chinese teachers (Gao & Watkins, 2002; Ho, 2001; Hu, 2002) were not evident in their data. Instead, teachers' perceptions and executions of their roles are more closely related to contextual factors, such as students' motivation and learning characteristics, the status of Chinese in educational institutions, teachers' access to professional support and the lack of adequate teaching materials.

2.2.4 Summary of the literature review and positioning this PhD study

Three conclusions can be drawn from the literature review on Chinese immigrant teachers.

Firstly, due to the rise of Chinese language education worldwide, research interest in learning more about the experiences of teachers of the Chinese language (most of them being of Chinese origins) is increasing. However, Chinese immigrant teachers working in Finland are rarely researched.

Secondly, research about Chinese immigrant teachers elsewhere seems to rely heavily on culturalist approaches (Holliday, 1999), which leads to contradictory findings. Many reviewed studies of Chinese immigrant teachers (Bao, Zhang & Dixon, 2015; Chen, 2015; Chen & Yeung, 2015; Gao, 2012; Han & Han, 2019, Meloney, 2013; Moloney & Xu, 2015; Sun, 2011; Wang & Jensen, 2013; Wen & Lin, 2013; Zhang, 2018) tend to attribute the challenges these teachers face to the cultural differences between their original place and the host environment. According to this perspective, the biggest obstacle for the Chinese immigrant teachers to have successful teaching outcomes in the host environment is that they are inheritably bearers and loyal practitioners of the Chinese culture of learning (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996), which is said to be very different from the Western one.

And lastly, as appose to the culturalist perspective, some researchers (Liu & Sayer, 2016; Xiang, 2019; Zhang, 2015) have begun to take more inclusive and reflective approaches that move away from seeing Chinese immigrant teachers as representatives of their national educational culture and their culture as a problem for successful teaching. Rather than attributing the challenges the Chinese immigrant teachers face when teaching in the new environment to the Chinese culture of learning (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996) or Chinese educational schema (Moloney & Xu, 2015), they place more emphasis on the intersectionality of different dimensions of their lived experiences.

This study aims to fill the research gap by investigating the intercultural experiences and perceptions of the Chinese immigrant teachers of the Chinese language. The literature review has helped to develop my understanding of current efforts in Chinese immigrant teacher research. It has also become clear to me that taking a cultural paradigm vs. critical and reflective approaches could lead to very different findings. The culturalist paradigm to the Chinese immigrant teachers' experiences is dominant in the reviewed literature but has led contradictory findings. Emerging approaches suggest taking into account the social, political and economic situations these teachers are in. Coming from China, a country with dynamic and changing traditions and values, each of them has their unique life trajectories and personal experiences (see e.g. Dervin & Machart, 2015). These should be taken into consideration when trying to identify challenges to successful learning outcomes in Chinese language classrooms.

In the third section, I discuss in detail the theoretical considerations in this study.

3. Theoretical considerations: How to problematize interculturality in the experiences and perceptions of immigrant teachers?

Since the American anthropologist Edward T. Hall mentioned intercultural communication in his book *The Silent Language* in 1959, many scientists, practitioners entered the field of intercultural education, training, and research. Hall's (1959) conceptualization of the term *intercultural* is based on a rather static and reified understanding of culture based on geographical boundaries. This way of problematising the term has been widely employed in intercultural studies ever since it was coined. Dervin (2006) argues that this type of conception of culture in intercultural communication leads to solidification of the Other and the Self as well as to the creation of intercultural imagination through discourse. Intercultural imagination refers to the idea that an individual has an authentic, homogeneous and unified self, which ignores the fact that people belong to different social groups (Dervin, 2006). Dervin (2006) was the first scholar to introduce the notion of interculturality as it is connoted in the French word *interculturalité* into mainstream intercultural communication education in English. As a process, interculturality is created and co-constructed between interlocutors (Dervin, 2006).

Holliday (2001) divides the social science literature into an essentialist camp and a non-essentialist camp according to researchers' views of 'culture'. The essentialist camp in the field of interculturality, represented by the positivist Hofstede (1980, 1991), defines culture solely in terms of nationality (Holliday, 2001), and often compares one culture with another using some generalized constructs (Kramsch & Zhu, 2016). As asserted in the previous section, this paradigm has somewhat dominated intercultural studies (Kramsch & Zhu, 2016).

The non-essentialist camp sees 'culture' as 'a movable concept used by different people at different times to suit purposes of identity, politics and science', and 'national culture'

as socially constructed by nationalism and by people who seek a sense of national security (Holliday, 2001: 45). Holliday argued that the non-essentialist view allows for a more flexible view of ‘culture’, in which the social world is made up of a seamless mix of human groupings, which may be characterised and understood as ‘small cultures’ (Holliday, 2001). Another main difference between essentialist and non-essentialist views is that the former sees culture as constraints and the latter sees culture as resources (Holliday, 2001).

More and more scholars have criticised the essentialist approaches that lock a cultural group into its history (Holliday, 1999; Shi-xu, 1997) and proposed different approaches that take into account social, political and economic changes within and across societies. As a researcher, I am influenced by critical intercultural perspectives which reject essentialist ways of understanding culture and identity. Therefore, the research paradigm that I used in the published articles included in this project is that of a critical interculturality which departs from essentialism (Dervin, 2016). That is, I believe that essentialism is problematic, and intercultural researchers should by all means try to use non-essentialist approaches. However, writing up the summary of this project provides me with opportunities for critical reflections. For example, these are questions I find primordial as I am writing this summary: how useful it is to have this binary division between essentialism and non-essentialism? And is it possible to have absolutely non-essentialist approaches to interculturality?

3.1 Approaches to interculturality

In this section, I first briefly present four different approaches to interculturality that are relevant to and have influenced the way I conceptualise the focus of this doctoral study. Following this, I will summarize some of the characteristics of these approaches. Then I will move to discuss to what extent these approaches and perspectives help to shape my understanding of the experiences and perceptions of Chinese immigrant teachers of Chinese language in this study.

3.1.1 A small cultural approach

Holliday (1999) distinguishes two different paradigms in applied linguistics: the large culture approach and the small culture approach. The notion of large culture is conceptualized by Holliday (1999) as a *prescribed* entity and as a tool explaining *prescribed* ethnic, national or international *difference* (237). A large culture approach reduces culture to essential features of ethnic, national or international groups, equating large groups with homogenous ideas of culture. The starting point of research taking a large cultural paradigm is the idea that groups have different ‘cultures’. Therefore, its focus is to search for details and to explain all behaviour in terms of differences, resulting in a reductionist overgeneralization and otherization of ‘foreign’ educators, students and societies (Holliday, 1999: 238). If we take a large culture approach to study Chinese learners and educators, they are usually reduced to one solid identity defined by their (national) culture, which is not uncommon in the literature reviewed in the previous section.

On the contrary, a small culture is “the sum of total of all the processes, happenings, or activities in which a given set of several, sets of people habitually engage” (Holliday, 1999: 248, citing Beals et al., 1967). A small culture approach does not reduce culture to essential features of ethnic, national or international groups but allows more fluid conceptualization of culture and examines the dynamics of cultural change and internal heterogeneity within a group (Holliday, 1999). Cultural identities can be made up of a variety of elements, many of which can cross national boundaries (Holliday, 2010: 175). Holliday (1999: 237) argues that, whereas a large culture approach imposes a picture of the social world divided into essentially different ethnic, national or international cultures, a small culture approach finds culture in all types of social grouping or activities wherever there is *cohesive behaviour*. Therefore, “a small culture approach can liberate culture from notions of nation and ethnicity and from the perceptual dangers following them” (Holliday, 1999: 237).

	Small Cultures	Large Cultures
Character	non-essentialist, non-culturist relating to cohesive behaviour in activities within any social grouping	essentialist, culturist 'culture' as essential features of ethnic national or international group
Relations	no necessary subordination to or containment within large cultures, therefore no onion- skin	small (sub)cultures are contained within and subordinate to large cultures through onion-skin relationship
Research orientation	interpretive, process interpreting emergent behaviour within any social grouping heuristic model to aid the process of researching the cohesive process of any social grouping	prescriptive, normative beginning with the idea that specific ethnic, national and international groups have different 'cultures' and then searching for the details (e.g. what is polite in Japanese culture

Table 2 Two paradigms (from Holliday 1999: 241)

A small culture approach highlights the fluidity of culture and reveals the false boundaries imposed on cultures by the methodological nationalism (the Nation-State as the only explanatory force in research) on which the large culture paradigm is based (Holliday, 2010). Methodological nationalism is understood as the assumption that the nation/state/society is the natural social and political form of the modern world (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002).

