Learning Chinese via WeChat in a reciprocal peer learning context: A study of the development of learner agency in Bangladesh

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Declaration

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of Doctor of Philosophy is entirely my own work , and that I have exercised reasonable care to ensure that the work is original and have conformed to the regulations on the use and declaration of Generative AI, and does not to the best of my knowledge breach any law of copyright, and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

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Publications and presentations

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Abbreviations

AR: Action research

CFL: Chinese as foreign language

CI: Confucius institute

CLT: Communicative language teaching

DBR: Design-based research

EFL: English as foreign language

ELT: English language teaching

ESL: English as a second language

GTM: Grammar translation method

HSK: Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi

ICT: Information communication technology

L1: First language

L2: Second language

RPL: Reciprocal peer learning

SLA: Second language acquisition

Learning Chinese via WeChat in a reciprocal peer learning context: A study of the development of learner agency in Bangladesh

Aishowarza Manik

Abstract

Recent years have seen significant demand for Chinese language learning in Bangladesh. Parallel to this, the government has advocated the integration of ICT in education to enhance digital literacy and competencies for citizens by implementing 'Digital Bangladesh Vision-2021' and 'Smart Bangladesh Vision-2041' policies. Yet in Bangladesh, foreign language education is still largely classroom-based and teacher-centred, with little opportunity for students to interact with peers and avail technological advantages for language learning.

Drawing on an extensive literature review on learner agency and on the role of social media and reciprocal peer learning (RPL) in supporting the former, this research investigates how the use of social media (e.g., WeChat), and RPL foster learner agency in responding to government policies and creating an engaging learning environment for third-level students of Chinese in Bangladesh.

A three-cycle based action research project was thus designed and implemented at the University of Dhaka, Bangladesh, to create an inclusive environment through direct participation of the students. Data was collected from reflective journals, interviews, and observing students' interaction in the classroom and WeChat. The findings reveal that collaborating with peers and integrating social media into language learning contributed to shaping learners' roles, asynchronous communication, linguistic skills, and, overall, empowering learners. It also reveals that a peer-supportive and immersive language learning experience through social media facilitates reflective learning and contributes to the development of agentive learners and a sustainable learning approach.

Chapter 1
INTRODUCTION

My academic background and professional experience across diverse cultures and languages heavily inform the current research project. My educational background in linguistics and my expertise in language learning and teaching, in both Bangladesh and China, have led me to reflect on how we learn language and how we apply it in real-life situations. For me, learning a foreign language is not about memorising a set of rules or vocabulary lists but about developing the ability to participate in social interactions, express oneself, engage meaningfully with others, and enhance cultural understanding. In other words, language learning is fundamentally about becoming part of a community of speakers. The linguistic lens has taught me to see the language learning process beyond the surface structures of the language and to focus on its pragmatic aspects. The underlying process of meaning-making and social negotiation occurs when learners engage with the learning environment.

This interest has deepened through my second MA degree in Teaching Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages (MTCSOL), which further exposed me to the pedagogical and sociocultural complexities involved in facilitating meaningful language learning. Perhaps the most formative experience was being a learner myself whilst living and studying in China. I found myself grappling with tones and characters, feeling lost in conversations and frustrated when I could not articulate my thoughts clearly. I came to appreciate in a very immediate way the gap between what formal classroom instruction provided and what was actually needed to communicate confidently. I observed, consistently, that I learned as much from informal exchanges with classmates as from structured lessons. During my internship as part of the MTCSOL programme, working within a Chinese university setting, this observation crystallised into a question I kept returning to: Why do students learn better when they engage with each other? I observed improvements in students' linguistic confidence and output quality during collaborative group activities, and I began to think seriously about the structural conditions that made this possible.

Social media, and WeChat in particular, formed an unexpected but integral part of this experience. Because of the restrictions on other social media in China (e.g., Facebook, WhatsApp), WeChat became the primary communication medium for me and my peers. We used it spontaneously for sharing Chinese language resources, correcting each other's writing, practising characters and tones, and offering encouragement in real time and asynchronously. This informal, peer-driven interaction on WeChat contributed to my Chinese learning progress in ways that classroom instruction alone had not. The platform's combination of voice messaging, group chat, real-time interaction, and resource sharing created a flexible learning environment that made it easier to connect with peers and native speakers. I experienced this environment as genuinely motivating. In addition, whilst working as an intern at a Chinese university, I observed the contradiction between theoretical knowledge and practical application of language outside the classroom. More specifically, though classroom learning provided essential foundations, learners needed not only classroom instruction but also consistent practice in real-world social contexts to become confident and efficient learners of Chinese. During this time, I kept returning to the same question: Why do students learn better when they engage with each other? I observed improvements in my students' various skills through their engagement in group work.

Moreover, my teaching and learning experiences in Bangladesh were situated within a largely teacher-centred curriculum that offered students limited opportunities to interact with peers, exercise initiative, or take ownership of their learning. Thus, the contrast between peer-mediated, digitally supported learning in China and the structurally constrained, teacher-directed environment in Bangladesh pointed to a clear research gap. As I embarked on this PhD journey, I carried with me the voices of many students whose learning journeys I had observed, along with insights from my experiences as both a teacher and a learner, and a strong belief in empowering learners for their growth and development. This thesis addresses this gap by designing a framework that creates opportunities for learners to take ownership of their learning through peer interaction on WeChat, while also offering practical approaches to support a more learner-centred learning environment.

1.1. The educational and linguistic context of Bangladesh

The People's Republic of Bangladesh provided the context for this study. Bangladesh is located in the north-eastern part of South Asia and covers an area of approximately 147,570 square kilometres. According to Worldometer's statistics (*Bangladesh Demographics*, 2025), Bangladesh is the eighth-most densely populated country in the world, with a population of 175.7 million. The official language of Bangladesh is Bangla (also known as Bengali), while indigenous communities speak 41 different languages (Imtiaz, 2023). An understanding of Bangladesh's educational, digital, and linguistic landscape provides important context for this study and helps explain why a technology-supported intervention to foster learner agency is both necessary and timely.

1.1.1. Overview of the education system

Socioeconomic differences, power structures, colonial heritage, and religious influence shape the education system in Bangladesh. These factors have led to the development and coexistence of three parallel education streams at the primary and secondary levels: mainstream general education, religiously faith-based education (aka madrasah), and English-medium education (Hunter & Zaman, 2022). Each stream serves different socioeconomic groups and operates independently with its own curriculum and academic standards (BANBEIS, 2022). Bengali is the language of instruction for mainstream education, Arabic for religious education, and English for English-medium schools. Primary education is compulsory for children aged 6 to 10. Secondary education comprises three stages: junior secondary (Grades 6–8), secondary (Grades 9–10), and higher secondary (Grades 11–12). Tertiary education includes public universities, private universities, and internationally affiliated institutions; as of February 2024, the University Grants Commission (UGC) lists 55 public universities, 114 private universities, three international universities, and 2,257 affiliated colleges (University Grants Commission, 2024).

The UGC was established in 1972 as an autonomous body to develop quality standards in higher education. Several higher education reform initiatives have also been launched to enhance and elevate the quality of higher education in Bangladesh. An

example of these reforms is the establishment of a 20-year Strategic Plan for Higher Education in Bangladesh: 2006–2026 (University Grants Commission, 2006). This plan has been revised to align with the government's higher education objectives and with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), resulting in the newly formulated Strategic Plan for 2017–2030. This plan aims to establish a quality, equitable, and inclusive education system consistent with the SDGs. The plan stresses the following objectives: enhancing teacher training, modernising curricula, improving infrastructure, and expanding educational access. It promotes digital learning, STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics), and vocational education to build a skilled workforce.

However, despite these policy commitments, higher education in Bangladesh continues to be characterised by persistent challenges related to teaching quality, student engagement, infrastructure, and the effective use of digital technologies, with classroom practices remaining largely teacher-centred and examination-driven. These conditions limit opportunities for students to participate actively in their learning and to exercise learner agency, particularly in language classrooms. Within this policy and practice landscape, there is a need to explore contextually appropriate, technology-supported pedagogical designs that can create space for students' involvement.

1.1.2. Digitalisation of education

The internet was introduced in Bangladesh in the mid-1990s but remained available only to a small elite group, depending on factors such as income, social status, and literacy (Alam et al., 2023). According to the World Bank's report 'Individuals using the Internet', the proportion of internet users in Bangladesh grew dramatically from 0.02% in 2005 to 39% in 2020 (World Bank, 2020). This growth was driven by government investment in information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure. The first National ICT Policy was introduced in 2002, establishing a framework for using technology to modernise public services and education.

This was followed by three significant policy developments. Firstly, in 2008, the Digital Bangladesh Vision 2021 manifesto set a national target to transform Bangladesh into

a middle-income nation through sustainable development in education, healthcare, infrastructure, and governance. Secondly, in 2009, the Digital Bangladesh ICT policy focused on four pillars: human resource development, connecting citizens, digital government, and promoting the ICT industry. This policy aimed to implement essential changes in the curriculum, pedagogy, and teachers' professional development to utilise ICT as an effective tool (Babu & Nath, 2017), including delivering ICT literacy training to educators and students at primary, secondary, and higher education levels. Thirdly, in 2010, the National Education Policy prioritised ICT integration at all educational levels, including curriculum reforms, teacher development programmes, and the provision of ICT-enabled learning environments. In the area of education, collectively, these reforms can be seen as successive iterations of a shared policy ambition to create a digitally capable national education system.

To implement this agenda in schools, the government launched the Access to Information (a2i) project with support from United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The project adopted a three-dimensional approach: creating multi-media classrooms (MMCs) in secondary schools, training teachers to create ICT-aided educational content, and creating electronic textbooks. By 2015, more than half of the country's schools (over 20,000) had established classrooms equipped with internet-connected computers to facilitate ICT-enabled teaching and learning (Ministry of Finance, 2015). Building on these initiatives, the government adopted Smart Bangladesh Vision 2041 in December 2022, announced as the next phase of the digital transformation agenda. This was structured around four pillars: Smart Citizen, Smart Government, Smart Economy, and Smart Society (Ahmed et al., 2023). This vision aims to leverage advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things, and data analytics to achieve high-income-country status and build a knowledge-based economy by 2041 (Sultana, 2025).

Despite this succession of policy commitments, the education system at all levels continues to rely primarily on traditional classroom-based instruction. Significant gaps persist between policy ambition and practice, with many educators still struggling to integrate ICT meaningfully into their pedagogy (Lim et al., 2020). Within this broader context, Bangladesh Open University (BOU) represents an important institutional

attempt to expand access through distance and technology-enhanced learning. Since 1992, BOU has offered secondary, higher secondary, bachelor's, and master's degree programmes through distance learning. It has followed various methods to support online and distance provision, including television, mobile phones, text-based tools, and videos. However, these have largely remained isolated initiatives, and widespread online education in Bangladesh is still minimal (Sarker et al., 2019). The limits of such isolated initiatives were most clearly exposed during the COVID-19 pandemic, when all educational institutes throughout Bangladesh had to transition rapidly to online modes of teaching and learning in 2020.

1.1.3. Impact of COVID-19 on education

As this research was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is necessary to consider its impact on the Bangladeshi education system. After the first COVID-19 case was detected in the capital, Dhaka, a general lockdown was announced on 26 March 2020 (Khan et al., 2021). The government closed all educational institutions to prevent the spread of the virus and instructed all students to remain at home. As a result, many university students had to leave their hostels in the capital and relocate to their family homes in rural areas. During this period, over 38 million learners were affected by the partial or full closures of educational institutions (UNICEF, 2022).

The transition to online education was abrupt and unstructured. Both students and teachers had limited experience with technology-driven learning environments (Ahmed & Tajwar, 2023). This transition was further hampered by multiple other factors, including low digital literacy, poor connectivity, a shortage of devices, unstable internet connections, power cut, expensive internet package, technophobia, and lack of preparedness (Rouf et al., 2022; Shohel et al., 2022). These challenges were much more severe in many rural areas, where frequent load-shedding, low mobile network coverage, and unstable internet connections were particularly prominent (Ela et al., 2021).

These factors hugely contributed to the negative attitude and behaviour towards online learning, and to the increased dropout rate (World Bank, 2021). In the absence of clear guidelines for online education and lack of technical support, teachers struggled to

organise and conduct their classes, and students found it challenging to participate and engage in this new learning environment (Roy et al., 2023; Sultana, 2025). In addition, online education has highlighted existing social inequalities among students and has been linked to increased anxiety, depression, and frustration, particularly for those from lower-middle-income families who were struggling to afford the necessary facilities (Zaman, 2020).

1.1.4. The foreign language learning landscape

To understand the foreign language learning context in Bangladesh, it is particularly important to reflect on the country's historical background and formation (Akhtar & Kusakabe, 2021). Bangladesh's language landscape has been shaped by two colonial legacies, British rule (1757–1947) and under Pakistani rule (1947–1971), which continue to influence education policy and practice (Ahmed, 2018). Two hundred years of British rule established English as a language of power, prestige, and social status (Chowdhury et al., 2018; Rahman, 2022). During the Pakistan period, the imposition of Urdu as a national language, despite Bangla being spoken by 98% of the East Pakistani population, provoked the Language Movement (aka Bhasha Andolon) of 1952. This movement established Bangla as the state language of East Pakistan and, subsequently, as the national language of Bangladesh after independence in 1971.

Although Bangla is the official language and the mother tongue of the majority, it is not universally a first language. As mentioned earlier (Section 1.1), Bangladesh has 41 indigenous language communities, who use their own languages as the primary means of communication at home and within their communities. These languages are largely absent from the formal education system. All students in Bangladesh begin learning English from Grade 1, and it remains the only foreign language taught until they reach university. Even decades after independence, English remains the most widely used language after Bangla and is mandatory in the curriculum from primary school through higher education (Hunter & Zaman, 2022). However, the absence of a foreign language policy has sparked an ongoing debate over the status of English (Rahaman, 2025). It is unclear whether English should be classified as a second language (L2) because of its institutional centrality and curricular ubiquity, or as a foreign language (FL) because most Bangladeshis have limited exposure to English outside the classroom.

In terms of language teaching, historically, students had little choice but to focus on grammatical competence through memorisation, as the Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) was the dominant pedagogical paradigm and the basis on which examinations were designed (Rahman & Pandian, 2018). In Bangladesh, teachers are accustomed to a teacher-centred approach that is characterised by formal, classroom-based instruction with little opportunity for student engagement (Chowdhury & Kabir, 2014; Islam et al., 2021). In the mid-1990s, the Ministry of Education introduced a significant shift towards Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which prioritises learner engagement in meaningful and authentic communication, and positions the teacher as a facilitator (Uddin, 2019). The move towards CLT represents more than a methodological shift: it also demands that teachers reorient themselves towards a pedagogical culture that fundamentally questions and reshapes deeply embedded teacher-centred classroom practices (Chowdhury & Le Ha, 2008).