The notion of 'small culture' relates to 'any cohesive social grouping' (Holliday, 1999: 237). What remained unclear is what could be considered as cohesive behaviour. This increases the difficulty in applying a small culture approach in research. For example, is cohesive behaviour identified through observation or by examining constructed discourses? Another neglected point of a small culture approach is that it does not

discuss the tension or power imbalances in the co-construction of a small culture. While everyone in the group can contribute to the co-construction of a small culture, their contribution may not be equal, some can have their voices heard and others can be silenced. Besides, although highly critical of essentialist approaches, Holliday (1999, 2001) seems to be in favour of binary approaches that consider that research can be simply and clearly categorized into essentialist or non-essentialist camps, and research approaches into the large culture or the small culture approaches. This binary approach to the research paradigms is itself an ideology that needs to be critically reflected upon.

Despite its weaknesses as a concept, small culture (Holliday, 1999) can be suggested to shed light on the complexity of interculturality in the world. 20 years after Holliday's (1999) call for small culture approaches, Holliday & MacDonald (2019) observe that the large culture approaches, taking the form of postpositivism, remain mainstream in intercultural studies. Positivism is the belief that reality pre-exists the social order and can be known by objective means of enquiry (Zhu, 2016). It is preoccupied with objectivist, essentialist, solid large cultures (Holliday & MacDonald, 2019), and is widely associated with essentialism in writings on identity (Zhu, 2016). Postpositivism has recognized the dangers of essentialism but maintains that this diversity remains within the certainty of large national or ethnic culture boundaries (Holliday & MacDonald, 2019). Holliday and MacDonald (2019) point out that due to the increasing competition for scarce resources, the performance of university academics is increasingly measured through their success in gaining external funding and publications in approved journals. This leads the researchers to choose safer, more quantifiable research approaches to meet market requirements rather than approaches that meet their research needs (Holliday & MacDonald, 2019). Postpositivist approaches satisfy the neoliberal desire of the university sector as they claim to be able to pin down, define and measure the precise gradation of 'intercultural competence' and 'intercultural learning' through complex performance lists and models (Holliday

& MacDonald, 2019). This is the main reason why these postpositivist approaches (e.g. Byram et al. 2001; Deardorff, 2009) remain dominant in intercultural studies.

3.1.2 A realistic liquid approach

Holliday's small culture approach is similar to what Dervin (2011) calls a liquid approach in that it aims at raising awareness about the dangers of essentialist, culturalist ideas and to 'suppress' them. Dervin (2011) discusses the differences between liquid and solid approaches and points out that some of the problems of using a solid approach to research Chinese students. This is very helpful to rethink research on Chinese immigrant teachers. Firstly, its analysis is often based on a simple review of what research participants say during the data collection (interviews, focus groups), with an aim to provide evidence and/or "truth". Secondly, researchers seldom implicate themselves in the analysing section of their research, ignoring that fact that they cannot but intervene in the creation of the data and ensuing discourses. Lastly, the use of central concepts such as "culture" and "identity" is loose and lacks interdisciplinary discussions and debates. A liquid approach is based on the idea of diverse diversities, that is, everybody is diverse regardless of e.g. their origins, skin colour, social background (Dervin, 2011).

In his later book, Dervin (2016) recognizes that a liquid approach, or idealist (liquid) approach as he later calls it, can be too idealistic if its ultimate aim is to achieve the objectives of non-essentialism and non-culturalism. For him, this aim is 'noble' and should be kept in mind at all times, but it is unreachable and can lead to frustration (Dervin, 2016). In addition, he reminds us that (liquid) idealistic approaches contribute to creating neo-imagining of IC, which can lead to self-congratulating but also easy patronizing ("I am non-essentialist and you are not") (Dervin, 2016). Therefore, he goes further to suggest a realistic liquid approach, which acknowledges that "essentialism is a 'universal sin' and that no one is immune against it" (2016: 82). In other words, this approach recognizes that, though it may sound too pessimistic, one

cannot be fully a non-essentialist or a non-culturalist. This more realistic and less ‘frightening’ perspective takes a critical stance towards the flawed concept of culture and recognizes the need to use intersectional analysis (Collins, in Dervin 2016) to examine the impact of power differentials from a more multifaceted perspective and to ‘individualize’ analyses of intercultural encounters rather than generalizing them based only on culture/ethnicity.

By pointing out that absolute non-essentialism is impossible, the realistic liquid approach may sound pessimistic, as Dervin (2016) acknowledged. However, the real pessimistic message implied in this approach is that essentialism is ‘bad’ and that the intention of essentialism and culturalism is to do ‘bad’ things, i.e. to manipulate the cultural other. However, for scholars like Shi-xu (2009a, b, 2012), whose approach will be discussed next, essentialism can serve good purposes.

3.1.3 A cultural approach to intercultural discourses

Some scholars from non-Western worlds, who position themselves as advocates of non-western perspectives, have expressed their dissatisfaction with ethnocentrism in mainstream scholarship to interculturality (Asante, 1998; Miike, 2006; Shi-xu, 2009a, b; 2012; Xiao & Chen, 2009). They call for non-Western perspectives to interculturality that emphasize the historical aspect of cultures in non-Western worlds. They do not shy away from claiming that there exist distinctions between Western and Eastern cultures and maintain that the existing hierarchies among these cultures (the view that some cultures are more advanced, civilized and better than others) are the result of Americanocentric/Eurocentric perspectives that dominate discourses about culture. For example, in Xiao & Chen’s (2009: 61) article about taking a Confucian perspective to communication competence and moral competence, they argue that “if we follow Western criteria, for example, and regard assertiveness and self-disclosure as important indicators of communication competence, then many Asian people such as the Chinese or Japanese may be seen as communicatively incompetent because

research that applies Western concepts and methods has identified these people as being submissive, communicatively apprehensive, and low in self-disclosure.”

Chinese scholar Shi-xu (2009a, b, 2012) is one of the strong voices advocating non-Western perspectives to language and communication. He critiques the mainstream discourse studies of language and communication for their ethnocentrism and for presenting themselves as theoretically and methodologically neutral and therefore universally applicable. For the scholar, who is based in Mainland China (Shi-xu, 2012), the main problems of the current critical discourse scholarship lie in its lack of self-criticism: it discusses neither possible cultural biases in its own epistemological, axiological, theoretical or methodological perspectives, nor the possible inappropriateness of its application to non-Western cultures. Rather, it indirectly or explicitly presents itself as universal, good, right and true, over and above other possible cultural approaches. He further points out that the production and dissemination of this culturally monological scholarship are supported by the almighty Western economic, political and cultural power in the form of institutional funding, the Internet, and multinationals’ publishing, advertising, marketing and distribution (Shi-xu, 2009b).

Shi-xu (2009b) also maintains that such a cultural monologue will lead to anything but genuine intellectual innovation or intercultural understanding and solidarity. Seeing these shortcomings of the mainstream discourse scholarship to languages and cultures, and to give voice to subordinated groups, Shi-xu (2009) argues for the reconstruction of Eastern paradigms in favour of multiculturalism in discourse research. Eastern paradigms, according to Shi-xu (2012: 485), are “locally grounded (viz. exhibiting cultural identity and usefulness) and globally-minded (viz. capable of engaging in international dialogue and showing global, human concerns).” Shi-xu proposed several approaches and perspectives that conform to Eastern paradigms: Asian discourse studies (2009a), cultural discourse studies (2012, 2014), Chinese discourse studies (2014), which I roughly name here ‘cultural approaches to intercultural discourses’.

In these works, Shi-xu seems to take a somewhat contradictory approach or what Dervin (2016) would call a Janusian approach to intercultural research. On the one hand, he takes a very critical stance towards mainstream intercultural discourse studies for being Americanocentric/Eurocentric (Shi-xu, 2009b, 2012; Miike, 2006) and resulting in biased conclusions about non-western cultures. In other words, he takes a critical position to ethnocentrism and rejects the collective cultural identity attributed to “the East” by “the West”. On the other hand, in order to construct Eastern paradigms, Shi-xu seems to try to claim a collective cultural identity for the non-western worlds. He and others (Miike, 2006; Shi-xu, 2012; Xiao & Chen, 2009) argue that Asian, or indeed non-Western, cultures have more or less similar philosophical roots in seeing the wholeness of the universe and the importance of maintaining harmonious relations among people and between Man and Nature. He does not deny that a culture is changing and developing and always interacting with other cultures. However, he argues that the changing process/path of non-western cultures is different from the dominating Western one, because “ours (the Eastern)” are cultures of oppression, struggles, and marginalization, and “theirs (the Western)” are cultures of colonizing, conquering, and imperialism (Shi-xu, 2009b, 2012). These, Shi-xu (2009b, 2012) claims, make it possible for non-western cultures to find common grounds to talk about shared Eastern paradigms on culture and communication.

The purpose for reconstructing Eastern paradigms to intercultural discourses, according to Shi-xu (2012), is not to replace the more culture-specific modes of research (i.e. Asian, African and Latin American perspectives), or smooth over their respective distinctions, but to provide a frame of reference that can not only act as one of the countervailing actors in response to and dialogue with the dominant Western scheme underlying its various paradigms but also guide the reconstructive efforts on particular Eastern paradigms and conversely be modified by them. However, when he conducts what he claims to be a dialogue with the mainstream discourses approaches from a non-Western (Chinese) perspective, he focuses much on binary comparisons

between the Western and Chinese perspectives (Shi-xu, 2012), which seems to contradict his critique of the binary approach of the Western tradition. The overemphasis on differences gives the impression that Western and Chinese perspectives are culturally exclusive discourses and leads to confusion as to whether there could be a real dialogue between them. The argument that CDA is not applicable to non-western cultures and discourses because of its Western origin, could be counterargued with the following question: is an Eastern perspective legitimate to apply to a Western cultural setting? What is more, in this study, it is confusing as to which perspective would be most suitable to explore the discourses of and about Chinese immigrant teachers of the Chinese language working in Finland.

Nevertheless, Shi-xu's (2001, 2009 a, b, 2012, 2014) critical discussions of the mainstream discourses scholarship and proposed approaches give at least two important messages. Firstly, there is a need to increase diversified voices in intercultural studies. Secondly, researchers, be they Western or Eastern, should constantly question their own cultural identities and ideologies or the cultural foundations and biases of their knowledge.

3.1.4 A global perspective

Echoing Shi-xu (2012) about eurocentrism in intercultural research, Dai Xiaodong, a well-cited scholar in the field of intercultural studies in Mainland China, and his colleague (Dai & Weng 2016) point out that existing models and theories of intercultural scholarship produced by US American or European scholars often suffer from Eurocentric biases, and are increasingly questioned by Asian, African and other non-European communication practices and experiences. Dai and Weng (2016) argue that some of the valued Asian communication behaviours such as indirectness, silence, shyness and humility are negatively evaluated from a Eurocentric paradigm. In addition, they also notice that some scholars such as Asante (1998) and Miike (2006) have proposed non-Eurocentric paradigms. However, Dai & Weng (2016) believe that there

is a need to reconcile all the competing paradigms and to synthesize them into a coherent whole. Therefore, they propose a global perspective that “integrates both Western and Eastern values, rises above the local lens and presents a complete picture of intercultural scholarship in the global context” (Dai & Weng, 2016: 230).

According to Dai and Weng (2016), a so-called global perspective would effectively respond to diversified social realities in the global context and has strength in four aspects: (1) it embraces multiculturalism and sees the world as a whole; (2) it addresses both intracultural and intercultural communication processes as well as the interaction between the two; (3) it highlights multi-dimensional factors and a wide range of research topics; and (4) it covers a wide range of geographical territories. However, they did not give a direct definition of a global perspective. They reviewed three books, in which they believe scholars have made conscious efforts to apply the global perspective to their work (Dai & Weng, 2016). From the summary of the books they reviewed it seems that for Dai and Weng (2016), a global perspective does not “gloss over” (Shi-xu, 2012) the existing cultural hierarchy between the West and the rest. Instead, it is sensitive to cultural differences and power issues in intercultural communication and scholarship. Besides, it uses indigenous theories of culture and communication, which are grounded in local philosophical and religious traditions (Dai & Weng, 2016: 233), and presents examples and cases from different parts of the world to put forward a complete picture of intercultural scholarship in the world.

However, although unsatisfied with the bias led by Eurocentric perspectives/paradigms, Dai and Weng (2016) did not really give a full account of what exactly is a Eurocentric paradigm, nor did they discuss any specific model or theory of this sort. Do all the models and theories suffer from Eurocentric biases only because of American or European origins? It might also be important to “integrate both Western and Eastern values” and “rise above the local lens” as Dai and Weng proposed (2016), but they do not provide convincing ways how to do so. Firstly, they do not explain what Western values and Eastern Values are. Can we integrate them before knowing

exactly what they are? Secondly, the examples of a global perspective they gave are mainly non-Western or indigenous theories and approaches (Dai & Weng, 2016), which I believe are great contributions to enriching the field of intercultural research. However, I cannot help but wonder if using indigenous theories of culture and communication differs from taking a “local lens”. Therefore, how we can better integrate the competing paradigms and synthesize them into a coherent global perspective? The answer remains unclear.

3.2 Towards critical non-essentialist approaches?

I will now bring together the four approaches discussed in the previous sections into a critical framework in order to clarify the differences and similarities between them. It is important to note that, by selecting to discuss these approaches, I do not mean to imply that these are the only ways the authors of these approaches think about interculturality. Instead, I believe researchers, like anyone else, are complex human beings, whose thoughts, ideologies and discourses develop over time and change as they move between different positions and contexts.

Whilst the ideas of these scholars do not form a unified, coherent theory, they can be considered to be taking critical perspectives to interculturality, in that they all take on the issues of power, context, and historical/structural forces in engaging culture and intercultural communication relations (Halualani, Mendoza & Drzewiecka, 2009). However, their foci of criticality seem to differ.

The small culture approach (Holliday, 1999) and the realistic liquid approach (Dervin, 2011, 2016) both reject the understanding of culture based on national boundaries and seeing individuals as representatives as their national culture. For them, culture, as well as cultural identity, are unstable, changing, dynamic and (re-)negotiable. Therefore, it is very difficult to draw a boundary between cultures and to define “a culture”. These perspectives are against the Hofstedian conception of cultures and argue that cultural differences may not be *the* major issue in intercultural encounters. They also hold that

the identity of a person is multiple and fluid, and individuals enact and co-construct different identities in specific contexts. Taking their perspective, intercultural encounters are not the *meeting of two different cultures* as many existing studies have suggested. Instead, they are unstable and rely on power-laden constructions and negotiations of identities and ideologies between different persons (Dervin 2016; Piller, 2011). A small culture approach (Holliday, 1999) and a realistic liquid approach (Dervin, 2016) urge researchers of intercultural studies to move their focus of analysis away from finding cultural differences to ideologies and power issues behind cultural discourses. For them, these, instead of cultures, are really what matters in intercultural encounters. The realistic liquid approach proposed by Dervin (2016) adds another dimension to critical intercultural approach in that it reminds us that non-essentialism is an unreachable goal due to the complexity of human beings but it does not mean that researchers should give up trying to fight against essentialism.

The first two approaches discussed above by Holliday (1999) and Dervin (2016) also emphasize the constructive nature of culture and cultural identities, and challenge the essentialist perception (often by the West) of the people (often from East): *Japanese are all..., Chinese are all...* Their criticality focuses more on pointing out that essentialism within intercultural studies is methodologically problematic. The two scholars are concerned about the misuses and abuses of culture, the use of culture as excuses and as alibis. Eastern paradigm advocates such as Shi-xu (2009 a,b, 2012, 2014), focus more on revealing the power imbalance of the global order and addressing the need for the empowering marginalized and subordinated voices. They are arguing for culture as a right, and as a tool to fight for justice and equality. For Shi-xu (2009a.b, 2012), in order to help the marginalized and subordinated, it is necessary to reject the collective eastern/southern/Asian/Chinese identities that are attributed and prescribed by the West to the East because of their hegemony. What is needed is a way to help them claim a collective identity as “politically necessary shorthand” (Phillips 2010, p. 47). However, by reconstructing this new collective identity, are we forcing an

unwanted identity to some of “us”? As such, there is a danger of falling into “methodological regionalism” or “methodological nationalism” (Holliday, 1999), by grouping different regions into one cultural area.

In addition, Shi-xu’s (2009 a) criticism of Western scholars and CDA practitioners seems to leave little room for them to feel legitimate to work with non-western discourses and in non-western contexts. One example could be found in his article about Asian discourse studies (Shi-xu, 2009a), where he comments about professors and research students from industrially advanced welfare states and the students and staff of higher education and research institutions in Asian societies:

For industrially advanced welfare states it is well understandable that professors and research students can have all the time, interest and resources to ask and answer scientific questions about the use of certain terms or metaphors, linguistic features of individual identity, strategies of politeness, interruptions in conversation, or social cognition of rhetoric. But many societies of Asia are faced with pressing issues of poverty, low literacy, lack of health care, unemployment, environmental disasters and poor information services, which call for urgent, concerted and comprehensive research efforts on the part of the students and staff of higher education and research institutions: ‘real’ problems that call for ‘real’ solutions. (Shi-xu, 2009a: 386)

It is important to urge researchers to be self-critical of their own positions, but it seems unjust to underrate the efforts and contributions made by many Western scholars and critical interculturalists who have proposed “real solutions” for “real problems” (Shi-xu, 2009a). There are Eastern scholars who contribute to maintaining the status quo, and Western thinkers who employ sensitive and inclusive approaches that take into account ethnic cultural differences and work towards embracing common goals in theory and practice. In fact, many students and researchers (including Shi-xu) from the East have benefited from learning from and with their Western mentors and colleagues and vice versa.