The Bangladeshi government has set up several teacher training institutes and centres to support in-service teacher education; however, the shortage of skilled teachers, large class sizes, and insufficient teacher preparedness for CLT implementation have limited their effectiveness (Rahman & Karim, 2015). The traditional classroom-based teaching approach remains prominent in classrooms (Chowdhury & Sarkar, 2018; Islam & Rahman, 2019). As a result, many English instructors do not actually follow CLT; instead, they use a disguised version of the GTM that they have consistently implemented in the past. This pedagogical challenge is not unique to the English classroom; it also extends to other foreign language instruction in Bangladesh (Hamid et al., 2025).

Beyond English, driven by globalisation, trade partnerships, and career opportunities, universities and private institutions in Bangladesh now offer courses in Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, French, Spanish, Hindi, Urdu, and Russian. In February 2026, for the first time, the government announced plans for the first time to introduce a compulsory third foreign language at secondary school level. Proposed options included Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, and French, with the aim to enhance students' multilingual competences and global competitiveness (Islam, 2026). However, this proposal has raised concerns about its practicality, particularly due to shortages of qualified teachers, the risk of continued reliance on memorisation, and the challenge

of adding another language when many students still have limited proficiency in English. Compared with English, there is substantially less research on the teaching practices and learning contexts of other foreign languages in Bangladesh, and research on Chinese language teaching and learning remains relatively underexplored.

1.1.5. Upsurge of Chinese language learning

In recent years, Bangladesh's closer engagement with China has generated remarkable growth in demand for Chinese language learning. This growth stems primarily from Bangladesh's participation in China's One Belt and One Road Initiative, which has strengthened economic ties and increased demand for employees proficient in both Bangla and Chinese (Nahar & Hossain, 2022). Through this initiative, economic partnerships and educational opportunities between Bangladesh and China have developed, which is leading to a strong relationship in infrastructure development and industrial collaboration (Yasmin, 2023). This collaboration has created numerous employment opportunities for Bangladeshis, and it needs strong proficiency in Chinese (Shihabuzzaman & Zheng, 2019).

To meet this growing demand, educational institutions in Bangladesh have expanded Chinese language courses. In 1974, the University of Dhaka pioneered Chinese language education in the country by offering its first course through its Institute of Modern Languages. Although the formal teaching of Chinese has relatively long historical roots, for three decades the expansion of Chinese language education remained limited. The most significant expansion has occurred through the establishment of Confucius Institutes (CIs) in 2006. In 2006, Yunnan University, located in Kunming, the capital of Yunnan Province in south-west China, established the first Confucius Institute in South Asia at North South University in Dhaka, Bangladesh. A second CI was established at the University of Dhaka in 2015, also in partnership with Yunnan University. Most recently, in 2021, Honghe University, located in Mengzi, Yunnan Province, China, partnered with Shanto Mariam University of Creative Technology in Dhaka, Bangladesh, to establish the third Confucius Institute in November 2023. The three Confucius Institutes collectively have 23 teachers across multiple teaching sites and serve approximately 1,500 students (Chen & Qi, 2025). The North South University CI operates from two teaching sites, while the University of

Dhaka CI has expanded to five locations. Beyond these formal partnerships, other public and private universities and private institutes also offer Chinese language programmes, ranging from introductory courses to advanced Chinese studies.

In parallel with these domestic developments, China has emerged as a popular destination for higher education for Bangladeshi students. Recent data show that more than 10,000 Bangladeshi students are currently pursuing higher studies in China (Wen, 2024). This trend represents a significant increase in educational mobility between the two countries. Moreover, the availability of Chinese government scholarships has encouraged students to develop proficiency in Chinese to access and compete for these prestigious educational opportunities. Despite the growth in both domestic Chinese language programmes and student mobility to China, research on Chinese language learning in Bangladesh remains remarkably limited. Even with the existence of many institutions, Chinese language education still follows traditional classroom-based approaches (Shohel et al., 2022), in which the teacher controls the content, pace, and structure of lessons, learner participation is largely receptive, interaction is primarily teacher-to-student, and digital tools are minimally integrated. This pedagogical limitation raises questions about how effectively existing Chinese language programmes prepare learners for real-world communication.

The historical, pedagogical, and technological conditions outlined above define the problem space of this study: a higher education context in which policy ambitions for quality and digital learning coexist with teacher-centred practices, limited opportunities for learner agency, uneven access to technology, and a lack of research on social media mediated learning in Bangladesh. Foreign language education in Bangladesh is still largely classroom-based and teacher-centred, with little opportunity for students to interact with peers and to leverage technological advantages for language learning. This teacher-centred approach restricts the development of learner agency, as it offers students limited opportunities to take control and to participate in the learning process.

Even though Bangladesh has some government policies (e.g., Vision 2021) that encourage the use of technology in education, there is a gap between these policies and their implementation (see Section 1.1.2). Although in recent years, social media has

been used in Bangladesh as a supplementary tool for teaching English (Amit et al., 2020; Hasan et al., 2020; Obaidullah & Rahman, 2018; Sadaf, 2023), there is limited research on the use of social media with a particular focus on learners of Chinese. As China–Bangladesh relations have rapidly developed and the scope of their cooperation has expanded, demand for Chinese-language instruction in Bangladesh has also risen in recent years. However, despite the growing need for learner-centred pedagogy, Chinese language education in Bangladesh shares similar challenges: classroom instruction remains predominantly teacher-centred, with limited integration of digital tools and limited opportunities for students to interact with peers.

1.2. Learner agency, reciprocal peer learning, and social media

Learner agency is the central construct of this thesis. In the field of applied linguistics and language education, learner agency refers to learners' sense of ownership and control over their learning. It is an intentional process that requires learners to act consciously (Bandura, 2018), to take meaningful actions (Blaschke et al., 2021; Hancock et al., 2023), and to participate actively in order to achieve specific outcomes (Adie et al., 2018; He et al., 2024). It also involves adopting a growth mindset and using self-reflection to address challenges (Anderson, 2021). According to researchers (Larsen–Freeman, 2019; Mercer, 2011; Yung, 2025), learner agency is not an individual property but rather a complex dynamic system that involves society, interaction, culture, and institutions. It is 'a relationship that is constantly co-constructed and renegotiated with those around the individual and with the society at large' (Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2001, p. 148). In other words, it is a socioculturally mediated process that emerges through social interaction with others and with material tools in a specific context (Ahearn, 2001; Code, 2025).

For example, in classroom settings, when students are invited to contribute, asked for their input, and encouraged to act purposefully on these opportunities, they can position themselves as actors in the teaching and learning process rather than as passive recipients of knowledge (Vaughn, 2020; Vaughn et al., 2020). In this process, the roles of teacher and student shift from a traditional hierarchy to collaborative partnerships, where students are supported to take initiative, express interest, make

choices and decisions, and be aware of their learning goals. Thus, agency becomes visible through learners' actions: planning their learning, making choices about strategies, seeking and providing support to peers, and reflecting on their experiences.

Reciprocal peer learning (RPL) fosters a sense of partnership and interdependence that aligns with principles of learner agency. RPL is a subset of peer learning that can be described as a mutually beneficial process in which participants share knowledge, ideas, and experiences (Alehegn et al., 2024; Boyko-Head, 2018). RPL is a way of moving from 'independent to interdependent or mutual learning' (Boud et al., 2001, p. 3). In many peer learning models, one student consistently acts as a tutor (the more knowledgeable peer) and another as tutee (the less knowledgeable peer). In contrast, RPL emphasises the absence of a fixed hierarchy: learners share equal status and alternate the roles of tutor and tutee. Role switching creates a reciprocal exchange in which each learner's contribution becomes a learning opportunity for others, and roles are alternated in a single session or over a series of tasks (Cohen, 1994).

Taking on dual roles provides multiple opportunities for exercising agency. When students act as tutors (peer teachers), they make pedagogical decisions about how to explain concepts, design activities, and provide feedback to support their peers' learning (Stigmar, 2016). When they act as tutees (peer learners), they decide how to seek clarification, offer feedback, participate actively, and take responsibility for their own engagement (Topping, 2005). This mutual form of learning creates a participatory environment that helps to develop transferable skills, such as teamwork, time management, organisational, and presentation skills (Aliano & Chang, 2024; Lim, 2014). Although RPL has traditionally been practised in face-to-face classroom settings, the emergence of digital technologies and social media has extended its possibilities by offering communication, multimodal interaction, and access to broader peer networks.

Social media platforms can offer supportive environments for peer interaction and learning. Platforms such as Facebook, WeChat, TikTok, WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube enable synchronous and asynchronous communication. In other words, social media offers affordances to create, share, and discuss content in ways that extend learning beyond classroom boundaries. In this thesis, affordances are

interpreted as the action possibilities offered by the social media platform (Gibson, 1979). Researchers have increasingly explored the use of these platforms for foreign language teaching and learning (Dashti & Abdulsalam, 2025; Manca & Ranieri, 2016; Perez et al., 2023; Reinhardt, 2019, 2022), highlighting opportunities for learners to connect with speakers of the target language, access authentic materials, participate in virtual communities of practice, and engage in personalised, interactive learning experiences.

Social media has also attracted growing attention in Chinese language education, where it has been used to support the development of language skills and cultural knowledge. WeChat was selected as the specific platform for this thesis because it is the most widely used social media application among Chinese-speaking communities, its interface is Chinese-language-oriented, and it offers affordances that are particularly well suited to the linguistic and cultural dimensions of Chinese as foreign language (CFL) learning (Jin, 2018; Liu, 2024). Many studies have already found the benefits of WeChat integration in Chinese teaching and learning contexts to develop pronunciation (Lei & Liu, 2020), writing (Wang & Jiang, 2021), cultural knowledge (Huang, 2019; Wang & Jiang, 2021), vocabulary acquisition (Li & Tong, 2020; Luo & Yang, 2016), and student engagement (Tong et al., 2024). Drawing on these documented affordances, this study extends existing research by examining how learners exercise agency through reciprocal peer learning on WeChat in a Bangladeshi CFL context.

1.3. Scope of this thesis

Aims and objectives

This thesis aims to investigate how the use of social media (e.g., WeChat) and reciprocal peer learning fosters learner agency to address the policy–practice gap and create an engaging learning environment for third-level students of Chinese in Bangladesh, and to explore how exercising agency influences their Chinese learning process. The thesis focuses on three interrelated concepts: learner agency, reciprocal peer learning, and social media (in particular, WeChat). In this thesis, learner agency is the central construct, understood as learners' socioculturally mediated capacity to

act purposefully and take responsibility for their learning. RPL provides the pedagogical structure through which this agency is enacted and observed, as learners alternate between peer teacher and peer learner roles and share responsibility for one another's learning. Social media, and WeChat in particular, functions as the mediating environment that affords interaction and shapes how RPL unfolds (see details in Section 2.4).

These aims are pursued through three interconnected objectives. Firstly, to examine how a WeChat-mediated RPL environment can be structured to create opportunities for exercising agency among third-level Chinese language learners in Bangladesh. Secondly, to investigate the factors that promote or challenge the development of learner agency within this environment. Thirdly, to generate contextual insights that may inform the design of social media supported, peer-mediated language learning environments in Bangladesh and other similar contexts to develop learner agency.

Research questions

This thesis aims to investigate the following research questions:

> *RQ1: What factors may promote or challenge the development of learner agency in Chinese language learning environments supported by technology?*
>
> *RQ2: What is the impact of reciprocal peer learning on the development of learner agency? What role does social media, such as WeChat, play in supporting reciprocal peer learning and the development of learner agency?*
>
> *RQ3: What principles and criteria can be derived for the design and implementation of language learning environments aiming to promote the development of learner agency among learners of Chinese in Bangladesh and beyond?*

Research approach

The methodological approach adopted to address the research questions is a three-cycle action research (AR) because it aligns with the study's core commitments: it is

participatory, iterative, and practice-focused (McNiff, 2017). Although other approaches, such as design-based research, ethnography, case study, or quasi-experimental designs, could also be used to investigate this problem, they are less well suited than AR to supporting cyclical, practitioner-led change in this specific classroom context. The study also integrates Design-based research (DBR) principles to guide the scripting and orchestration of learning activities within the AR cycles. The cyclical nature of AR involves a structure of planning, action, observation, and reflection that supports the researcher to respond to emerging challenges, collaborate with participants, refine the pedagogical design across the cycles, and evaluate their impact in real time (Burns, 2009; Consoli & Dikilitaş, 2021). This iterative process provides ongoing opportunity to examine how learner agency develops over time and to identify the conditions that promote or constrain that development. Data were therefore collected across the three AR cycles using multiple tools: WeChat interaction logs, semi-structured interviews, participant reflective journals, and observation notes. This methodological triangulation strengthens the credibility of the findings.

My role in this study extends beyond that of a distant observer to an active participant in the research process. My dual role as both a facilitator and an investigator (teacher-researcher) shapes my positionality and influences the design, execution, and interpretation of this thesis. I acknowledge that this positionality may influence how I interact with the participants, how I interpret the data, and how I draw conclusions.

Contributions of this study

This thesis makes three interconnected contributions. Theoretically, it advances understanding of how learner agency is co-constructed through peer interaction in social-media-mediated environments by demonstrating that agency is not a stable individual property but a developmental achievement that grows across cycles of participation. Methodologically, it demonstrates how action research, combined with multimodal qualitative data from WeChat logs, reflective journals, interviews, and classroom observations, can capture the dynamic, contextually embedded nature of agency development. Pedagogically, it offers a practical guideline for integrating RPL and social media into foreign language instruction in teacher-centred contexts, which

other teachers may adapt if they wish to adopt a similar approach, both within and beyond Bangladesh.

1.4. Thesis outline

Chapter 2 reviews the literature underpinning the three core concepts of this thesis: learner agency, reciprocal peer learning, and social media. It examines learner agency as a social and contextually mediated capacity. This chapter explores RPL as a pedagogical approach that enables learners to shift their role as peer teacher and peer learner and to mutually contribute to their own and their peers' learning. It further investigates the role of social media in foreign language learning, with particular focus on its application to Chinese language learning and teaching. It also includes a detailed review of the use of the WeChat platform for Chinese language learning. After presenting each construct individually, this chapter creates a conceptual framework that articulates how the three concepts can be interconnected for this thesis.

Chapter 3 presents the action research methodology. It defines and justifies the action research approach, and it explains how adopting design-based research principles, specifically Dillenbourg's scripting and orchestration, can support the pedagogical design. This chapter then describes the research context, data collection instruments, pilot study, analytical procedures, and ethical considerations. It describes how students engage in the three-cycles through various activities, documenting their initiatives in different areas and examining their evolving roles as both learners and peer teachers. Moreover, this chapter discusses the teacher's facilitative role throughout each cycle, analysing how guidance strategies shifted from Cycle 1 to Cycle 3. The chapter also explores the iterative improvements made between cycles, the challenges encountered, and the measures taken to address the challenges.

Chapter 4 presents evidence on how reciprocal peer learning influences student motivation, engagement, and knowledge sharing. It examines how social media platforms facilitate or hinder collaborative learning experiences. This chapter also includes different challenges faced by students. The analysis highlights key factors that contributed to the development of learner agency, such as increased peer support,

active participation in learning communities, and the effective use of social media as a learning tool.

Chapter 5 interprets the findings presented in Chapter 4 in relation to how learners exercise their agency through reciprocal peer learning, using WeChat as a mediating environment. It links the findings to the theoretical and empirical literature discussed in Chapter 2. Instead of treating learner agency, RPL, and social media (e.g., WeChat) as separate constructs, the discussion foregrounds how they intersect.

Chapter 6 summarises the key findings and their implications for educational practice. It reflects on the effectiveness of reciprocal peer learning and social media in fostering learner agency. This chapter also answers the research questions, discusses the study's limitations, and suggests directions for future research. The researcher concludes this chapter by stating her personal reflection on this thesis.

Chapter 2
LEARNER AGENCY, RECIPROCAL PEER LEARNING, AND SOCIAL MEDIA: A LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter 2 discusses literature on learner agency, reciprocal peer learning, and social media. It examines how learners can take ownership and assume responsibility, as well as the factors that contribute to and the obstacles that may hinder the development of learner agency. This chapter also highlights how incorporating social media into foreign language learning offers an effective way to cultivate learner agency through interaction and practical language use. It explores how reciprocal peer learning fosters collaboration, mutual engagement, and responsibility when learners alternate between the roles of tutor and tutee. After presenting each factor independently, this chapter discusses how learner agency, reciprocal peer learning, and social media are interconnected.

2.1. Learner agency

The notion of learner agency is rooted in the sociological concept of human agency, which generally describes an individual's capacity to act. Social theorists (Bourdieu, 1977; Emirbayer & Mische, 1998; Giddens, 1984) have explored the concept of human agency with a primary focus on human behaviour and social structure. According to Giddens's (1984) Structuration Theory, there is a dialectical relationship and mutual influence between social structure and individual agency in shaping patterns of social action. This theory emphasises agency as more than psychological, because the social structure and agency cannot be separated. Structure and agency are interrelated in shaping social action; therefore, structures such as norms, institutions, and social systems can both constrain and enable human action (Giddens, 1991).

For Emirbayer and Mische (1998), becoming an agentic learner is not just about spontaneous decision-making but is a dynamic process in which our past experiences, future aspirations, and present circumstances interact to shape how we act and make decisions as we navigate immediate situations. Drawing on the past, the intentional dimension focuses on an individual's past routines, habits, and experiences. Looking towards the future, the projective dimension encompasses an individual's capacity to imagine alternative possibilities and to construct potential future trajectories of actions. In the present, the practical-evaluative dimension denotes an individual's capacity to make practical choices and judgements in response to context-specific situations. It is 'always agency toward something, by means of which actors enter into a relationship with surrounding persons, places, meanings, and events' (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998, p. 973).

Human agency is not a fixed attribute of an individual but a dynamic capacity that simultaneously engages with past experiences, future possibilities and present realities in a particular environment (Crossley, 2022). Agency emerges in the interaction between an agent and the situated environment (McGann, 2014), which cannot be limited to an individual's inner characteristics (Pyysiäinen, 2021). The link between the individual and their context is reciprocal, meaning learners are active participants who exhibit creativity and take relevant initiatives in response to their surroundings, rather than simply passively reacting. These theoretical conceptualisations of the nature of human agency provide a starting point for understanding learner agency in education in general and in language education in particular.

2.1.1. Learner agency and related concepts

According to Gupta et al. (2024), 'learner agency involves students actively engaging in their learning process and shaping their educational experiences through autonomy, self-regulation, and decision-making' (p. 1). For many researchers, learner agency also entails learners' ability to take initiative (Charteris & Smardon, 2018; Gao, 2013), their capacity for making decisions (Gao & Shen, 2023; Kohn & Hoffstaedter, 2017), their engagement in the learning process (Lin, 2023; Liu & Chao, 2018), and their responsibility, motivation, and reflections (Mairitsch et al., 2023; Matusov et al., 2016; McGregor & Frodsham, 2022; Reeve & Shin, 2020; Reeve & Tseng, 2011). Having a

sense of agency is regarded as a vital skill for 21st-century students, serving as both an objective and a process that helps learners navigate the unknown. However, in formal education settings, the exercise of learner agency is constrained or facilitated by the learning environment and its affordances, as noted by Kalaja and Ruohotie-Lyhty (2021):

> *At the core of the construct of agency is the idea of learners as active participants in their learning process rather than as passive receivers of outside input. This power to act is, however, always considered in connection to existing conditions and affordances surrounding the individual. As a construct, it is, thus, a relational phenomenon. (Kalaja & Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2021, p. 250)*

In education in general, and in language education in particular, multiple terms have been used to denote learner agency, such as choice, autonomy, sense of control, self-regulation, and self-efficacy (Brod et al., 2023). Amongst them, the boundaries between agency and autonomy are somewhat blurred, and the terms are often used interchangeably (see for example Toohey and Norton, 2003). In applied linguistics, learner autonomy has traditionally been understood as the 'ability to take charge of one's own learning' (Holec, 1981, p. 3), and as the 'capacity to exercise control over their lives' (Benson, 2016, p. 18).

Definitions of autonomy have often centred on individualistic notions of learner independence, such as the capacity to select one's own goals, materials, resources, and tasks (Teng, 2019). By contrast, agency is fundamentally social. It is 'not a property of an individual' (Morita, 2004, p. 590), but rather 'the socio-culturally mediated capacity to act' (Ahearn, 2001, p. 112). This capacity arises through engagement with the social world (Lantolf, 2006). While definitions of agency and autonomy may overlap, agency is a broader concept that encompasses the latter (Gao, 2010). According to Benson (2007), agency functions as 'a point of origin for the development of autonomy' (p. 30). Gao (2013, p. 227) extends this understanding of the relationship between agency and autonomy by arguing that agency is a precondition for learners' efforts to take control of the learning process; he also proposes reflective thinking as a means to examine how agency enables learners to exercise their autonomy. Tao and Gao (2021) further suggest that 'without agency, it is impossible for language learners to learn autonomously or for teachers to act autonomously in teaching' (p. 3).

Another construct that relates closely to learner agency is self-efficacy. Self-efficacy originated in Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, and refers to an individual's belief in their capacity to perform specific tasks or achieve desired outcomes (Bandura, 1977). An individual's capability to succeed is an important condition of human functioning that requires reflecting on personal efficacy, thoughts, and actions, and making adjustments when necessary (Bandura, 2006). More broadly, self-efficacy functions as the self-reflective dimension of human agency, representing one of four core agentic features alongside intentionality, forethought, and self-regulation (Code, 2020). It emphasises that the human 'metacognitive capability to reflect upon oneself and the adequacy of one's thoughts and actions is the most distinctly human core property of agency' (Bandura, 2006, p. 165).

However, although self-efficacy remains relevant to an individual's beliefs and capabilities for change, these beliefs are not only internal psychological states but are shaped by and responsive to social conditions, environments, and the overall structures within which individuals are situated. To sum up, learner agency as conceptualised in educational research is a situated and relational construct. It develops through 'a reciprocal relationship that occurs across environmental factors, personal factors, and observed behaviours' (Brandt, 2024, p. 8). It is not only an individual's internal psychological capacity but also something co-constructed through interactions, relationships, and environmental conditions (Larsen–Freeman, 2019; Yung, 2025).

2.1.2. Taking ownership and being in control

Larsen-Freeman et al. (2021) position ownership and control as core elements of learner agency. For them, 'learner agency refers to the feeling of ownership and sense of control that learners have over their learning' (p. 6). Taking ownership of one's learning comprises cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions. From a cognitive perspective, Bandura (2001) argues that ownership is related to learners' ability to initiate and exercise control over their learning tasks. For Code (2020), 'agency is integral to students' ability to regulate, control, and monitor their own learning. Students enact agency through their ability to regulate their cognitive, affective, and behavioural processes' (p. 3). Campbell (2012) further argues that

exercising agency requires learners 'to make free or independent choices, to engage in actions, and to exercise judgment in the interests of others and oneself' (p. 183). Some researchers have highlighted that learners' increased sense of ownership and involvement can occur when learners possess the 'will' and the 'skill' to engage (Cleary & Zimmerman, 2012; D'warte, 2021). In this regard, learners' active engagement can, in turn, contribute to their overall learning process both within and beyond the classroom (Blaschke et al., 2021; Montenegro, 2017).

The emotional aspect of ownership is related to how learners regulate their positive and negative learning experiences (Benesch, 2018; Chen et al., 2025). When students experience positive emotion, they are more likely to take ownership of their learning and develop a sense of agency. Conversely, negative emotions can hinder learner agency, leading to disengagement and decreased motivation (Mameli et al., 2021). Drawing on social cognitive theory, Chen et al. (2025) examine the interplay between learner agency and emotion among secondary school learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) in China. Using semi-structured interviews and a written report, they explore how learners' emotion's function both as a source of agency and as outcomes of learning. The findings reveal a bidirectional relationship between learners' positive emotion and the process of overcoming negative emotions with learners' agency. Learners with a high level of agency fostered more positive feelings, which improves their motivation and engagement.

From the behavioural viewpoint, Tsai et al. (2020) define agency as 'the capacity of individuals to control and compose their behaviour for a determined end, and to anticipate how others would interpret their behaviour' (p. 561). Benson (2013) identifies three dimensions of control over learning: learning management, cognitive process, and learning content. Firstly, learning management refers to learners' capacity to structure and govern their educational activities, including planning, establishing objectives, managing time and resources, tracking progress, and adjusting methods as necessary. In this sense, learners as primary agents can 'actively engage in constructing the terms and conditions of their own learning' (Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2001, p. 145). Secondly, cognitive processes involve the ways that learners assimilate knowledge, cultivate comprehension, use critical thinking through reflection and attention, and engage in the learning process (Ponomariovienė & Jakavonytė-Staškuvienė, 2025).

Finally, learning content denotes the degree of agency that learners exercise to choose topics, resources, and become recipients to contributors through their direct involvement (Fouché, 2025). In the classroom context, such agency can be seen as the opportunities given to students to make choices and then follow through on them in their own learning process (Vaughn, 2020).

Exercising control across these dimensions is underpinned by a sense of responsibility. Lehtonen (2015) argues that learner agency is not only about assuming control over one's own life but also about acknowledging one's role as a responsible human participant, and is characterised by ideals of individual choice, freedom, intentionality, empowerment, and cultural transformation. Such responsibility enables learners to recognise and create meaningful opportunities to learn and intentionally enhance their learning experience (Chan et al., 2014; Storey et al., 2021). By making decisions, individuals can both define their preferences and exercise their choices (Moses et al., 2020). Therefore, developing learner agency requires learners' active participation and critical reflection, which involves learners' willingness to act, their belief that their own decisions can make a difference to their learning, and their reflective engagement with the choices they make (Tapal et al., 2017). In other words, fostering agency depends not only on an individual's or learner's capacity to act, but also on the underlying beliefs that enable them to take that action and reflect on the choices and decisions. These beliefs align closely with the concept of a growth mindset.

2.1.3. Learner agency and mindset

According to Dweck and Leggett (1988), mindset theory adopts a social-cognitive perspective that is rooted in the study of goals and goal-directed behaviour. Kapasi and Pei (2022) describe mindset theory as an achievement-motivation framework that centres on an individual's underlying belief about the malleability of abilities, as well as their values, efforts and persistence in learning, and how these beliefs influence their response to challenge. Dweck (2006) emphasises that 'with the right mindset and the right teaching, people are capable of a lot more than we think' (p. 64). According to her, individuals may exhibit one of two distinct mindsets, a growth mindset or a fixed mindset:

> *The fixed mindset stands in the way of development and change. The growth mindset is a starting point for change, but people need to decide for themselves where their efforts toward change would be most valuable. (Dweck, 2006, p. 179)*

The development of learner agency is continuous rather than being a fixed trait that remains unchanged across contexts and time (Mairitsch et al., 2023). This developmental nature aligns with growth mindset principles, where learners show more effort, focus on their learning process, and assume responsibility for their progress.

The mindset of language learners can significantly influence their attitude, motivation, and behaviour in foreign/second language learning (L2) (Leis et al., 2025). Recent studies in the field of second language acquisition (SLA) have explored how language mindsets are conceptualised, and demonstrated a connection between learners' mindsets and their motivation to learn a language (Cacali, 2019; Elahi Shirvan et al., 2024; Lou & Noels, 2019, 2020b; Zarrinabadi & Mantou Lou, 2022). The L2 learning process is influenced by learners' attitudes and beliefs regarding their capabilities and accomplishments, which require learners to step outside their comfort zones (Cacali, 2019). Students with a growth mindset are more motivated to take ownership of their own learning, because they believe that their efforts will lead to progress and success (Lou & Noels, 2019). This mindset fosters resilience and encourages learners to embrace challenges, view failures as opportunities for personal growth, and maintain a proactive attitude towards their education (Dweck & Yeager, 2019; Khajavy et al., 2022). Mercer and Dörnyei (2021) also share the perspective that 'learners first need to feel they can cope with whatever tasks they face, that they can affect the outcomes and that they can successfully achieve goals' (p. 30). Other researchers (Amalia et al., 2023; Lou & Noels, 2016) also suggest that learners view challenges and mistakes as learning opportunities when they have a growth mindset.

Anderson (2021) suggests that 'students don't have either a Fixed or Growth Mindset. Instead, their Mindset falls somewhere along a continuum between these two extremes' (p. 11). Students with a growth mindset are more inclined to take initiative and are more willing to take risks. Gao (2022) argues that, in language learning, students with a growth mindset believe that their language ability can be developed and that they can actively improve through effort and effective strategies. They are not afraid of challenges; rather, they see them as opportunities to grow.