In addition, while Shi-xu (2009 a) sharply and rightly points out the socio-economic and geo-political power imbalances that exist in the global order, he does not allude to the resistance of these power imbalances from the non-Western worlds and thus leaves us with the impression that the “non-Western” is powerless at the hand of the powerful West and lacks agency, which I think is also over-simplistic and otherising the “non-Western” (unless this is considered to be a form of strategic essentialism (Spivak, 1988) that aims to help subordinated people). However, can we fight one form of essentialism with another, and help to combat the situation of inequality and change the existing hierarchical world order? Or does it lead to even more reinforced stereotypes of Asian people and make the world even more divided?

Dai and Weng (2016) point out an ambitious direction of future development of approaches in intercultural research: to reconcile all the competing paradigms and synthesize them into a coherent one. However, how this ambitious aim can be achieved remains unclear.

In what follows I discuss the perspectives I am taking to examine the experiences and perceptions of Chinese immigrant teachers of the Chinese language in Finland, by drawing on the strengths of the discussed approaches while bearing in mind some of their inconveniences.

3.3 Proposed theoretical framework

The approaches to interculturality discussed above represent recent efforts in advancing intercultural research and provide a good starting point to understand the experiences and perceptions of Chinese immigrant teachers in Finland. A small culture approach (Holliday, 1999) can help researchers to move from attributing a particular identity and ascribing cultural characteristics to research participants as fixed, reified, homogeneous and homogenized individuals, to look at what identity positions are available to immigrant teachers to construct a way of being and behaving in the host environment (Clark & Gieve, 2006). A realistic liquid approach recognizes the

complexity in interculturality that involves “contradictions, instabilities and discontinuities” rather than seeing it as a linear acquisition of intercultural skills or competence (Dervin, 2016: 84). Shi-xu’s (2009b, 2012) cultural approach to intercultural discourses questions the danger of Eurocentric biases in communication practices and experiences and reminds us that there is always much to learn with and to get inspiration from each other. A good example is found in Yuan et al. (2020), where a team of scholars from China and Finland work together in exploring China’s Minzu (‘minority’) education and finding new insights for diversity education. The central message I have taken from Shi-xu’s work (2009 a. b, 2012, 2014) is that, as a researcher, I should question my own cultural identities and ideologies or the cultural foundations and biases of my knowledge when conducting research.

There are many strengths in these approaches, but each has its weakness that we should be aware of. As the discussion of the four approaches shows, many of the questions I have asked in this theoretical section remain to be answered. This shows that despite the progress made in intercultural research, more work still needs to be done. There are limitations in any given theorization about interculturality, and thus setting off by searching for a perfect theory for my research might have been a mistake. There is no “one size fits all” theory for intercultural studies because different approaches tackle research through different questions and lead to different findings. Therefore, instead of imposing a Western or an Eastern paradigm, or pretending that I have a ready-made recipe for understanding complex human experiences and perspectives, I choose to start from an open mind with many questions. I aim to hear the voices of the Chinese immigrant teachers (who seem to be voiceless in Finnish education) and to try to build a dialogue between the discourses around these teachers’ experiences and perceptions and theories of interculturality, to see how much of the discourses resonate with existing conceptualisations of interculturality and what new insights these discourses bring.

Despite the unresolved questions, a few elements about this research did become clearer throughout the thinking and research process and drawing on the conceptualisations of interculturality discussed. These will serve as principles for my investigation of the Chinese immigrant teachers' experiences and perceptions.

- Keeping in mind diversities within the participant teachers rather than homogenizing them;
- Instead of evaluating and criticising cultural claims as (bad) essentialism, try to understand what it means for Chinese immigrant teachers of the Chinese language when they reflect on how they have been identified (in the media, in the social and professional environments and interpersonally, and what the political, social and economic elements lead to such constructions;
- Instead of seeing culture and cultural differences at play, be aware of the power relationships in the context where a given discourse is constructed;
- look at what identity positions are available to immigrant teachers to construct a way of being and behaving in the host environment;
- be aware of the bias arising from using certain values to judge what is 'good' and what is 'bad', and what is "advanced" and what is "backwards" (about e.g. ways of teaching, teachers, students);
- be honest, transparent about the research process, and admit that my interpretations might be influenced by my ideologies.

4. Methodology

This section compiles the data and methods of each of the three sub-studies. Several qualitative methodologies are utilized in this research (see Table 2).

Studies	Research Participants/materials	Method of data collection	Data Analysis
I. Ideologies of the Chinese language in Finland - A critical analysis of policy documents and news articles.	28 News articles related to Chinese language education from two main Finnish news outlets: Helsingin Sanomat and Yle. 4 Policy documents related to Chinese language education	The news articles were found by key terms searching and retrieved from three electronic databases (www.yle.fi , www.hs.fi and www.helsinkitimes.fi). Political documents were found by searching key terms on governmental organization websites	Content analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)
II. A Transdisciplinary Approach to Examining and Confidence-Boosting the Experiences of Chinese Teachers of Chinese in Finland	20 Chinese immigrant teachers (19 female and 1 male), all were native Chinese speakers born and educated in universities in China.	Observations Group discussions	Dialogism: analysis of multivoicedness
III. “They Have It Better There”: Chinese Immigrant Teachers’ Beliefs, Imaginaries and Ideologies in Cross-National Comparisons	18 Chinese immigrant teachers, all were native Chinese speakers born and educated in universities in China.	Group discussions, observations, and note-taking	Discursive pragmatics: enunciation and dialogism

Table 3 Methodological breakdown of the research by article

4.1 Data collection

Study I problematises the ideological construction of Chinese language education in Finnish political and media discourses. Data in this study include four Finnish policy documents and 24 newspaper articles from two main news outlets in Finland. Four policy documents in which the Chinese language was mentioned, two in English and

two in Finnish, were chosen for the analysis: *Suomi, Aasia ja kansainvälinen yhteistyö* (Finland, Asia and International Cooperation); *Finland's China Action Plan*; *Kohti Tulevaisuuden Kielikoulutusta Kielikoulutuspoliittisen Projektin Loppuraportti* (The Final of the National Project on Finnish Language Education Policies); and *Lukion Opetussuunnitelman Perusteet 2015* (National Core Curriculum for Upper Secondary School 2015). These four policy documents were chosen because they are directly related to China, the Chinese language and Chinese language education. They differ in style and orientation. As it is not possible within the confines of a single article to analyse each of them in its entirety, we only focus on those instances of texts that clearly have to do with the Chinese language either explicitly or implicitly. These instances of texts are regarded as key elements in the ideological construction of the Chinese language.

The news articles were selected from the Finnish National Public Broadcasting Company (Yle), and the only national daily newspaper of Finland, Helsingin Sanomat, and its simplified English version *the Helsinki Times*. Yle is Finland's 99.9 percent state-owned national public service media company. HS is the largest unaffiliated national daily newspaper of Finland and the largest subscription-based daily in the Nordic countries. These news outlets were chosen because they had the widest readership, hence their influence, in the country. The news articles were retrieved from three electronic databases (www.yle.fi, www.hs.fi and www.helsinkitimes.fi) through searching keywords in English and Finnish: "Chinese", "the Chinese language", "Mandarin", "Cantonese", "Kiina (Chinese)", "Kiinan kieli (the Chinese language)", "Mandariinikiina (Mandarin)" and "Kantonikiina (Cantonese)". Among the 24 news articles, 18 were in Finnish and six in English. The length of the articles ranged from 79 to 687 words. In addition, several pictures and one video within the news articles were also included in our analysis. The selected news articles covered the period from 2008 to when this study was conducted in May 2016, because 2008 was, to some extent, a milestone that marked a new era of the Chinese language education in Finland, due to the establishment of the first Chinese-Finnish bilingual comprehensive school.

The data in Article II include audio-recorded group discussions among 20 immigrant Chinese teachers (19 female and 1 male), researchers' observation and notes. Two group discussions were organized during a one-day teacher professional development training. In the first group discussion, the participant teachers were divided into small groups to discuss and share their response to a talk that covers topics related to Chinese language education, such as learner autonomy and motivation, translanguaging as a tool for empowerment, task-based teaching-learning, and intercultural language education. The second group discussion theme was how Chinese teaching and learning could be made more innovative and rewarding. The participant teachers shared examples of good teaching practices or successful teaching/learning from their own experience, information about recent teaching developments and to voice their concerns as teachers of Chinese in Finland.

Data collection in study III took place in a Chinese language teacher development training workshop organized by the Confucius Institute of Helsinki. 18 teachers of Chinese, who were all Chinese immigrant teachers, participated in the workshop. The workshop was organized into two sections. In the morning section, the main task was for the Finland-based Chinese teachers to view and respond to a video in which four Australia-based Chinese language teachers were discussing Chinese language education in Australia. Before viewing the video, the participating teachers were divided into groups of four to six and asked to discuss what the similarities and differences of Chinese language education between Australia and Finland could be. As Australia had been mentioned on many occasions during previous trainings, the discussions were organized so that they could have a chance to share not only their beliefs but also their imaginings about being a teacher of Chinese in a country where Chinese language education has a longer history and was on a larger scale than in Finland. After viewing the video, they were then asked to reflect on and share in the same groups what they had discussed before viewing the video, and what they had learned from the video. In the afternoon section, one of the Finland-based authors gave a plenary talk entitled "Diversity in Chinese Language Education: Concepts and

Methods.” The focus of the talk was to comment on the participant teachers’ group discussions and discuss their perceptions of their situation, challenges and potential solutions, along with the possibility of embedding intercultural Chinese language teaching in Finnish schools. Both during and after the talk, the participants responded actively making comments and asking questions. Both sections of the workshop were audio recorded. The recordings were then transcribed, and the group discussions and interactions in Chinese were translated into English by the Chinese-English bilingual researchers.

4.2 Methods for data analysis

As it is shown in Table 2, articles composing this PhD thesis utilized several different qualitative data analysis methods to analyse the data. Article I applied content analysis and forms of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (Fairclough 2013), Article II used a dialogical analysis of multivoicedness (Aveling et al., 2014), and Article III a discursive pragmatics approach consisting of enunciation and dialogism (Zienkowski, 2011). The methods of analysis in article II and III were first introduced by Dervin (2006) in the field of intercultural research.

In Article I, the focus was on how political and media discourses contribute to the construction of Chinese language education in Finland. Content analysis and CDA employed to analyse the data. The content analysis method helped to get a general picture of the data and allowed us to focus on the selected aspects of meaning that are related to the research questions (Schreier, 2014) Critical discourse analysis helped us reveal the linguistic choices made to create power differentials, taking into account underlying ideologies (Punakallio & Dervin, 2015). We have chosen the framework of CDA developed by Fairclough (1992, 1993, 2003) to analyse our data. Fairclough’s framework is a multilayered analysis that incorporates textual, processing and social levels of discourse analysis and is based on three components: description, interpretation and explanation. We first read all the texts (policy documents and news articles) several times for a general picture of the data. Then we read the texts with a

particular focus on the Chinese language. We focused on document types, how the Chinese language appeared in the text, and what was said about the Chinese language. In this step, we created a chart to list the information of the time and source of the texts and the instances of texts related to the Chinese language. Then we categorized the instances of texts based on the recurring themes. Finally, we added our interpretation and possible explanation, with special attention paid to the word choices related to Chinese, and the intertextuality between news articles, and between news articles and policy documents.

Article II employed the ‘analysis of multivoicedness’ originated from Bakhtin’s dialogism. recognizes the multivoiced nature of the Self and argues that the Self is not single or unitary (Aveling et al., 2014); rather, it is always infused with and directed at the voices of others. The analysis of multivoicedness is a systematic methodological approach for extracting the voices of the Self and Other and analyzing the relations between them (Aveling et al., 2014). It complements the perspective on interculturality that is put forward in this article, as it allows us to identify positioning (i.e., ‘diverse diversities’), potential contradictions about cultures and identities, and previously mentioned ‘-isms.’ Following Aveling et al., 2014, the analysis included a three-step analysis. First, the multiplicity of I-positions from which the Self speaks were identified. This step aims to identify the various I-positions from which the participating teachers speak. Next, the voices of the inner-Others that can be heard within the speakers’ utterance were identified. Finally, the nature of the autodiologue – dialogue between the voices within the Self (Josephs & Valsiner, 1998, as cited in Aveling et al., 2014) and relationships between voices within the Self – were examined. The use of the analysis of multivoicedness (Aveling et al., 2014) allowed us to go below the surface of narrative descriptions or of perspectives that ignore the role of power imbalances in intercultural relations and identify several positions/voices taken up by our informants.

Article III used a discursive pragmatic approach (Zienkowski, 2011) to examine the beliefs, ideologies and imaginaries that composed the Finland-based Chinese immigrant teachers' discourses. A discursive pragmatic approach means analyzing text in terms of both enunciation and dialogism. Enunciation deals with utterance level meaning from the perspective of different linguistic elements (Johansson & Suomela-Salmi, 2011:71). That is, the focus is on (1) how the speaker constructs her/his discourse, and (2) how she/he negotiates the discourse with others (Dervin & Layne, 2013). Dialogism, the second perspective used within a discursive pragmatics analysis of the data, is derived from M. Bakhtin's work (Brandist, 2002), which highlights the many and varied (often contradictory) voices that cross a given discourse (Bakhtin, 1981). From a dialogical perspective, language is fundamentally polysemic and its meaning is not predetermined by the linguistic code but constructed within a given discursive situation (Grossen, 2009:7). The use of a discursive pragmatics approach allows us to identify different "voices" inserted by our research participants in the discourses and thus to highlight some of the ideologies, hierarchies, and power relations ingrained in the discourses (Dervin, 2011).

Among the methods used, critical discourse analytical approaches and dialogism have been important in deepening my understanding of the experiences and perceptions of Chinese immigrant teachers in this study. Pietikäinen and Dufva (2006) offer convincing arguments for combining the strength of Bakhtinian dialogical philosophy of language and CDA in researching the identity of marginalized people. For them, the strength of CDA lies in its analysis of the relationship between language and the social. It offers a framework for conceptualising language use as an irreducible part of social life and provides methodological means for analysing the relationship between language use and the social world. However, while CDA foregrounds the social, the individual positions could be weakened. Dialogism, on the other hand, could help to foreground individual voices (Pietikäinen & Dufva, 2006). Xu (2013) holds a similar view that combining critical approaches and dialogical approaches could yield especially illuminating research findings in researching interculturality. For him,

critical theories tend to emphasise the grand narratives and focus on power differentiation between the groups that the interlocutors belong to in analyzing intercultural interactions and may overlook the localized and dialogic narratives. Dialogism focuses more on localized dialogic discourses than the grand narratives, which may limit our lens to the disguised local and situated interactions. A combination of these two approaches offers the possibility of seeing the world in multiple ways and engaging multiple, but distinct, cultural activities and interpretations (Xu, 2013).

CDA is an umbrella term for several slightly different approaches (i.e. Fairclough, 2003; Wodak, 2001; van Dijk, 2008), all interested in the social conditions and consequences of language use. Being 'critical', CDA primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context (van Dijk, 2008: 85). With such dissident research, critical discourse analysts take an explicit position and thus want to understand, expose, and ultimately resist social inequality.

Shi-xu (2012) raised some issues about mainstream discourse scholarship. He argues that CDA, as a theoretical framework originating in the West, is culturally singular and exclusive and thus may not be applicable to non-West communities and cultures (Shi-xu, 2009 a; b; 2012). Shi-xu (2009; 2012) also warns researchers to be cautious of CDA being used in service of the Western economic and political domination of the rest of the world. However, as mentioned earlier there are several forms of CDA, Shi-xu (2012) does not specify which forms of CDA may not be applicable to non-Western communities and cultures. My understanding is that not all forms of CDA in general suffer from these problems, only because they originated in the West. Surely many CDA practitioners from both the West and the East aim to raise awareness concerning the role of discourses in establishing, maintaining and reproducing (a)symmetrical relations of power in their research and ultimately to resist social inequality. Their contribution should not be wiped over. And it is not guarantee that scholars taking non-western originated approaches would not contribute to suppressing or marginalizing

certain discourses intentionally or unintentionally depending on their ideologies. Whatever approaches we take, it is important to be cautious of the danger of ethnocentric biases and of the suppression of marginal voices.

Seeing identity as socially constructed and individually experienced (Pietikäinen & Dufva, 2006) is especially helpful in understanding the perceptions and experiences of Chinese immigrant teachers working in Finland. CDA in this doctoral study pays attention to how the discourses about Chinese language education in Finland are constructed, and how competing and contradictory ideologies coexist in these discourses. Dialogism in this study aims to map the meanings and significations that Chinese immigrant teachers give to their experiences onto their ways of drawing on and using socially available and conditioned discourses (Pietikäinen & Dufva 2006).

4.3 Limitations

Like any other research, there are limitations to this study.

The first limitation relates to the method for data collection. In articles II and III, the data were obtained from one-day professional development workshops. These include recordings of focus group discussions, the interaction between participants and researchers, and observation notes. Individual interviews and follow-up with the teachers after the data analysis would have provided more information for the studies. However, my interest was not in the long term changing process of the Chinese immigrant teachers' experiences and perceptions, but in how the teachers construct their discourses there and then, how their discourses are in dialogue with the circulating social discourses, and what elements (such as socio-economic status and power issues) in their context become apparent in their constructed discourses. Moreover, discourse is unstable and thus people may give different information at different times, and with different interlocutors (Dervin, 2013).