By adopting a growth mindset, learners are more inclined to assume control over their learning experiences, thereby enhancing their sense of agency. To exercise this control and regulate their learning, learners need to be aware of their own strengths and weaknesses, and to have learning strategies and the ability to evaluate their progress (Zimmerman & Cleary, 2009). However, age may play a significant role in how learning mindsets and learning outcomes develop. Haimovitz and Dweck's (2017) study finds that younger learners are more likely to adopt a growth mindset towards language learning, reflecting the belief that language proficiency can be enhanced through consistent effort and practice. In contrast, older learners are more inclined to hold a fixed mindset, often perceiving language acquisition as increasingly difficult with age. Lou and Noels (2020) argue that a supportive classroom environment and feedback from teachers can also influence students to embrace a growth mindset. Therefore, while a growth mindset enhances an individual's agency, both the development and expression of such mindsets do not occur in isolation. Learners' ability to exercise agency is mediated by environmental factors.

2.1.4. Learner agency as a sociocultural process

Learners' agency can be influenced by a variety of contextual factors, such as society, culture, tools, institutional settings, and interaction and collaboration with teachers and peers. According to Ahearn (2001), agency is the 'socioculturally mediated capacity to act' (p. 112) that combines the interaction between individual actions and the broader social and cultural contexts within which these actions occur.

Learner agency is not exercised in isolation but is constructed and negotiated through ongoing participation in social and institutional contexts that emerges from the interplay between a learner's personal, relational, and participatory resources and the contextual conditions that either enable or constrain their capacity to act (Jääskelä et al., 2017). In this regard, Davies (1990) argues that agency is not an inherent individual capacity but can be understood as a form of discursive practice that becomes available to learners when classroom conditions position them to act, decide, and influence what happens. By analysing a classroom scene, Davies (1990) illustrates how such positioning is interconnected with routines, beliefs, and contradictions that can at the same time limit students' opportunities to exercise agency. This relational aspect of

agency resonates with the idea of the learner as a social agent, which combines an internal, individual dimension with an external, social dimension, and foregrounds the co-construction of meaning through collaboration with others (North et al., 2022).

In educational settings, agency can be conceptualised as a collaborative and relational process that arises from the dynamic and reciprocal relationship between individuals and their sociocultural surroundings (Schoon & Heckhausen, 2019). A similar approach is echoed by Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner (2020), who describe agency as not only an individual capacity but also a collective achievement that emerges within communities of practice:

> *From a social perspective, an individual is never simply an individual or a collective simply a collective. They constitute each other. In social learning in particular, agency becomes intertwined. Acknowledging each other's agency is part of what makes a social learning space. It is key to engaging with each other. (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2020, p. 60)*

The concept of agency as a social process is rooted in sociocultural theory. This process involves learners' collaboration, adaptation, and engagement with human and non-human factors (Edwards, 2005). According to Meston et al. (2022), learners co-construct meaning related to texts, ideas, and artefacts through interactions with peers and educators. Their learning process is dynamic, involving continuous reflection on their past achievements, current progress, and future aspirations. This ongoing reflection strengthens their sense of agency as they come to recognise how their learning has evolved through interactions with others over time. As they embrace their role as active agents supporting both their own and others' learning, they come to value not only their own development but also the progress of their peers and teachers.

Role of peers and teachers to support learner agency

Engaging with peers and working together are crucial for developing learners' ability to take initiative and make independent choices. As Lipponen and Kumpulainen (2011) explain, collective agency develops through collaboration, shared goals, mutual support, and problem-solving. In that regard, peer interactions can foster the development of learners' agency by offering opportunities for social learning, collaboration, and mutual support. A study by Kuwabara et al. (2020) investigates the progression of agency among students who participated in a mentoring programme in

the English-language department of a Japanese university between 2012 and 2018. This study has found that positive peer relationships can increase learners' confidence and willingness to take risks in their learning, while negative peer dynamics can restrict their willingness to engage actively.

To understand the role of peers, Liao (2019), in his qualitative study *Understanding EFL Learner Agency in Collaborative Activities*, argues that learner agency comprises action-oriented endeavours that progress through the co-construction of knowledge with peers. This process is influenced by the specific communities of practice in which learners participate, and contributes to the development of a more profound understanding of the narrative content through peer discussions. Stenalt (2021) investigates the interaction between social factors and human agency in online peer assessment. His findings indicate that learner agency is influenced not only by individual differences and external circumstances but also by teacher–student and peer relationships.

Students are more likely to engage thoroughly with their studies and take initiative when their teachers create supportive, encouraging, and responsive environments (Erss et al., 2024; Scanlon & Connolly, 2021). The meaningful interactions in learning contexts allow teachers and students to 'make collaborative contributions, create fulfilling experiences, and maximise meaning potential around the classroom ecology' (Liu & Chao, 2018, p. 83). Li (2020) recommends five principles for teachers to foster learner agency in foreign language instruction: focusing on literacy practices in the target language, ensuring that lessons are culturally relevant, fostering interaction, empowering students to be language producers, and conducting engaging assessments. These principles are intended to support learners in taking ownership of their learning by connecting language use to their lived experiences and involving them actively in the evaluation of their own progress. In an agency-supported classroom, teachers can create and shape learning environments for students by asking questions, facilitating learners' responses, suggesting tasks and activities, monitoring progress, and helping learners build reflective habits and the necessary skills for self- and peer-assessment (Biesta et al., 2015; Fullan, 1993). In addition, educators who emphasise learner agency are aware of the need to be open to unforeseen opportunities.

In many educational systems, classrooms have been structured around a teacher-centred paradigm, in which the teacher holds the most authority and is responsible for making critical decisions about the content, methods, and timing of student learning (Chaaban et al., 2021). This dynamic often limits students' capacity to exercise agency and make meaningful decisions about their education, placing them in a more passive role. At first, students may find it intimidating to exercise agency over their learning. Therefore, they need to acquire the ability to establish objectives and make effective choices and decisions. To mitigate this issue, Tseng and Zhou (2023) recommend reviewing the roles of teachers and students, the instructional design, and the use of technologies, to transfer learners from passive recipients to active participants in their learning process. However, power dynamics between teacher and student can constrain students' agency, especially when students interpret teachers' feedback as a judgement and not as a dialogue and co-construction (Francis et al., 2019).

Moses et al. (2020) suggest that 'supporting student agency is a complex and evolving process, involving reflection and restructuring of traditional roles between teachers and students to share power and control over learning' (p. 219). As a result, teachers need adequate training to facilitate the development of learner agency in their classrooms (Mitra, 2018). If students have limited say in their curriculum, it can limit their ability to set and pursue their learning goals (Manyukhina & Wyse, 2019). Low motivation and insufficient teacher support can influence students' actions and interactions (Xiao, 2014). Thus, a supportive classroom atmosphere enables students to engage and express themselves without fear (Krashen, 1982). The collective interaction of the teacher, the students, and the environment shape a setting that simultaneously enables and limits the agency of those involved.

The role of social contexts

Learner agency emerges and develops through interactions within a social context, 'where identity and connections are emergent' (Collins & Raymond, 2021, p. 12). Understanding how such contexts enable or constrain agency requires attention to the concept of affordances. The term *affordance* was coined by the ecological psychologist Gibson (1979) in his seminal book *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception*:

> *Affordances of the environment are what it offers the animal, what it provides or furnishes, either for good or ill' and 'it implies for the complementarity of the animal and the environment. (Gibson, 1979, p. 127)*

In the field of applied linguistics, van Lier (2004) extends this notion from an ecological linguistics perspective to the learning environment itself. He writes, 'an affordance expresses a relationship between a person and a linguistic expression (a speech act, a speech event); it is action potential; it is a relation of possibility' (van Lier, 2004b, p. 95). In other words, affordances can be conceptualised as:

> *A relationship between an organism (a learner, in our case) and the environment, that signals an opportunity for or inhibition of action. The environment includes all physical social and symbolic affordances that provide grounds for activity. (van Lier, 2004, p. 5)*

From this ecological perspective, affordances are not fixed properties of the environment but possibilities for action that become available when an organism (i.e., an animal or a person) acts upon them, which can have both positive and negative consequences. Biesta and Tedder (2007) connect agency with the wider learning ecosystem in which learners act, including social, material, and temporal dimensions of their lives. The authors suggest that agency goes beyond participation in contextual settings: it refers to the capacity to influence and direct one's responses to lived situations. Thus, agency is exercised through 'individual efforts, available resources, and contextual and structural factors as they come together in particular and, in a sense, always unique situations' (Biesta & Tedder, 2007, p. 137). Mercer (2012) also applies this ecological perspective to learner agency directly, arguing that contexts potential and 'agency thus emerges from the interaction between resources and contexts and the learners' perceptions and use of them' (Mercer, 2012, p. 43). The sociocultural environment can influence and shape individuals' behaviours, choices, and decisions. In other words, a learner's sense of agency originates from complex interactions involving contextual, interpersonal, temporal, and intrapersonal dimensions (Jun & Mu, 2024; Yung, 2025). This influence may not be immediately apparent but can be recognised and activated under specific circumstances.

The sense of agency and taking agentic action are two distinct but interconnected aspects of learner agency. Manyukhina and Wyse (2019) distinguish between learners' personal sense of agency, which relates to their belief in their ability to act, and the exercise of agency, which relates to their performance of agentic behaviour. Simply

being conscious of oneself as an active agent does not necessarily lead to the active exercise of that agency. Also, changes in learning environments create different demands on learners. As active community members, language learners need to interpret, participate in, influence, and transform their learning context (Teng, 2019). Learners' capacity to act may be influenced by societal issues such as inequality and discrimination, which can affect their confidence and opportunities. Learners are more likely to experience empowerment and to operate with greater agency in their educational pursuits in societies that prioritise education and equitable access (Reeve, 2009).

The development of learner agency is a complex process influenced by a range of interrelated factors, including the availability of a supportive environment, cultural contexts, interpersonal interactions, and planning for continuous learning improvement. This process is mediated by 'cultural tools' or 'mediational means' that are influenced by society, which shapes the values, norms, and expectations attached to education (Scollon, 2001). Learners' interaction with the social context 'is not limited to roles but also involves other social structures, such as institutions and norms' (Bazzani, 2022, p. 489). For instance, learners' perceptions of their role in the educational process are influenced by cultural norms that distinguish between individualism and collectivism. In individualistic cultures, learners may be more inclined to assert their agency and take independent actions, whereas in collectivist cultures, collaborative and group-oriented learning approaches may be more prevalent (Hofstede, 2001).

A comparative qualitative study in Finnish and Korean comprehensive schools explores how individualist and collectivist cultures emphasise different aspects of learner agency (Yoon & Rönnlund, 2021). The study makes several key findings. Firstly, learner agency was intensively constrained in teaching-learning practices in both countries. Secondly, the controlling and caring roles of teachers appeared differently in Finnish and Korean schools: Korean class teachers exercised more intensive control. Thirdly, hierarchical structures differed between the two cultural contexts. Hierarchy was observed as more intensive in Korean schools, where principals rarely interacted with students. Finnish schools showed relatively weaker classification, with principals teaching lessons or counselling students individually.

To investigate the relationship between agency and institutional context, Dang (2025) has conducted a qualitative study examining how EFL learners in three Vietnamese secondary schools shape agency. The Vietnamese educational context represents a collectivist Confucian Heritage Culture (CHC) system characterised by teacher authority, collective identity, hierarchical classroom dynamics, and high-stakes examination pressure. These cultural and institutional structures differ from individualist Western contexts, where agency is typically conceptualised as an inherent individual right, rather than something granted or permitted by authority figures. This study's findings show that institutional context and resource limitations (i.e., class size, infrastructure) can function as powerful constraints on learner agency. According to Priestley et al. 's (2016) ecological model of agency, the constraints can be cultural, structural, and material conditions for learners in a particular context.

The material resources available within learning environments play a significant role in fostering learner agency. Charteris and Smardon (2018) have developed a typology of learner agency that focuses on: sovereign agency (self-determination), relational agency (sociocultural), ecological agency (temporally embedded social engagement), and emerging new material agency. Their typology describes agency not as a singular individual trait, but as a relational phenomenon that emerges through interactions between students, instructors, learning spaces, and technological tools. The interactions between human and technological elements create opportunities for collaboration with both human and non-human actors, such as peers, educators, and digital platforms (Code, 2025; Nieminen et al., 2022).

2.1.5. Summary

To sum up, the literature review on learner agency reveals two dimensions: individual and social. Individual dimensions involve learners taking control, setting learning goals, and cultivating a growth mindset. Simultaneously, learner agency is a social process that emerges through interactions with peers, teachers, learning tools, and the environment. In other words, learner agency is a relational construct that emerges through a learner's interactions, engagement, and collaboration with peers, teachers, the environment, and learning tools. Among the various interpretations of learner agency, Ahearn's (2001) definition of agency as the 'socioculturally mediated capacity

to act' (p. 112) is particularly relevant for the current study. It underscores the dynamic relationship between individual actions and the influence of the social context in which the learner is situated. Furthermore, this perspective suggests that learner agency is not an individual trait of a learner; rather, it emerges through social interactions and the influence of the learning environment. Furthermore, the specific social and environmental conditions in which learners are situated can enable or constrain their agency. According to Kukulska-Hulme and Viberg (2018, p. 38), collaborative settings enable 'greater agency in deciding what and how to learn', fostering learning practices that extend beyond the classroom. In this regard, the reciprocal peer learning approach enables learners to exercise their capacity to act through opportunities to engage, take initiative, negotiate roles, share responsibility, reflect, and ultimately contribute to each other's learning process.

2.2. Reciprocal peer learning

Section 2.1 presents learner agency as a social process that emerges through learners' interaction with the context, peers, teachers, and tools. From this perspective, pedagogical designs that foreground collaboration, shared responsibility, and mutual engagement are particularly relevant because they enable the enactment of agency in observable participation and interaction. Reciprocal peer learning (RPL) offers such a design. It provides learners with structured opportunities to exercise initiative, negotiate meaning, share responsibility, and reflect on participation through peer interaction. In doing so, RPL helps operationalise key principles associated with learner agency, particularly the idea that learners do not merely respond to instruction but actively shape learning processes through participation, decision-making, and mutually supportive work.

2.2.1. Conceptual foundations

Reciprocal peer learning is a form of peer learning, the latter referring to 'the acquisition of knowledge and skills through active helping and supporting among status equals or matched companions' (Topping, 2005, p. 631). Etymologically, the term *peer* derives from the Latin word *par*, which means equality in rank, character, or status. Within educational contexts, peers are commonly defined as individuals with

comparable backgrounds, experiences, or objectives. Peer learning normally takes place among individuals who share a similar background, who are not educators but teach each other, either in pairs or in small or large groups, to understand specific tasks or subjects that promote growth and learning (Topping, 1996). This pedagogical approach encourages peers to instruct each other through purposeful and meaningful interaction (Bradford-Watts, 2011), and may unfold across both formal and informal contexts (Boud et al., 2001), in classrooms or online (Tang et al., 2022; Wang, 2024).