Another limitation relates to the limited access to participants. The participants in this study are all Chinese immigrant teachers of the Chinese language. I would have liked to include Finnish teachers of Chinese and decision-makers to see how they perceive

the position of Chinese immigrant teachers, or to organize encounters between them to e.g. renegotiate the meanings of what it is to be an (immigrant) teacher in Finland. As I noted at the beginning of this thesis, I did not succeed in convincing Finnish teachers to take part in my PhD research. In a future study I endeavor to include these other participants to broaden the scope of my work.

4.4 On trustworthiness and ethical considerations

The concepts of validity and reliability are often used to evaluate quantitative research. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) these concepts are not incompatible with qualitative research. They proposed the concept of trustworthiness could provide more relevant perspective. I will discuss the trustworthiness from the following aspects, and in connection with ethical considerations.

A researcher is not an objective observer but an integral part of the research process (Ratner, 2002). Therefore, the trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) of this qualitative study lies in the transparency of the research process and the openness of the researcher's own positioning and ideologies as a researcher. In this summary as well as in the published articles included in this doctoral study, I openly discussed my researcher position, including my background as a Chinese immigrant living in Finland, how my research interest and foci shifted during the research process, and how my position changed from one that believed there was indeed clear divisions between essentialist and non-essentialist camps and that I needed to identify myself as a non-essentialist researcher, to one that sees the complexity of discourses construction that involves many elements, including political positionings and ideologies of the interlocutors in the discourse contexts. That is, I understand that people are not essentialists, but everyone can contribute to the essentialist or non-essentialist construction of culture out of certain purposes in certain contexts when taking certain positions.

The aim of the inquiry is not to find and report a pattern or a trend about the experiences and perceptions of all the Chinese immigrant teachers, therefore the views and experiences should not be seen as representative. Instead, the aim is to gain a deeper and multiple understandings of the Chinese immigrant teachers in this study. I believe that the interpretation of media discourses and teachers' discourses in the published studies is inevitably influenced by my position and ideology and that of my co-authors. The same sets of data could be understood differently by another person. Therefore, I try to provide original quotes or if not possible, due to the limitation of space, provide carefully checked translations of the original text. This way, the readers can also judge by themselves if they agree or disagree with my interpretation.

The trustworthiness is also inseparable from ethical considerations. During my research process, I adhere to the ethical guidelines described in *The Ethical Principles of Research with Human Participants and Ethical Review in the Human Sciences in Finland* (Finnish National Board on Research Integrity Tenk, 2019). Throughout the research process, the participants' anonymity and confidentiality were ensured. Before data collection, I shared with the participants the research nature, topic and stages and obtained written consents from them prior to any data collection. Any information that could render the participants identifiable were kept confidential to protect their identities.

I also took into ethical consideration the act of researching multilingually. This study involves at least three languages: Chinese Mandarin, English and Finnish. My mother tongue is Hakka but growing up trilingually I speak Hakka, Mandarin and Cantonese with almost equal competences. I started learning English as a second language when I was 12 years old and have used English as my work language for the past 15 years. My Finnish language skill is that of an intermediate level. Mandarin is the language that me and all of my research participants, the Chinese immigrant teachers, shared. And as for these international Chinese teachers, they were all competent English speakers. English is also the working language I share with the co-authors and the

language of all the publications of this doctoral study. I am aware that, as a researchers, the way the co-authors and I conceptualise, understand, and make choices about generating, analysing, interpreting and reporting data when more than one language is involved (Holmes at al. , 2013), has a great impact on the research outcome. To minimize the negative impact, several actions were taken. During the group discussions, the teachers were free to choose either English or Chinese as they felt most comfortable with. During the translation and interpretation of the data, I invited several Finnish-English bilingual speakers, Chinese-English bilingual speakers and native English speakers to check the translations and interpretations.

5. Summary of the articles

In this section, I present each article included in this doctoral study in more detail.

5.1 Discourses on the Chinese language in Finland

The first article *Ideologies of the Chinese language in Finland-a critical analysis of policy documents and news articles* was co-written by me and Prue Holmes. It aims to shed lights on how Chinese language education is ideologically constructed in Finland as presented in Finnish news outlets and policy documents.

As a Chinese-speaking researcher based in Finland, I have witnessed the growing presence of the Chinese language in Finnish society and noticed the discourses circulating in the media and society around the Chinese language during the past few years. These discourses are charged with different ideologies and often lead people to discuss Chinese language education in certain ways. In Finland, English has been the foreign language par excellence over the last four decades (Leppänen & Pahta, 2012), while the presence of China and the Chinese language has gradually emerged over the past 10 years or so, due to the increasing growth in Finnish-Chinese economic relations. The value of learning the Chinese language is now recognized and discussed in Finnish society, but the phenomenon has rarely been researched. From a language ideology perspective, this paper explored Finnish political documents and news articles in two main news outlets as discursive sites in which ideological discourses of the Chinese language are constructed and (re)produced.

We followed Woolard (1998) who understands language ideologies as (explicit or implicit) cultural representations of the intersections of language and human beings in a social world. Language ideologies are more than about linguistic codes but serve individual and group-specific interests, and are always formulated from a particular social perspective and have particular referents and targets (Androutsopoulos, 2010). Media and political discourses have a powerful influence on the formation of attitudes

in society (Van Dijk, 2000), and are thus rich sites to reveal how ideologies related to the Chinese language are imposed or appropriated. To investigate the ideological construction of the Chinese language in the political and media discourses in the Finnish society, this study drew on four Finnish policy documents and 24 newspaper articles that were related to the Chinese language.

Critical analysis of these discourses reveals that the kind of Chinese language education promoted in Finland as illustrated in policy documents and media reports is based on pragmatic ideologies on languages. Along with these ideologies, the languages that can strengthen national competitiveness are seen as cultural capital/resources, while those cannot are seen as useless, for example, the idea that Swedish (the second official language of Finland, which should be learnt by all school students) should be replaced by more useful languages. Four key themes concerning ideological discourses of the Chinese language emerged from the analysis: Chinese as a useful language, Chinese as an increasingly popular language, Chinese as a world and/or global language, and Chinese as a difficult language. The dominant discourse identified Chinese as a language that primarily served a pragmatic function: Chinese as a useful language. The usefulness of the Chinese language is discussed in relation to increased job opportunities; boosting cooperation between China and Finland; strengthening Finland's international competitiveness. The second major theme, Chinese as a world language, This discourse was the most frequently found in policy documents. Chinese as a world language discourse is used as a rationale for the policies concerning the provision of the language in the Finnish education system. The third theme highlighted the increasing popularity of the Chinese language. This discourse appears most often in news reports about newly inaugurated Chinese language courses in schools and universities. The final theme revealed a small number of news articles depicting Chinese as a difficult language, through comparing learning Chinese with other European languages, particularly English.

To sum up, the messages implied in political and media discourses and exemplified in the analysis are that Chinese is becoming a popular, even global, language, and learning the Chinese language could bring job opportunities to individual learners and international competitiveness to the nation, but also that Chinese is potentially difficult to learn. These findings point to three major conclusions. First, the discourses about the benefits of learning Chinese in the Finnish context are not limited to a personal level but often discussed in relation to national economic and political success. Second, our analysis shows that the increasing interest in learning Chinese is seen as a positive phenomenon by the Finnish media. Third, despite the different stances they take, the policy documents and the two different news outlets are often discursively engaged with each other through circulating certain ideological discourses about the Chinese language.

The ideological discourses about the Chinese language presented in media and policy documents at least partly show that in Finland policymakers and those who have power in control of the media discourses perceive the rise of China as an opportunity for Finland to boost its economy and enhance its global competitiveness and that the teaching and learning of Chinese language is an important tool to help Finland and Finnish people to seize the opportunity. This ideological stance inevitably has an impact on the provision of Chinese language education and those who are closely related to it, such as the teachers and the learners.

The first article, by examining the discourses presented on media and policies surrounding the Chinese language, provides background information for further exploration of the perceptions and experiences of Chinese immigrant teachers working in Finland. The next two articles take a closer look at how Chinese immigrant teachers, who represent the majority of the workforce for the instruction of the Chinese language in Finland, take up these circulating discourses about the language, and how they talk about their experiences and perceive their positions in the teaching and learning of the Chinese language in Finland.

5.2 A marginalized group? Chinese immigrant teachers' experiences

Article II is a collaborative work between Fred Dervin and me. This article investigates how Chinese immigrant teachers of the Chinese language perceive the position of Chinese language education. We took a critical intercultural approach which is based on the notion of 'interculturality'. Interculturality is defined in this article as the (unstable and power-laden) construction and negotiation of encounters, identities, and ideologies between different persons (Dervin, 2016; Piller, 2011). By taking a critical intercultural approach, we move well beyond the usual description of interculturality as behaving and communicating effectively and appropriately across cultures (e.g. Byram et al., 2001; Deardorff, 2009).

Drawing on the interaction, observation and video recordings of group discussion of a group of Chinese immigrant teachers in a professional development workshop, and using the "analysis of multivoicedness", which was developed from dialogism (Aveling, Gillespie, and Cornish, 2014), a number of positions/voices taken up by the teachers and others in their discourses are identified.

The first voice identified in the teachers' talk was the voice of 'I-as-a-Chinese-in-Finland'. When taking this position, some teachers seemed to imply a Chinese 'I' (and 'we' by extension), which contrasted with a Finnish 'they.' On the one hand, the teachers perceived their status as inferior in comparison to the Finns. They struggled to fit into Finnish society and were constantly reminded of their status as Others. On the other, many of the teachers felt proud because of their knowledge of what they call 'real' China and that it is their responsibility to let the students know about the 'real' China of today through Chinese language teaching.

The second I-position identified in the data is the 'I-as-an-uncertified-Chinese-teacher-in-Finland' voice. When taking the position of an uncertified Chinese teacher in Finland, many of the instructors perceived themselves as inferior in comparison to the Finnish teachers of Chinese. They felt disadvantaged because their qualifications and

education were not recognized by the Finnish educational system and were somewhat relegated to an inferior position.

The ‘I-as-a-Chinese-Teacher-in-Finland’ voice is the dominant position in the teachers’ utterances. Analysing the Chinese immigrant teachers’ discourses of interculturality shows that many of their discourses were based on culturalist and essentialist perspectives (Holliday, 2010). When taking up this position, some of the teachers see their students as the representative of Finnish culture and the culture is a problem for their teaching.

Two main aspects of the experiences of Chinese teachers of Chinese in Finland emerged from the data. They both relate to interculturality and show a certain ‘unbearable heaviness’ of being a Chinese teacher of Chinese in Finland: *First*, the teachers generally felt that they were implicitly treated as inferiors because of their unqualified status or simply because of their position as teachers sent by a Chinese institution to Finland. This attitude was often reflected negatively in the intercultural discourses the teachers had on Finns and Finland. *Second*, the way some of the teachers see their students and the teaching of language and culture represents some essentialist perspectives, which deserves to be revised based on a critical intercultural perspective.

5.3 They have it better there? Teachers’ comparisons between two countries

Article III is a collaborative work among four researchers based in Australia and Finland. It examines Finland-based Chinese immigrant teachers’ cross-national comparative discourses on Chinese language teaching. The data derives from a professional development (PD) training session held at a Finnish university, during which a group of Chinese immigrant teachers viewed and responded to a pre-recorded discussion among four Australia-based Chinese teachers about their work.

Based on a critical intercultural theoretical perspective, which moves beyond typical “culture shock” and “adaptation” models of understanding and explaining migrants’ experiences, this paper makes use of the concepts of teacher beliefs, ideologies and

imaginaries (Holliday, 2010) in considering how Finland-based Chinese migrant teachers perceive the position of Chinese language and being teachers of Chinese in Finland and Australia. A well-cited researcher in applied linguistics, Borg (2001: 186), defines a belief as “a consciously or unconsciously held proposition.” For Borg (2001: 186), a belief “is evaluative in that it is accepted as true by the individual, and is therefore imbued with emotive commitment; further, it serves as a guide to thought and behaviour”. Borg’s (2001) definition seems to suggest that there is a clear linear relationship between teachers’ beliefs and their behaviours. However, we understand that the relationship between beliefs and behaviours is more complex and dialectical and that contexts play an important role (Tamimy, 2015). We also consider that teachers have complex beliefs, and that these different beliefs are not separate entities but that they interplay dynamically and constantly (Ernest, 1989). When teachers engage in language practices such as constructing discourses on Chinese language education, they are simultaneously displaying their ideologies about the nature, function, and purpose of learning the Chinese language, how the language should be taught, and what the characteristics of good learners, and what a good teaching and learning environment look like. We are interested in whether and how the ideologies manifested in the teachers’ constructed discourses are intertwined with the circulating ideological discourses of Chinese language in Finnish society as discussed in Article I. Following Dervin (2007), intercultural imagination is understood as the imagined solid identity of the self and other, and/or positive impression of places based on stereotypes and hearsay. Imaginaries are thus seen as constructed, expressed and negotiated between self and other in an intercultural context.

The analysis shows that the Chinese immigrant teachers in Finland tend to have negative views about being teachers of Chinese in Finland while idealizing teaching Chinese in Australia. Before viewing the stimulus video, the Finland-based Chinese immigrant teachers, drawing on circulating discourses but also imaginaries, anticipated that the discussion of their Australian counterparts would confirm their beliefs of Australia as being a better place to be teachers of Chinese language, in terms of learner

characteristics, and cultural and economic ties with China. After viewing the video, some of these teachers realized that despite the differences in the history and the scale of Chinese language education in the two countries, the teachers in both places face very similar challenges, such as how to motivate learners' enthusiasm in learning the language, and funding cuts. However, many teachers still held a strong belief that Chinese language and teachers of Chinese language were in a less favourable position in Finland than in Australia, even though what they learned from the video often contradicted these beliefs.

As exemplified in the analysis, various factors have contributed to the Chinese immigrant teachers' construction of comparisons about Chinese language education in Finland and Australia. The teachers' perception of the status of the Chinese language in the two contexts seems to have had the greatest impact on their cross-national comparative discourses. The Chinese immigrant teachers' perceptions that they are somewhat marginalized in Finnish education might also play an important role in determining their negative discourses about Finland and their idealizations of another country where they imagine immigrant Chinese teachers are more valued and face fewer challenges. Our finding points to the importance of providing space to discuss these imaginaries and confront teachers, be them immigrant or not, with different realities in both initial and continuing teacher education. The finding also provides information for teacher educators and stakeholders to better understand and support migrant teachers from various linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

6. Conclusions and implications

In this section, I first summarize the main findings of the study in light of the theoretical considerations elaborated in section 3. This is followed by a consideration of the theoretical implications of the findings in terms of the way it has helped me generate a model that can better capture the intercultural experiences and perceptions of the immigrant Chinese teachers in this study. The second part of this section considers the ways in which Chinese immigrant teachers can be better supported, drawing upon the insights from discourses about and of the participants of this study.

6.1 Chinese immigrant teachers working in Finland: Experiences and perceptions of the voiceless

This doctoral thesis attempted to shed light on the relatively rarely researched Chinese immigrant teachers' experiences working in Finland and how they perceive their roles in them. By examining the political and media discourses constructed around Chinese language education and the utterances of Chinese immigrant teachers, this study aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of these teachers' experiences of and perceptions of working in Finland. The teachers' perceptions are intimately related to how they positioned themselves or were positioned by others within their experiences as teachers, whose problems and experiences inside and outside the classroom were neither 'voiced' nor 'heard'. The findings suggest that the perspectives and approaches to interculturality discussed in chapter 3 are helpful to understand these experiences and perceptions. However, a large culture approach (Holliday, 1999) or a solid approach (Dervin, 2016) is not sufficient to explain the teachers' experiences and perceptions of voicelessness in Finnish education.

The findings in this thesis suggest that various factors have contributed to how the Chinese immigrant teachers experience and perceive their roles in teaching the Chinese language in Finland. These factors include but are not limited to local context realities, wider discourses, personal capacities. These factors influence how the teachers

perceive their position in Finnish society and thereby lead to intercultural imaginings about themselves and others (Finns, amongst others in the study, see Dervin, 2007) and affect the way they constructed discourses about different aspects of their professional life.

As the findings show, widely circulating discourses have an impact on the teachers' perceptions. Discourses such as the rise of Chinese and the increasing popularity of the Chinese language, the global ranking of Finnish education, and the political and economic arguments behind the provision of the Chinese language, appear to have influenced how the Chinese immigrant teachers perceive their positions. The teachers in this study are aware of these circulating discourses and reproduce them in their own ways to serve their arguments. Article I reveals that the discourses on teaching and learning of Chinese language in Finland are closely connected to economic and political benefits for individuals and the nation. These ideological discourses also appear in teachers' arguments for expanding the provision of the language and improving the treatment of the teachers in articles II and III.

The findings also suggest that the local context plays a critical role in the teachers' experiences of working as Chinese language teachers in Finland. In the group discussions in both substudies II and III the teachers talked about the influence of funding cuts in the education sector on the provision of the Chinese language, hence of their job opportunities. They discussed the lack of paths for the recognition of their previous teaching qualifications or of acquiring new teaching qualifications to be certified Chinese language teachers in Finland. They also talked about the small learner population and the lack of teaching resources and professional development trainings. Language issues and the marginalization of foreigners in the Finnish job market were also considered in the group discussions.

The third factor is the personal capacity. Personal capacities here refer to teachers' educational backgrounds, languages they speak, the length of their stay in Finland, and previous work experiences. As it is explained in the research context, the Chinese

immigrant teachers in this study are teachers who were born and educated in China and are working as teachers of the Chinese language in Finland. Although teachers did not explicitly discuss their educational backgrounds or previous work experiences in the group discussions, their utterances do reveal that different personal capacities can affect their experiences and perceptions. For example, those who stayed in Finland longer and speak the Finnish language well do show greater confidence in their knowledge about Finnish students.