The literature uses a wide range of terms to describe various forms of peer-based learning, such as collaborative learning, cooperative learning, peer interaction, group mentorship, peer tutoring, peer-mediated learning, peer-assisted learning, peer evaluation, reciprocal learning, reciprocal teaching, or tutoring (Havnes et al., 2016; Hellmer, 2012; Ting & Shukor, 2022). Although these labels share an emphasis on learner–learner interaction, they originate from different educational viewpoints and pedagogical priorities. As a result, they may imply different assumptions about how learning and responsibility are distributed among students. Fisher and Frey (2019) divide peer tutoring into unidirectional peer tutoring, where students take the roles of either tutor or tutee, and reciprocal peer tutoring, where students alternate between both roles. Reciprocal peer learning is further described by Boud et al. (2001) as a type of learning that is 'mutually beneficial and involves the sharing of knowledge, ideas and experience between the participants' (p. 3), and is framed as a movement from 'independent to interdependent or mutual learning' (p. 3).

This emphasis on mutuality is of critical importance, because it shifts the focus from learners simply receiving support to learners participating as contributors to the knowledge-building process. In this sense, RPL is not only a model that helps improve performance but also a participation structure through which responsibility, expertise, and agency can be exchanged across learners and relationships. This alternation of roles is central to RPL because it enables learners to move between explaining and questioning, supporting and being supported, monitoring and being monitored. Such movement helps to create opportunities to enhance understanding, test interpretations, and develop strategies in response to feedback.

2.2.2. Core features of RPL

As mentioned in Section 2.2.1 above, a significant feature of RPL is the alternation of roles between peer learners and peer teachers. RPL requires learners to move between providing support for others and benefiting from others' support. This dynamic role exchange distinguishes RPL from more traditional peer learning models, such as peer tutoring, as noted by Damon and Phelps (1989):

> *There is little equity in peer tutoring because each student plays a different function (as tutee or as tutor) that is mostly overseen by the tutor. In contrast, students are supposed to have a similar position to establish an equal reciprocal relationship, where every student has the potential to serve as a tutor at one point and subsequently transition into the role of learner. (p. 31)*

This alternation is pedagogically significant because it redistributes responsibility and support among learners, positioning them as both contributors to and beneficiaries of the learning process. When students take on the role of **peer teachers**, they are expected to learn through teaching, while also being perceived by their peers as more relatable and similar to themselves (Topping, 2005). It is a deliberate and intentional association between a student and a peer of their own selection, wherein the student as teacher engages in planning, learning, and reflection (Robinson et al., 2015). As peer teachers, students usually delve into academic matters more deeply than when working independently. According to Stigmar (2016), 'students, who become teachers of their own learning, tend to engage in self-assessing, self-evaluating, self-monitoring, and self-learning' (p. 125). In addition, students who take on the role of teacher develop their own knowledge and skills by engaging in cognitive activities, such as summarising, questioning, clarifying, and predicting. They also reflect on and increase their own understanding by revising their knowledge of topics previously studied, correcting errors, and participating in reflective knowledge building (Bailey et al., 2018).

Equally important is the role of **peer learners**. In RPL, students are not positioned as passive recipients of knowledge but as active participants, whether as peer teachers or peer learners. Peer learners have opportunities to ask questions and to provide feedback to their group members while participating in reciprocal teaching. Thus, when acting as peer learners, students benefit cognitively from articulating their queries, resolving misunderstandings, and participating actively, which is not limited

to language learning but is applicable to their other areas of learning too (Tenenbaum et al., 2020).

Unlike teacher–student interactions, peer-to-peer interactions encourage students to collaborate in order to achieve a common goal, and generally allow them to do it in a less hierarchical manner, which creates a 'collaborative, multi-party, symmetrical participation structure' (Blum-Kulka & Snow, 2004: 291). Role switching enhances a reciprocal exchange in which the observer's output becomes the doer's input (Cohen, 1994). To be precise, this form of learning encourages students in:

> *Taking responsibility for their own learning and more importantly learning how to learn. It is not a substitute for teaching and activities designed and conducted by faculty members, but an important addition to the existing repertoire of teaching and learning activities. (Chandra & Palvia, 2021, p. 161)*

The effective RPL partnerships support learners to take control and mutual responsibility. The process of RPL allows students to select their own partners, to organise communication at mutually convenient times, to identify content that is relevant to their needs and interests, to engage actively with concepts, and to experiment with tasks together. RPL provides students with an opportunity to articulate their own ideas, compare them, engage in discussions, and learn collaboratively from one another. Dewantono and Murtisari (2023) identify four characteristics that distinguish RPL formation. First, they highlight negotiation activities through which partners decide their course of action together. Second, their interaction is distinguished by the act of questioning and constructing meaning. Third, the partnership among students creates a less formal learning environment, which allows them to disagree and facilitate conflicts between peer teachers and peer learners. Fourth, a range of mediational methods are used, including the implementation of actual tasks, setting rules for RPL session regulations, and using different tools and resources. These interactional features can contribute positively to students' learning process. The next sections will explore the benefits and challenges of RPL in the specific context of language education.

2.2.3. RPL in language learning: benefits and challenges

Reciprocal peer learning has been used as a strategy to develop different linguistic skills, and a growing body of research has provided evidence for its pedagogical value in language education. Three categories of benefit recur consistently across the RPL literature in language education: linguistic development, enhanced motivation, and the cultivation of transferable skills. Regarding skill development, RPL has been shown to support both productive and receptive language skills. The action research study by Cárdenas and López-Pinzón (2019) has explored the impact of RPL on the development of English writing skills. The findings focus on the significance of increasing student confidence and refining their writing abilities. Through the implementation of RPL, students have demonstrated an expanded vocabulary, a reduction in syntactic errors, and improvements in the coherence, structure, and punctuation of their written work. Fang et al. (2018), in a quasi-experimental study of EFL learners in Taiwan, explore how reciprocal peer feedback affects the improvement of English speaking and the use of communication strategies. For this study, a mobile app was designed to make it easier for students to participate in discussion projects, listen to recordings of their conversations, and give and receive feedback from their peers. The findings suggest that peer-generated feedback improves learners' spoken communication skills. Dunworth (2020), in a mixed-methods study of EFL learners at an Australian university, shows that peer discussion and reciprocal teaching facilitated active language development and deeper engagement with academic texts.

A second well-documented benefit of RPL in language education is its positive effect on learner motivation. Benware and Deci's (1984) experiment demonstrates RPL as an alternative pedagogical method that enhances students' intrinsic motivation when they work in pairs and serve as both tutors and tutees. Thurston et al. (2009), in a study of online RPL for English and Spanish acquisition in primary schools, found that sustained peer interaction improved motivation. The findings show that cognitive co-construction occurs when a more competent peer mediates between new knowledge and the learner's existing understanding. In this study, peer support in the online environment has predominantly involved tutors providing correct answers to tutees, and the high amount of online interaction between tutor and tutee has been observed to improve students' motivation. A replication of Thurston et al.'s (2009) study has

been carried out in New Zealand with young adults using a mixed-method approach by East et al. (2020). The qualitative findings align with Thurston et al. (2009), suggesting that by creating a relevant and authentic communication setting, RPL enhances learners' motivation.

Beyond the classroom context, RPL has also been used in online settings to engage learners. A bilingual study involving two primary schools in Scotland and Spain examines the effects of RPL in English and Spanish writing development (Dekhinet et al., 2008). In the study's tandem setting, partners are L1 speakers of English and Spanish, and their interaction is mediated by technologies through different forms (e.g., emails, messages, shared documents). The findings reveal that combining internet technology with peer-to-peer interactions can improve students' writing skills, as they write for a real audience and apply their knowledge in real-life contexts through actively planning activities, providing feedback, and communicating with peers. In this project, most of the participants not only actively engage in planning activities and sending messages but also show high motivation. Despite indicating the benefits of RPL, especially when students take on the role of peer teachers, the study pays less attention to students' experiences as peer learners.

The mutual way of learning fosters a participatory environment that contributes to the development of transferable skills, including teamwork, time management, organisational, and presentation skills (Aliano & Chang, 2024; Lim, 2014). Topping and Ehly (1998) suggest that peer interactions may encourage reinforcement through mutual praise when providing feedback. Also, peer interactions can contribute to the development and exercise of critical thinking skills (Anderson & Soden, 2001).

However, within the specific context of Chinese language learning, and Asian language instruction more broadly, RPL has received comparatively limited attention. Liu and Devitt (2014) investigate the implementation of RPL among beginner learners in a Chinese language classroom at a university in Ireland. In their study, RPL is used as a strategy to involve students in different groups, with each group taking responsibility for teaching the whole class. The study has been designed as an action research project comprising three distinct cycles. Modifications to the organisation and content of students' engagement have been implemented at each iteration, as determined through

an analysis of data from their reflective language-learning notebooks and group reports. The findings suggest that the cooperative and intellectually engaging characteristics of RPL contributed to the development of students' individual responsibility and motivation to acquire knowledge, while also fostering a sense of shared cohesion in the classroom.

A qualitative case study by Osborne and Zhang (2023) explores how the combination of in-class and informal learning activities outside the classroom contributes to the development of beginner learners of Chinese when participants engage in them outside the classroom. The findings show that one-hour weekly peer-taught activities help students expand their vocabulary and cultural awareness. Wu and Chen's (2018) quasi-experimental study examines how a reciprocal teaching framework that is supported by digital tools can improve the learning of Classical Chinese. This study compares a control group receiving traditional instruction with an experimental group engaging in reciprocal teaching strategies (predicting, questioning, clarifying, summarising) alongside e-books and mind mapping tools. The findings indicate that the experimental group achieved significantly higher reading comprehension outcomes. This is because combining reciprocal pedagogy with technology enhances both engagement and interpretive competence in learning Chinese.

Despite the strengths and benefits of RPL, several challenges and limitations of RPL have been identified in the literature. The effectiveness of peer learning depends on what Dillenbourg et al. (1996) describe as conditions paradigm: systematically examining and setting the conditions that encourage productive collaboration among learners, such as group formation, task type, communication medium, and the context. Similarly, Adams and Oliver (2023) note that, although learning with peers offers benefits, some students might feel reluctant to engage when they perceive their peers as lacking sufficient language proficiency. Cheng and Ku's (2009) study indicates that, in technology-mediated RPL settings, some students perceive little added value in peer support because they already feel proficient at using the tools involved, so they do not see themselves as needing help from peers. In addition, some students indicate that they do not benefit from RPL because their group has never managed to meet outside of class. The finding shows the similarities with a study by Philp et al. (2013), who suggest that learners of different proficiency levels may engage differently, because

peer interaction is a dynamic and complex process that varies according to contextual factors, such as peer proficiency, task types, learning setting, and learner relationships. The outcome can be less beneficial if learners have mismatched proficiency levels.

According to Chou and Chan's (2015) design, RPL can be formed through peer interactions both within and beyond the classroom and can be supported by available computer technologies. Although their design aims to make learning more manageable by distributing tasks across different peers and tools, some students can also feel overburdened with RPL coordination and the use of new tools. In addition, much peer-interaction research focuses on English language learners and Western contexts, so there is limited research on how to implement RPL in a wider learning context (Adams & Oliver, 2023; Boyko-Head, 2018; Fang et al., 2018). Therefore, it is important to investigate how RPL can be used in other languages and in different cultural settings.

2.3. Social media

Sections 2.1 and 2.2 conceptualised learner agency as the socioculturally mediated capacity to act and make choices, and reciprocal peer learning as a pedagogical approach that encourages students to alternate their roles and learn from each other. Language learning is understood not only as a personal cognitive process, but also as an activity or process emerging through interaction with peers, tools, and environments. Learner agency is exercised when learners take ownership of and responsibility for their learning within particular contexts, while RPL provides a structured interactional platform that enables such agency to be exercised. Learning environments therefore play a crucial role in shaping how agency and reciprocity are realised in practice. Social media platforms constitute a relevant environment in this respect, in which engagement, interaction, and responsibility can be distributed and enacted in digitally mediated language-learning contexts.

2.3.1. Affordances of social media

Over the last decade, social media, rooted in Web 2.0/3.0 technologies, has evolved into digitally mediated spaces that support social interaction, within and across communities. Its rapid expansion has been ascribed to individuals' desire to establish

digital communities with others, nurture and maintain digital connections, articulate individual perspectives, and disseminate many forms of information (Lomicka & Lord, 2016). In this sense, the term 'social' refers to two-way communication between individuals, while 'media' serves as a tool for exchanging information, including texts, images, and sounds (Murphy et al., 2013).

Social media platforms encompass a wide range of forms and functions. Manca (2020) categorises them into the following classifications: image-sharing platforms (e.g., Instagram), information organisation platforms (e.g., Pinterest), photo messaging platforms (e.g., Snapchat), instant messaging platforms (e.g., WhatsApp), and a combination of all platforms (e.g., Facebook). These platforms share common features such as synchronous and asynchronous communication, multimedia sharing, and user-generated content, which create a dynamic environment for social connection and information exchange. For example, Meikle (2016) argues that these platforms also combine public with personal communication and support users to build bonds with peers. Kukulska-Hulme et al. (2023) note that users' engagement with such technologies is also sometimes driven by a fear of missing out on popular activities and current trends. The versatile nature of communication on social media is enhanced by its dual characteristics of being both real-time and asynchronous (Yu et al., 2022). Informal interactions, such as live conversations or streaming, can generate a feeling of promptness and involvement. Asynchronous interactions, such as forum postings or comments, enable users to engage in discussions at their own convenience, making social media flexible for individuals in various time zones and with diverse schedules.

People use social networks for a variety of reasons, including relaxation and entertainment, sharing information, escaping from reality, creating and maintaining social interactions, and passing time habitually (Chung et al., 2016). Carr and Hayes (2015) emphasise interaction, audience awareness, and self-presentation:

> *Internet-based channels that allow users to opportunistically interact and selectively self-present, either in real-time or asynchronously, with both broad and narrow audiences who derive value from user-generated content and the perception of interaction with others. (Carr & Hayes, 2015, p. 50)*

Even though social media was not originally intended for educational use, its affordability, ease of portability, widespread availability, and extensive accessibility

have led educators to use it for educational purposes. In the context of foreign language teaching and learning, social media is referred to as 'any application or technology through which users participate in, create, and share media resources and practices with other users by means of digital networking' (Reinhardt, 2019, p. 3).

2.3.2. Use of social media in language education

Social media has proven to be a valuable resource for innovative teaching and learning practices. Its emergence as a viable language-learning environment can be associated with the transition from largely individualistic to socially grounded use of technology (Ansari & Khan, 2020; Barrot, 2021). These platforms serve as a space for a wide range of interactive educational activities and for combining education with entertainment. This is also known as edutainment; the concept is founded on the notion that learners achieve optimal results when they are fully engaged in captivating and entertaining activities (Labus et al., 2015). In light of this, social media has been identified as a valuable resource for students to improve their language skills. This may be due to its interactive functionality and the extensive array of popular features, such as story sharing, video and photo posting, reactions, subscriptions, reposting, and user-friendly access (Tavassoli & Beyranvand, 2023). Social media's entertainment features provide learners with authentic exposure to the target language through engaging content, enabling them to interact with language in real-world communicative contexts (Ruijie et al., 2025).

The pedagogical relevance of social media is closely connected to the concept of authenticity. In language education, authenticity refers to 'correspondence between 'pedagogic' language, texts or materials, and 'real world' language, texts or artefacts' (MacDonald et al., 2006, p. 252). According to Gilmore (2007, p. 98), 'authenticity can be situated in either the text itself, in the participants, in the social or cultural situation and purposes of the communicative act, or some combination of these.' Social media environments are particularly salient in this respect, as learners encounter target-language content, interact with others, present themselves, and remain creative in their user-generated posts (Nejadghanbar & Shaahdadi, 2025).

This pedagogical potential is illustrated in the study by Fornara and Lomicka (2019), which examines the pedagogical value of social media platforms, primarily Instagram, for foreign language learning and teaching. Over six weeks, learners participated in community-based assignments, sharing authentic content in the target language and extending their practice beyond classroom walls through mobile technology. Instagram posts generated opportunities for meaningful online community building, connecting language learners and teachers in collaborative learning networks. This digital community provided an accessible, supportive environment for continuous language exchange and skill development outside formal instructional time.

The concept of affordance may also enhance our understanding of the educational potential of social media. Barton and Potts (2013) emphasise that:

> *Affordances are the possibilities for action which people identify in relation to specific resources. So, people continue to carry out existing practices: they pass notes, share photos, and scribble down ideas in a meeting, though such practices are now frequently digitally mediated. (p. 817)*

This means digital environments can provide both linguistic and non-linguistic affordances that can be perceived by the learner. Importantly, they are not features of technological tools themselves, but rather possibilities of actions that shift across time and place. In that regard, Lee's (2022) qualitative study suggests four affordances of platforms such as TikTok and Instagram for language learning: multimodality, mobility, participation, and interactivity. Multimodality is related to how posts combine visual, textual, and auditory resources and allow learners to hear, see, and read the language simultaneously. Mobility refers to the opportunity to access both formal and informal context from K-12 to higher education settings, anytime and anywhere (Reinders & Benson, 2017; Xue & Churchill, 2019). Participation allows users to respond to posts, join in different activities and challenges, and co-create content (Arndt & Woore, 2018; Benson, 2015; Dizon, 2022). Interactivity emphasises the dialogic nature of comments, likes, shares, and responsive videos, which support feedback and collaborative language use between creators and viewers (Chugh & Ruhi, 2018; Mwalwanda & Mhlana, 2022).

Much studies have examined how different social media platforms support various aspects of foreign language learning, including language skills, vocabulary,

pronunciation, cultural awareness, and learner engagement (Nguyen et al., 2026; Perez et al., 2023). In terms of overall language development, Dashti and Abdulsalam's (2025) mixed-method study on EFL learners in Kuwait has examined how daily use of social media can contribute to the development of core language skills. The findings suggest that social media use is associated with improving learners' listening, speaking, and reading skills. Yaacob et al. (2021) designed a three-phase action research study using YouTube for listening skill development among young EFL learners in Malaysia. In phase 1, students listen to audio only, reflecting the traditional teaching method, whilst in phase 2, YouTube and video podcasts are introduced as an intervention over four weeks using four different stories. After intervention, the data is collected in phase 3. The findings suggest that YouTube and video podcasts are effective teaching tools for enhancing listening comprehension for learners with limited English proficiency. However, teacher support and proper selection of materials are crucial to implement this study.

In terms of pronunciation development, Wang and Chen (2020) investigate how learners use YouTube to improve their English pronunciation. This study emphasises YouTube's capacity as a helpful tool for developing pronunciation in English, but this depends on how students interact with the content. The findings suggest that learners should carefully select videos that align with their personal interests and language proficiency, because there is a risk that learners may only focus on the entertaining part of the content, but not for pronunciation practice. Also, learners may not be equally able to select appropriate videos, which can limit the learning effect. Focusing specifically on vocabulary learning, a quantitative study by Abbas et al. (2019) uses Facebook and YouTube for Pakistani EFL learners, gathering data from both teachers and students. Most participants have found social media platforms to be engaging tools for connecting and learning outside the classroom environment. In addition, they observe that vocabulary development does not happen through incidental exposure alone: learners need to be actively and consciously focused on language learning.

Through interactions, learners have the opportunity to practise their language skills in real-world contexts and can connect with native speakers and fellow learners. Several studies (Akhiar et al., 2017; Bestari, 2020; Lailiyah & Setiyaningsih, 2020) have found that interacting with social media, such as Instagram, enhances learner engagement

and enthusiasm for language learning in different contexts. Börekci and Aydin's (2020) study of foreign language teachers' interactions with their students on Facebook examines communication between English instructors and their learners in a course context. Their findings show that teacher-led facilitation is essential for creating a positive, interactive environment that supports both students' personal and academic development and helps to channel social media use towards pedagogically meaningful goals.

Yeh and Mitric (2023) use social media in their pedagogical design, which aims to encourage EFL learners to participate actively with the target language community in face-to-face settings. The findings suggest that learners are exposed to and engage with authentic language and cultural content on social media outside the classroom. This, in turn, encourages them to participate more confidently in target-language communities in face-to-face settings. Ahmad et al.'s (2022) research focuses on students' perception of using social media for learning Spanish in India to support their formal language learning. The findings suggest that students frequently use various social media platforms, such as Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter, outside of their class. This helps students to enhance their communication and language skills by exchanging messages, sharing materials, and participating in group discussions with others.

Using social media can also increase language learners' cultural awareness (Álvarez Valencia & Fernández Benavides, 2019). For example, Kim and Kim (2021) investigate how Korean international students in the United States use YouTube to develop their cultural awareness. Findings reveal that YouTube serves multiple educational functions: broadening students' cultural understanding, expanding their content knowledge, and enhancing their learning experiences. Yang and Yeh (2021) investigate how Taiwanese EFL learners act as cultural mediators by producing English-language YouTube videos about their local culture; they argue that such video production tasks can foster learners' intercultural understanding.

Despite its many advantages, social media has sparked debate over its educational applications as a pedagogical tool. A central concern is that these platforms were not originally designed for educational purposes. Because of this lack of educational focus,

these platforms may not support the development of key academic practices such as critical debate and the respectful exchange of differing opinions in educational settings (Friesen & Lowe, 2012). This concern is further intensified by practical difficulties such as student and teacher resistance to using social media as a learning tool, technical unreliability, and data privacy (Barrot, 2022; Hsu & Beasley, 2019). Technical issues, including inconsistent internet access and platform instability, can disrupt learning, especially in contexts with limited digital infrastructure. In addition, concerns around data privacy, ownership, and surveillance have become increasingly prominent, which raises ethical questions about the use of commercial platform in formal education (Selwyn, 2016; Selwyn & Aagaard, 2021).

Learners can also experience using social media as a source of distraction. Instead of focusing on their assignments, they may repeatedly switch to messaging, browsing, or watching videos (Güney, 2023; Reinhardt, 2022). This constant shifting of attention and loss of study time is associated with lower grades and reduced academic performance (Giunchiglia et al., 2018; Manca & Ranieri, 2016; Rostaminezhad et al., 2019). Therefore, for social media to function effectively as a learning environment, the platform needs to be used purposefully, learners need to engage with it intentionally for language learning, and teachers need to provide guidance and structure.

2.3.3. WeChat in Chinese language learning

Various social media platforms have been explored in CFL contexts, including TikTok (Liu, 2022; Vazquez-Calvo et al., 2022), YouTube (Wang et al., 2022), Twitter (Hsiao & Broeder, 2014), and Facebook (S. Wang & Vásquez, 2014; Zhang & Lu, 2014). Despite this diversity, WeChat is consistently identified as the most widely used platform in CFL contexts. WeChat is a well-known, free social networking application used widely in China and many other countries. Often described as China's app for everything, it is characterised by its multifunctional features and platforms. Since WeChat's launch in 2011, it has become an integral part of everyday life for many people in China. WeChat's functions have extended from messaging and social networking to mobile payments, content sharing and access to a range of services (Liu, 2024).

A growing body of research has examined the pedagogical potential of WeChat in a CFL context. A systematic review of such use from 2013 to 2023 by Liu (2024) has summarised some fundamental benefits of using this app. Those benefits include increasing learners' motivation, enhancing collaboration, and improving target language use in an authentic learning environment. According to Lei and Liu (2020), WeChat's affordances support the development of a multi-modal learning platform in various ways. These include supporting flexible micro-learning opportunities, enhancing knowledge retrieval, promoting learner autonomy and collaboration, and enabling assessment of both student and teacher performance. Building on this, Shi et al. (2017) conceptualise the affordances of WeChat to include multi-functionality, individuality, accessibility, interactivity, and affordability.

Developing Chinese language skills

As an interactive learning tool, WeChat supports conventional classroom-based teaching methods but also fosters Chinese language learners' ability to learn independently. Wang et al.'s (2016) study explores how WeChat can function as a language learning environment by focusing on its affordances that support teaching, social, and cognitive presence in semi-synchronous exchanges between learners of Mandarin and English. The findings show that WeChat's multimodal features (e.g., text chat, voice messages, images, video, emojis, and stickers) allow participants to interact in ways that are more flexible than real-time conferencing but more immediate than fully asynchronous forums. This semi-synchronous mode gives learners 30 minutes of real-time oral interaction through exchanging voice messages, allowing them time to plan and formulate responses while still participating in ongoing conversation. In this time, learners also exchange text, audio files, images, emojis, and stickers. The findings suggest that the ongoing exchanges develop learners' language skills through questioning, clarifying, and reflection. Also, learners build relationships and a sense of community through informal messages and expressive resources.

Consistent with prior research, Xu and Peng's (2017) research investigates mobile-assisted oral feedback in teaching Chinese using WeChat as the platform through which learners submitted spoken recordings and received feedback. In their design, students recorded short oral tasks on their smartphones and sent these

recordings to their teachers via WeChat; two native-speaker research assistants then provided feedback through WeChat voice and text messages. The results show that students held positive attitudes towards this WeChat-based feedback and perceived it as helpful for improving their speaking skills.

Jiang and Li (2018) have conducted a study focused on a task-based language teaching framework to evaluate a WeChat-mediated speaking task. In this task, low-proficiency learners of Chinese at an Australian university were paired with native speakers of Chinese (international students on the same campus) and asked to complete weekly question-and-answer interactions in Chinese via WeChat outside class time. The study has examined how well this WeChat task was received as part of the tertiary CFL curriculum. The findings suggest that students have enjoyed the WeChat interactions with native speakers, and they felt more confident in using the target language to connect classroom learning with real-world situations. WeChat interactions also allow learners to enhance their Chinese language vocabulary. Pamintuan et al.'s (2018) quantitative study uses three features of WeChat with CFL learners in the Philippines: WeChat Messaging, Official Accounts, and Mini Programmes. The findings suggest that different features of WeChat enhance learners' vocabulary through exposure to the target language in WeChat.

Enhancing motivation

Huang's (2019) one-year (2017–2018) action research study suggests that learners develop high intrinsic motivation for learning Chinese when engaging with others in WeChat. However, this study also argues that teachers' engagement and feedback are necessary to sustain students' motivation and engagement. WeChat, when used as a language-learning tool, supports conventional classroom-based teaching and learning procedures, which in fact stimulate the autonomous learning process of Chinese language learners (Jin, 2018).

In the studies by Jin (2018) and Tong et al. (2024), students are asked to complete language tasks, share posts, and exchange messages in Chinese in WeChat. Participating in these activities encourages them to participate directly in online interaction and to take responsibility for their own learning. WeChat-mediated

activities also enhance students' motivation to learn by creating a comfortable environment where they feel free to share opinions, ideas, and learning challenges with their classmates and mentors. Moreover, Luo and Yang's (2016) research has used WeChat in Chinese language courses at an American college with elementary and intermediate language learners. The WeChat group enables peer interaction in the target language beyond regular class hours. The study has reported improvements in participants' Chinese language skills and motivation. However, the authors suggest that because there are two different groups of learners, based on their language proficiency they may use WeChat differently.

Cultural awareness

To promote intercultural collaborative learning for non-native beginners' CFL learners, Chen and Du (2021) have piloted an experimental pedagogical design with small numbers of Chinese learners in Denmark. Students interacted with native speakers in WeChat. In these exchanges, learners asked questions and shared stories about everyday micro-settings such as meals, family routines, local festivals, and study or work life. The findings suggest that communicating with native speakers regarding everyday experiences helped students develop awareness of Chinese cultural practices.

Zhou and Sun (2020) present a five-year computer-mediated intercultural exchange programme involving Chinese EFL learners and American CFL learners. They use WeChat as the principal platform for collaborative intercultural activities. These activities included setting up personal WeChat blogs to introduce themselves and their campus life, jointly completing thematic tasks such as 'one day in a city' (e.g., Beijing or Chicago) by exchanging photos and descriptions of daily routines, and discussing parallel course topics (e.g., festivals, food, student life). This study has used a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative data from surveys and qualitative insights from action research. The findings indicate progress in students' comprehension of cultural diversity and subtleties, along with their capacity to embrace other cultural viewpoints. This study also emphasises that interactions on WeChat can reduce the gap between learners' knowledge of the target language and their opportunities for practical use by giving them chances to apply what they have learned in everyday interactions.

2.4. Discussion: Learner agency, reciprocal peer learning, and social media

Learner agency, RPL, and social media work in a layered relationship: learner agency is the central construct, RPL is the pedagogical approach, and social media is the mediating environment through which RPL is conducted. As discussed in Section 2.1, learner agency refers to a sense of control and ownership that enables learners to make meaningful choices and take purposeful action by embracing opportunities and challenges. Within the social environment, learner agency is co-constructed through interaction, collaboration, and mutual support. It involves learners taking ownership of language learning and exercising control through reflective engagement with learning tasks and peers. Learner agency is thus understood as a socially mediated capacity that emerges through consistent practice and interaction with others, with tools, and with the contexts in which learners are situated. Within this framework, learner agency becomes visible through learners' actions and engagement in the learning process. Learners' agentic actions may be demonstrated through how they plan learning, make choices about learning strategies, approach challenges, provide support to peers, and reflect on learning experiences.