These teachers' experiences lead to different perceived positions, such as negative ones (an inferior immigrant teacher), or as positive ones (a confident authentic Chinese culture representative), as exemplified in Article II. Depending on the perceived positions available to them, the immigrant teachers enacted their intercultural imagination (Dervin, 2007), and constructed discourses that could be essentialising and othering the learners and places.

6.2 Theoretical implications: A model for understanding immigrant teachers' experiences and perceptions

The findings of this doctoral study point to the fact that the existing intercultural models have their limitations in helping to explore immigrant teachers' experiences and perceptions, and that taking an alternative perspective is necessary. Unlike many of the reviewed studies in section 2, the findings in this study reveal that cultural differences do not play a significant role in the experiences of Chinese immigrant teachers. Although occasionally, the teachers made cultural comparisons between Finland and China, or essentialised and othered discourses on their learners, their colleagues and themselves, these cultural discourses appear to be more connected to the positions they take in specific contexts.

Based on the findings, a model for understanding immigrant teachers' experiences and perceptions is proposed.

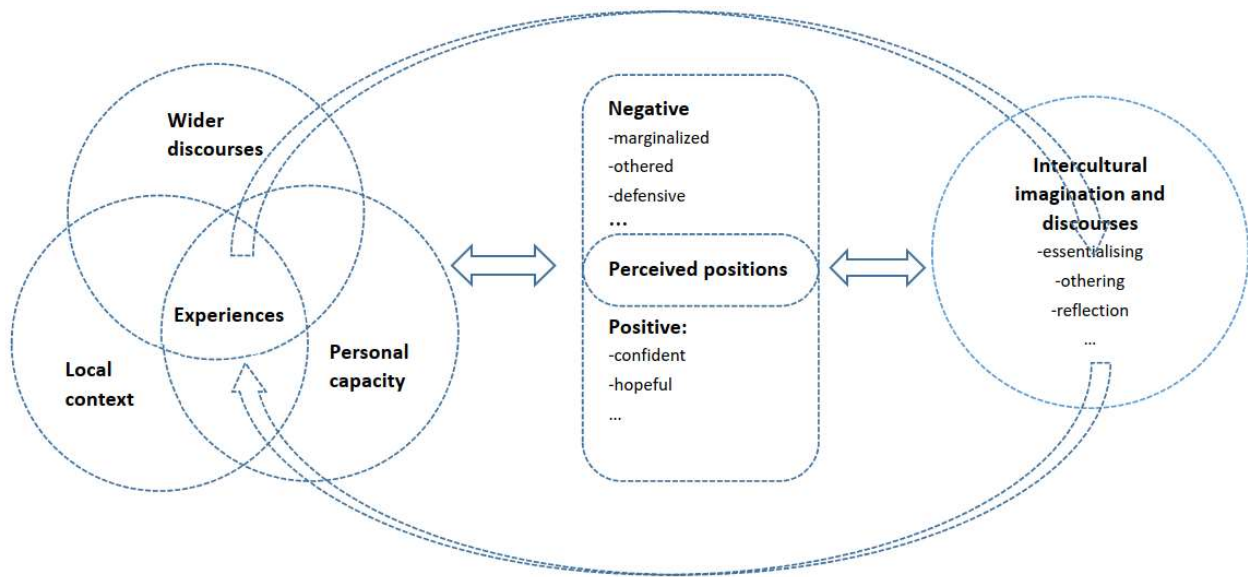


Figure 1 A Model for Understanding Immigrant Teachers' Experiences and Perceptions

Figure 1 shows the various facets of immigrant teachers' experiences and the connection between their experiences, how they perceive their positions, their intercultural imaginations, and the discourses they construct about their work. In this model, and as the findings of this study exemplify, intercultural experience does not necessarily lead to the development of intercultural sensitivity, as opposed to mainstream theories (e.g. Byram et al. 2001; Deardorff, 2009) that suggest intercultural experience lead to intercultural competences and development. There are no stages, and no linear development of intercultural sensitivity or competences in the way the 'voiceless' teachers describe their experiences and their perceptions of being a teacher in Finland. Instead, the immigrant teachers' intercultural experience is a constant negotiation process through which they accept, claim or reject different identities of their own; but also imagine, attribute to and deny certain identities for others. In this process, different factors such as wider discourses, the complex realities of a given context, personal histories can lead to different perceived positions and thus trigger different actions of 'doing' identities (Zhu, 2017), such as othering or essentialising. This understanding of immigrant teachers' intercultural experiences and perceptions reflects the perspectives of critical interculturality as discussed in section 3.

While I acknowledge that a model cannot do full justice to the full complexity of intercultural experiences and perceptions of immigrant teachers revealed by this study, it could be helpful for stakeholders as an alternative way to understand the relationship between different facets of immigrant teachers' experience, perceptions and potential (re)actions. It could also be a useful tool for immigrant teachers to reflect on the connections between their perceptions and their own intercultural imagination (Dervin, 2007).

6.3 Practical implications to empower immigrant teachers

Based on the findings of this doctoral study, two practical implications are suggested. Firstly, education institutions should learn about and support the education and professional development of immigrant teachers and provide equal treatment and equal opportunity for career development for them. In particular, teacher education and training should extend to include immigrant teachers, whatever subject they teach (be they full time or part-time teachers) because they are part of the education system and have a direct influence on the students. The participants in this study reported the challenges they face in education and professional development. The first challenge is that there is no Chinese language teacher training programme that can accept those who speak Chinese as a first language/mother tongue. According to the teachers, only one university in Finland offers Chinese language teacher training programmes, but this programme only accepts those who do not speak Chinese as a first language. This is very frustrating for those who want to become qualified Chinese language teachers in Finland. Furthermore, the teachers report that they have had very few professional development training opportunities. Therefore, it is recommended that regular tailor-made professional development trainings be made available to them. This can help immigrant teachers update their knowledge and skills in teaching and learning, but also meet and talk to peer teachers.

Another implication is that teachers need to examine the wider discourse and reflect and interrogate their beliefs. In this regard, critical intercultural teacher education is

much needed in Chinese language teacher education in Finland (and elsewhere). This can be organized in ways such as learning with local colleagues of different subjects but also learning with peer teachers who teach the same subject but based in different countries. This could create two-way learning opportunities where all kinds of teachers, be they immigrants or locals, can confront their underlying assumptions about culture, people and places. Teachers could benefit from having an open mind to different ways of learning and systems of academic and intellectual thought, to enter into a dialogue, share and reflect on their intercultural experiences. These types of learning opportunities could help immigrant teachers and other teachers to build a better teaching and learning environment for themselves and their learners.

Education is often said to be ‘international’ and ‘global’ today. As mentioned in the context description, Finland considers recruiting more teachers of diverse background to be one of the ways to better support the increased number of culturally diverse learners (Hahl & Paavola, 2015; Lefever et al., 2014). I argue that the voice of all types of teachers should be heard, as the conditions of all teachers are closely tied to learners’ wellbeing and achievement. However, this study showed that the mere presence of so-called multicultural teachers does not suffice to make education international, global and equal. The voice of the participating teachers in the study is rarely heard in Finnish education. I hope that this PhD study can contribute modestly to find ways to empower these teachers, as well as the millions of migrant educators around the world.

This summary was written amid the Covid-19 pandemic, which started in early 2020. The virus has spread all over the world and changed the lives of everyone. But what is more destructive and spreads faster than viruses like this one is xenophobia, (structural) racism and injustice. Escalating defensive speech and actions against minorities, especially Asian minorities, have been reported in many places. Such incidents have had a negative impact on the wellbeing of the entire Asian community. Many migrant teachers were the first to be furloughed and/or lose their jobs in many countries. Xenophobia and (structural) racism are not directly caused by the virus. They are

deeply rooted in many societies. To fight against (structural) racism and xenophobia requires efforts from everyone. In Education, it is especially important that the diversity of teachers and students is not treated as a mere add-on or a token for looking “international” and “global”. Teachers of all kinds should be heard and treated equally.

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List of Original Publications

This thesis consists of a summary and the following publications:

Article I

Liu, H., & Holmes, P. (2018). Ideologies of the Chinese language in Finland: A critical analysis of policy documents and news articles. *Global Chinese*, 4(2), 247-270.

Article II

Liu, H., & Dervin, F. (2016). A transdisciplinary approach to examining and confidence-boosting the experiences of Chinese teachers of Chinese in Finland. *L2 Journal*, 8(4).

Article III

Liu, H., Dervin, F., Xu, H., & Moloney, R. (2019). “They Have It Better There”: Chinese Immigrant Teachers’ Beliefs, Ideologies and Imaginaries in Cross-National Comparisons. *Frontiers of Education in China*, 14(3), 453-479.