The RPL approach functions as the pedagogical mechanism through which learning agency is promoted. As discussed in Section 2.2, RPL is characterised as a structured, mutually supportive approach in which learners assume dual roles as both peer teachers and peer learners and share responsibilities. RPL is distinguished from other peer learning models by its structural design of reciprocity, in which learners systematically alternate between the roles of peer teacher and peer learner, thereby reducing hierarchy. This dual positioning of learners in RPL aligns with understandings of learner agency from the social process. In the framework, RPL positions students to take active roles in engaging in different forms of agentic behaviour by alternating between the roles of tutor (e.g., peer teacher) and tutee (e.g., peer learner). As peer teachers, they need to understand the concept, explain it, and decide how to support others. As peer learners, students seek clarification, evaluate peer explanations, and determine what support to accept or question. This form of peer-to-peer learning redistributes responsibility to learners as intentional partners, which in turn reduces hierarchical boundaries and cultivates a greater sense of

belonging in the class (Storey et al., 2021). Collaboration among peers is not simply about putting people together; it is about specific interactions that trigger learning mechanisms (Dillenbourg, 1999). Although RPL provides the pedagogical structure for peer interaction, the environment in which that interaction occurs shapes the nature and quality of the learning that emerges.

Social media platforms function as the mediating environment within the conceptual framework. As outlined in Section 2.3, social media environments are characterised by features such as interactivity, multimodality, and asynchronous communication. These features create opportunities for learners to engage with peers, share resources, and participate in discussions beyond the temporal and spatial constraints of the classroom. Within the conceptual framework, social media functions not only as a technological tool but also as an interactive learning environment that shapes how RPL unfolds. Using social media allows learners to exchange information, share multimedia content, and engage in asynchronous discussions with more flexibility in managing their learning. For example, synchronous and asynchronous interactions allow learners to exercise agency in deciding when, how, and with whom to engage in RPL activities beyond the classroom context. Social media also facilitates the development of a learning community, in which shared goals foster a sense of belonging, and this social dimension is crucial for developing learner agency over time (Fuchs & Snyder, 2013). This understanding of social media as both a tool and a learning environment is crucial for understanding how RPL, enacted through social media, creates conditions for learner agency. The platforms provide technological affordances, but agency emerges from learners' decisions about when, how, and why to engage with these tools and their peers.

2.5. Summary and conclusions

This chapter has reviewed the concepts of learner agency, reciprocal peer learning, and social media. Learner agency can be described as the capacity to make meaningful choices and act purposefully in one's learning, emerging from dynamic interactions among learners, social contexts, and available resources. Reciprocal peer learning has been examined as a collaborative process through which learners mutually support language development. Social media's role has been analysed through its functionality,

such as multimodality, mobility, participation, and interactivity, which create possibilities for language engagement alongside significant challenges. This chapter also establishes that these three concepts are fundamentally interconnected. For Chinese language learning specifically, WeChat emerged from the literature as a prominent platform that combines features supporting both individual and collaborative learning practices. This chapter paves the way for the next chapter, which explores the pedagogical design of this thesis.

Chapter 3
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Chapter 3 describes the methodological framework that guided this study and justifies the major decisions made regarding the research design. The study was designed as a three-cycle action research project within the Chinese language programme at the University of Dhaka. The chapter, therefore, first explains the action research paradigm and its relevance to the study. It then describes the research context, the three-cycle design, and the dual role of the teacher-researcher. The chapter also outlines the participants, data collection procedures, and the implementation of each cycle. This is followed by a detailed description of the qualitative data analysis procedures and the ethical considerations that governed the study throughout. The chapter concludes by summarising how the methodology provided the foundation for the findings presented in Chapter 4.

3.1. Research questions

Sections 2.1 to 2.3 have examined learner agency, reciprocal peer learning, and social media as three interrelated but analytically distinct concepts. Learner agency serves as the conceptual foundation for learners' capacity to take control and ownership, address challenges, and reflect on these challenges in pursuit of their learning goals within particular social and institutional contexts. RPL offers a pedagogical approach that situates this agentic capacity within a framework of social relations in which learning and learner agency are constructed through interaction, mutual support, and collaboration. In this process, social media provides a further layer of mediation for such interaction in digitally mediated environments. Therefore, the purpose of this thesis is to investigate how the use of social media (e.g., WeChat) and reciprocal peer learning can foster learner agency among learners of Chinese in Bangladesh. To address this aim, the thesis examines three interconnected research questions:

RQ1: What factors may promote or challenge the development of learner agency in Chinese language learning environments supported by technology?

RQ2: What is the impact of reciprocal peer learning on the development of learner agency? What role does social media, such as WeChat, play in supporting reciprocal peer learning and the development of learner agency?

RQ3: What principles and criteria can be derived for the design and implementation of language learning environments that aim to promote learner agency among learners of Chinese in Bangladesh and beyond?

These three research questions are sequenced to build a coherent analytical progression, from understanding context to examining intervention and deriving design implications. RQ1 establishes the contextual and pedagogical conditions that either enable or constrain learner agency in social-media-supported Chinese language learning environments in Bangladesh. RQ2 examines the specific role of reciprocal peer learning and its mediating role through WeChat. It asks how specific pedagogical and technological arrangements shaped students' opportunities to participate, support peers, make choices, and assume responsibility. RQ3 moves from analysis to action. Building on what is learned from RQ1 and RQ2, this study asks what principles can be derived for designing and implementing language learning environments that support learner agency in Chinese language education.

Investigating the problem space addressed in this study involves direct engagement with students and iterative exploration of their learning experiences. Such an approach is not well suited to experimental or quantitative research, which typically focuses on measuring variables, testing hypotheses, and identifying cause-and-effect relationships. This study seeks to understand how learners exercise agency, what supports or constrains their actions, and how these processes are experienced by learners and reflected upon in teaching practice.

The study also involves ongoing re of the pedagogical design in response to insights emerging from participants and classroom practice. A qualitative approach is therefore appropriate because the research questions focus on how learner agency is experienced, negotiated, and transformed over time. The context-dependent nature of

qualitative inquiry also enables a deeper understanding of the social, cultural, and educational factors influencing learners' experiences and actions. Also, this research needs to adjust and modify the pedagogical design based on reflective insights, which can be identified through individual learners' reflections as well as reflections on teacher practice. A qualitative approach is therefore appropriate because the research questions focus on how learner agency is experienced, negotiated, and transformed over time (McNiff & Whitehead, 2009). The context-dependent nature of qualitative inquiry also provides a deeper understanding of the social, cultural, and educational factors influencing learners' experiences and actions.

3.2. Action research and design-based research

Action research (AR) provides the methodological foundation for this thesis. The study investigates how RPL and social media, particularly WeChat, can support the development of learner agency among Chinese learners in Bangladesh. Addressing this aim requires a methodology that could accommodate pedagogical intervention, ongoing refinement, and close engagement with a situated learning context. AR is therefore appropriate because it enabled the study to intervene in classroom practice, examine the consequences of that intervention, and redesign the learning environment in response to evidence generated during the study.

3.2.1. What is action research?

Action research is a systematic form of enquiry that helps practitioners to examine and improve their own teaching practices. Originating in the work of Kurt Lewin in the 1940s, action research has evolved into a widely recognised approach to educational research that emphasises democratic participation, the generation of practical knowledge, and transformative change (Kemmis, 2010; Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005). Burns and Dikilitaş (2025) describe AR as 'contextually situated, teacher-led, data-driven, intervention-oriented, collaborative, reflective and critical, and inquiry-based or theory grounded'. The process of AR provides a consistent opportunity for the researcher to address the problem, to change the pedagogical design through reflection, to evaluate their impact in real time, and to collaborate with participants (Burns, 2009; Consoli & Dikilitaş, 2021). Banegas and Consoli (2020) further

emphasise that AR involves the interaction of three elements: context, agents, and issues. As they explain:

> *These words and notions suggest that the adoption and implementation of action research often entails a change, and that this will require agents who are willing to change and be changed. (Banegas & Consoli, 2020, p. 177)*

A central aim of AR is therefore to minimise the gap between theory and practice (Bradbury, 2015) and to improve knowledge in education regarding curriculum, teaching, and learning activities (Johnson, 2019).

Teacher-researcher's development of practice

A key dimension of AR is its contribution to teachers' professional development across areas such as improving instructional strategies, implementing curriculum, and developing existing pedagogical methods. The teacher is often a participant in the context, playing dual roles as teacher and researcher. This dual role allows the researcher to observe classroom practices while also making changes to teaching approaches during the study. Reason and Bradbury (2008) define multiple terms that may influence a shift to the centre of action enquiry: first-person AR, second-person AR, and third-person AR. Herr and Anderson (2012) suggest a list of the researcher's positionalities to identify the action researcher's position: insider researcher, insider researcher with collaboration, outsider researcher, and outsider researcher with the collaboration of an insider researcher. My position in this study is a first-person insider researcher.

AR encourages teachers to critically examine their teaching practices and experiment with new pedagogical approaches to address classroom challenges. The collaborative reflective practice of AR with other teachers, researchers, or students enhances practitioners' involvement in generating new knowledge and taking action about their work. Researchers (Gibbs et al., 2017; Glenn et al., 2023) indicate that implementing AR has a positive contribution to the teacher's professionalism by solving teaching problems through classroom experience.

Participants' involvement in AR

The direct involvement of participants is an integral part of AR. According to Jensen and Dikilitas (2023), participants play three roles during different stages of AR: data provider, researcher, and active participant. These various roles provide more opportunities for learners' direct engagement through the research process. Groundwater-Smith and Mockler (2016) analyse that this shift empowers participants from their role of passive data providers to become active co-researchers. It addresses the issue of power and ownership, and knowledge is produced through participant-driven inquiry (Brydon-Miller et al., 2003).

3.2.2. The cyclical nature of AR

AR is widely understood as reflective and intervention-oriented enquiry undertaken by practitioners to connect research and practice through a cyclical process of planning, action, reflection, and redesign, thereby improving practice and increasing knowledge. AR focuses on the individual researcher's development, with the researcher directly involved in the research (Clark et al., 2020). The researcher collects and interprets evidence while simultaneously making pedagogical decisions and involving people in a journey to improve their skills, techniques, and strategies (McAteer, 2013, p. 10). As Burns (2023) suggested, 'the central idea of the action part of AR is to intervene in a deliberate way in the problematic situation to bring about changes and, even better, improvements in practice' (2010, p. 2). The cyclical nature of action research offers multiple benefits for examining teaching and learning within and beyond the classroom across cycles.

Researchers have already developed various AR models (McNiff, 2013; Stringer, 2014). The basic structure is based on Kurt Lewin's (1946) model of AR that is commonly represented as a spiral of iterative steps: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. **Figure 3.1** illustrates these four stages. In the *planning* stage, the researcher explores the context, specifies research questions, reviews relevant literature, prepares data collection tools, and follows ethical procedures. The *action stage* involves implementing the project and collecting and analysing data. Data can be collected using qualitative approaches (e.g., observations, interviews, journals) and quantitative

approaches (e.g., surveys, checklists, rating scales, tests). In selecting data types and tools, the researcher adopts a strategic approach aligned with the research problem, because inappropriate or insufficient data can compromise the study (Tomal, 2010). Often, AR involves gathering data from at least two different sources or categories to enhance the credibility of findings (Johnson, 2019).

The observation stage overlaps with data collection, as the researcher documents what happens during and after the intervention. Data analysis is the final step in an ongoing cycle. It influences further continuation of the next cycle by giving the researcher a deeper understanding of the query on the ongoing cycle. Reflection is central to AR, which supports the researcher to identify challenges, interpret outcomes, and decide whether or how to move to the next cycle. In this sense, reflection integrates action and research dimensions by linking practical problem-solving with systematic inquiry and generating context-specific solutions (Bradbury, 2015).

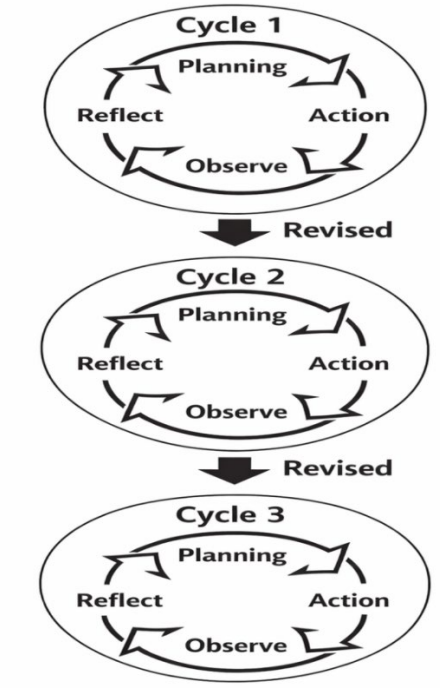


Figure 3.1. The basic cyclical nature of action research

There are other models of AR, such as the Kemmis and McTaggart (2005) model, which McNiff (2013) criticised for its rigid, linear representations that fail to capture how AR genuinely unfolds in practice. Burns (2009) makes a similar point, that the

traditional AR model tends to be interpreted as a neat and sequential cycle that misrepresents the reality of classroom-based research. She argues that in real-world classrooms, the AR process is inherently messier and non-linear, which needs the teachers to move back and forth between phases as the situation demands.

In this thesis, I adopt the core four steps of the original AR model and follow Burns's (2009) view that these steps are not a fixed sequence, because they need to remain responsive to what is actually happening in the classroom. This distinction between having structure and being rigid is central to how I have designed this study. AR is understood here as a self-reflective spiral of cycles: a process that stops at a single cycle cannot be considered genuine action research, since it is through repeated cycles that teachers build knowledge through action. In each subsequent cycle, the pedagogical design is reviewed and adapted, which strengthens the trustworthiness of the findings through what Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe as prolonged engagement and triangulation of evidence across contexts. Therefore, I have designed a three-cycle AR study in which the movement between steps is non-linear and directly responsive to classroom realities. To make the pedagogical design behind each cycle more visible and systematic, this study draws selectively on design-based research principles.

3.2.3. Design-based research and pedagogical design

Design-based research (DBR) shares several characteristics with AR. Both involve practitioners as active researchers, iterative cycles, contextual understanding, and improvements in educational practice. DBR is an interventionist research method that aims to produce new theories, artefacts, and practices through a series of designs and interventions (Barab & Squire, 2004). The fundamental difference between DBR and AR lies in their objectives. As Barab and Squire (2004) explain:

> *Design-based research is concerned with using design in the service of developing broad models of how humans think, know, act and learn; that is, a critical component of design-based research is that the design is conceived not just to meet local needs, but to advance a theoretical agenda. (Barab & Squire, 2004, p. 5)*

Research suggests that integrating insights from DBR into AR 'can help action researchers to regularly distance themselves from practice, reflect on their findings, and create generalizable knowledge' (Andriessen, 2008, p. 132). DBR is particularly

valuable for structuring the lesson, classroom, students' roles, teachers' roles, and learning space. The collaborative learning design shows the contextual and social outcomes of different interactions and contributions through the roles students play, their roles in the group, and their roles in the class (Kanevsky et al., 2022). Also, incorporating DBR principles addresses a common critique of AR that findings may remain specific to a single context.

In DBR applications, Pierre Dillenbourg's work on scripting and orchestration has been especially influential for designing collaborative learning environments. Dillenbourg et al. (1996) have introduced the idea of 'collaboration script' for computer-supported collaborative learning (CSCL), which has been used to structure learners' interactions. Dillenbourg (2002, 2013) and Dillenbourg et al. (2018) have elaborated this concept in later publications. Scripting refers to the structure of interactions through predefined roles, sequences, and activities (Dillenbourg, 2002, 2013). Orchestration, by contrast, refers to the real-time management and adjustment of learning activities as learning unfolds (Bae et al., 2023; Dillenbourg, 2013; Dillenbourg & Jermann, 2010).

Scripting and orchestration support teachers in defining designated specific roles and tasks while managing real-time classroom complexities. The articulation between these two dimensions is critical because a well-designed script creates the conditions for productive collaborative learning, whereas effective orchestration ensures that these conditions are applied flexibly, adaptively, and responsively to learners' needs (Holstein et al., 2019). Scripting can be related to 'five attributes: the task that students have to perform, the composition of the group, the way that the task is distributed within and among groups, the mode of interaction and the timing of the phase' (Dillenbourg, 2002, p. 61). Orchestration addresses what happens when the classroom does not go to plan. As Dillenbourg (2013) describes:

> *Orchestration refers to how a teacher manages, in real time, multi-layered activities in a multi-constraints context. Many pedagogical scenarios integrate individual activities (e.g. reading), teamwork (e.g. problem solving) and class-wide activities (e.g. lectures). (Dillenbourg, 2013b, p. 485)*

Dillenbourg (2002) examines various pedagogical scenarios through different CSCL scripts for collaborative learning, such as the Grid or Jigsaw script, the ArgueGraph

script, and the UniverSanté script. The Grid script is used in a CSCL environment as part of a learning technologies course. In this script, the task is split into sets of sub-tasks, each assigned to different group members, so that no individual can solve the task alone. This script aims to trigger rich explanations and interdependence. The ArgueGraph script pairs students with opposing views based on an initial questionnaire, and they need to resolve their cognitive conflicts and agree on a single joint response. This design aims to promote productive socio-cognitive conflict and deeper conceptual clarification through structured disagreement. The UniverSanté script is a cross-cultural medical education model in which international students analyse clinical cases and develop unified health strategies by drawing on their different national contexts.

Each of these scripts carries a risk: they can become overly prescriptive if they over-structure collaboration. Thus, to avoid over-scripting in collaborative learning, Dillenbourg (2002) emphasises that social interaction should remain a focus of learning and that shared understanding should be a central design goal. This concern connects directly to Burns's (2009) call for non-linear flexibility. In the current study, scripting structures the teacher's role, the student's role as peer teacher and peer learner, the use of tools, and the relationship between teacher-led instruction and RPL tasks, which serves as the 'Plan' for each AR cycle. Orchestration then addresses the specific affordances and constraints of each delivery context, whether fully online or hybrid, by coordinating activity flows across multiple spaces in a way that keeps the 'Act' and 'Observe' phases responsive. Throughout the process, the reflective stage of AR provides opportunities for evaluating and revising script designs from one cycle to the next.

3.3. Research design

This study adopted a three-cycle action research design to investigate how RPL, mediated through WeChat, could promote learner agency among Chinese language learners in Bangladesh. The three research questions directly shaped this design: RQ1 guided what was observed and collected across cycles; RQ2 informed how RPL tasks and peer roles were structured and revised; and RQ3 oriented the study towards design

principles that extend beyond the immediate classroom context. The integration of DBR principles to support this process was discussed in Section 3.2.3.

Each cycle followed four AR steps – planning, action, observation, and reflection with the flexibility of moving among steps but not following a fixed sequence. The Planning steps involved preparing the script for the cycle that included defining teacher-students' roles and responsibilities, preparing a sample task for RPL, forming RPL groups and responsibilities, using WeChat and other tools, and finalising tools for data collection. The Action step involved preparing students for RPL through classroom practice, developing and distributing RPL tasks on WeChat, and managing real-time challenges across different learning spaces. The Observation steps involved observing students' interaction in class and on WeChat, gathering students' feedback, collecting data through WeChat logs, interview, reflective journal, and observation. The Reflection step involved evaluating the pedagogical design and students' responses, analysing the data, identifying challenges and gaps, and revising the script in preparation for the following cycle. Each subsequent cycle followed these four AR steps, generating qualitative data that informed revisions to the pedagogical script before the next cycle began. WeChat logs and classroom observations primarily addressed RQ1 and RQ2, while end-of-cycle interviews and reflective journals provided evidence across all three questions, with particular relevance to RQ3.

Table 3.1 presents the timeline of the three-cycles designed for this study. Cycle 1 started in July 2021 and ended in September 2021. Cycle 2 started in January 2022, after the revised plan, and ended in March 2022. The same approach was followed for Cycle 3, which started in April 2022 and ended in June 2022. The three-cycles had distinct but interconnected purposes. Cycle 1 focused on identifying problems and trialling an initial intervention on a small scale. Its main aim was to understand students' prior learning experiences, their familiarity with RPL, and their use of social media for Chinese language learning. It introduced structured elements, clarified student and teacher roles, and explored how students navigated the WeChat environment; it thereby revealed contextual barriers, technical challenges, and early struggles with exercising agency. Cycle 2 refined the intervention based on these insights, adjusting task design, guidance, and support in order to strengthen RPL and respond more closely to students' needs. Cycle 3 then focused on consolidating and

generalising the emerging findings by further refining the design and examining its sustainability and impact across a full cycle.

The pedagogical design also needed attention to variation and comparability across cycles, as the three cohorts differed in important respects. Cycle 1 was conducted online during the COVID-19 period with a small Zoom-based cohort. Cycle 2 involved more mature learners, many of them working professionals returning to study after an interruption, while Cycle 3 involved a younger and more stable cohort. Rather than treating these differences as a limitation, the study understood them as part of the real educational variation through which action research operates. The iterative nature of the three-cycles supported testing and refining the pedagogical design across changing cohorts, and this variation helped develop context-sensitive design principles for supporting learner agency in RPL.

Research cycles	Time period
Cycle 1	July 2021 – September 2021
Cycle 2	January 2022 – March 2022
Cycle 3	April 2022 – June 2022

Table 3.1. Timeframe of three AR cycles

Pilot study

Before implementing Cycle 1, a pilot study was executed with seven voluntary students from the Department of Chinese for two weeks in April 2021. The aim of this pilot was to test the logistical viability and linguistic accessibility of the research instruments. During this time, the university was closed because of COVID-19, and the course coordinator helped me to disseminate the call for voluntary participants. Before the class began, a plain language statement and consent form were provided to ensure that participants fully understood the study's purpose, procedures, and potential risks. This

helped me make corrections to the Bengali translation of the plain language statement before starting Cycle 1.

I observed participants' online class participation and WeChat interactions and facilitated their learning activities. Observation was conducted using a structured checklist covering four areas: language use, responsibility-taking, peer interaction, and WeChat involvement. Pilot observation data showed that the checklist did not need to be revised. The data derived from their reflective journals indicated that some questions were not fully clear to participants. These needed to be modified to improve participants' understanding. Two interviews were recorded that lasted 40 minutes. These preliminary interviews also provided an opportunity to assess logistical aspects, including interview duration, the appropriateness of the online setting, and the effectiveness of the Zoom recording feature. These interviews showed that two questions, which students found ambiguous, needed to be changed into plain language. The interview process also identified that an unstable internet connection interrupted the process. I revised the questions immediately; however, the internet issue was beyond my control. The pilot study ensured that any technical or practical issues with the data collection tools were addressed before implementing the main cycle to prevent disruptions.

3.4. Research context

3.4.1. The University of Dhaka

The University of Dhaka (DU) was established on 1 July 1921 as a teaching and residential university modelled on Oxford University. This marked the beginning of higher education in Bangladesh under British rule. The university officially started with 12 departments across three faculties: Arts, Science, and Law, with a total of 877 students. Over time, DU has expanded and currently has 83 departments across 13 faculties, 12 institutes, and 56 research bureaus and centres, with an estimated student population of over 37,000 (University of Dhaka, 2024). DU provides a range of degree programmes: the honours programme lasts 4 years, while the master's programme lasts 1 year. It also offers advanced degree programmes, including the MPhil (2 years)

and PhD (4 years). Apart from these regular degrees, DU organises seminars and workshops to support students' continuous academic and professional development.

The selection of DU as the research site was informed by two considerations. First, DU holds historical significance as the first institution in Bangladesh to introduce Chinese language education, making it a uniquely relevant site for a study concerned with Chinese language learning in Bangladesh. Second, DU, being my alma mater, offered an established familiarity with the institutional culture, academic norms, and student profile that characterised the learning context. Access to the site, including the Institute of Modern Languages' physical and digital resources, was granted through a formal departmental approval process described in ***Section 3.7.3***.

DU, like other Bangladeshi universities, follows in-person and classroom-based teaching. There was no specific policy or guideline on how to continue education during a crisis like COVID-19. As a result, the university needed significant time to transition from physical to online platforms. Before online classes began, DU conducted a survey to assess whether lecturers and students had the necessary resources and willingness to pursue education online. Although many teachers had knowledge of using the computer programs essential to their daily tasks, they were unfamiliar with the resources needed for online instruction (Roy et al., 2023). To address this challenge, DU organised online training courses for teachers and provided financial assistance to students in need.

Institute of Modern Languages: Department of Chinese

The Institute of Modern Languages (IML) was established in 1974 to foster and facilitate the study of contemporary languages. IML has been offering Chinese language learning facilities since 1978 and is the first institution to introduce a Chinese language course in Bangladesh. This institute also provides a variety of language courses, including Bengali (exclusively for international students), Arabic, Korean, English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Persian, Russian, Spanish, Turkish, and Hindi (Institute of Modern Languages, 2024). In addition to these language courses, IML offers honours (4-year) and master's (1-year) degrees in Chinese, Japanese, French, and English (University of Dhaka, 2024).

The Department of Chinese is a part of IML. The department follows the HSK standard coursebook, developing a Chinese series book and a basic Chinese book written in Bengali as teaching materials. The Chinese course is taught in Bengali and Chinese and basically focuses on reading and writing skills. This department arranges an intensive programme before the HSK exam and offers students listening and speaking practice before the exam. Also, part of its programme are various Chinese cultural activities, such as tai chi, calligraphy, traditional paper cutting, and Chinese language competitions to promote Chinese language and culture. Initially, the Chinese language department offered only language courses. In 2016, this department expanded to include a range of degree programmes from BA to PhD. The existing language courses are:

- Basic Language Course (equivalent to CEFR, A1): This course lasts two months. Students are expected to learn 150 Chinese words. No prior experience or knowledge of Mandarin is required to enrol in this course. Upon completing this course, students can use the certificate as proof of basic Chinese knowledge.
- Junior Certificate Course (equivalent to CEFR, A2–B1): This is a one-year programme that is divided into two semesters, as Junior Course Part I and Junior Course Part II. The aim of this programme is to develop B1 proficiency and prepare students to pass the HSK 3 (Chinese proficiency level 3) exam. The first semester is considered Junior Course Part I; students are expected to learn 300 Chinese words and achieve A2 proficiency. In the second semester, students are expected to learn 600 words and achieve HSK 3 proficiency.
- Senior Certificate Course (equivalent to CEFR B2): This course prepares students to achieve HSK 4 proficiency (Chinese proficiency level 4). Before the HSK 4 exams, this department offers an intensive programme which focuses on the HSK examination structure. HSK 3 or a minimum of 1 year of Chinese study at DU (or another institution of similar academic standards) is the main requirement for enrolling in this Senior Certificate Course.
- Diploma (equivalent to CEFR C1): This is a year-long programme, and at the end of the module, students are expected to have developed all the necessary skills to pass the HSK 5 (Chinese proficiency level 5) exam. Students are expected to communicate confidently in most professional and social contexts, demonstrating the fluency and accuracy required for HSK 5 proficiency.

- Higher diploma (equivalent to CEFR C2): This is also a one-year programme that emphasises developing CEFR C2 proficiency. Generally, only a small number of students choose to enrol in this course.

The certificate course and the diploma programmes are open to all students from the university and beyond, and class sizes are limited to 20–30 students. The requirement to pass those courses includes continuous assessment and written and oral exams. For the present study, Junior Certificate Course students were selected.

3.4.2. Course and pedagogical design

This study was conducted within the Junior Certificate Course offered by the Department of Chinese. This is a one-year programme divided into two semesters. Part I prepares students for A2 proficiency (HSK-2), and Part II prepares students for B1 proficiency (HSK-3). The study focused specifically on Part II. Prerequisites for enrolment were the completion of HSK-1 and HSK-2 or demonstration of equivalent competence.

In its existing form, the course is exam-driven and teacher-centred. Learners are positioned primarily as recipients of content, with classroom instruction structured around vocabulary teaching, reading comprehension, and character writing based on the HSK Standard Course 3 textbook. Listening and speaking skills receive attention only in the pre-examination intensive period. Students have limited choice over how they engage with learning materials or interact with peers. There is no structured out-of-class learning component.

The department suggested two recommendations for the selection of instructional materials: the Standard Course HSK 3 books and the Developing Chinese Series book. After approval was obtained from the Chinese language course coordinator, the Standard Course HSK 3 was chosen as the primary textbook and used throughout the study. This book, published by Beijing Language and Culture University, features a structured curriculum with clearly defined learning outcomes to prepare international students for the HSK level 3 examination. The content was fixed and non-negotiable. The end-of-course examination, its structure, and the formal assessment criteria were

determined at the institutional level and could not be modified either. I was therefore working within a clearly defined content and assessment framework. However, I was allowed to design my class and restructure the roles of teachers and students.

My course used the HSK Standard Course 3 as the main textbook, introduced the Workbook as supporting material, and followed the textbook's lesson sequence throughout (see sample lesson in Appendix E2). Each lesson in this book presents a diverse array of activities, including vocabulary lists, audio dialogues, grammar explanations, and short exercises to enhance proficiency in listening, reading, and writing. Thus, all the lectures were followed by this book's outline and lesson plan. **Table 3.2** presents a sample lesson plan:

Week	Lesson	Learning Objectives	Topic & Texts	Grammar Points	Classroom Activities & RPL
Week 1	**Lesson 1**	1. Learn vocabulary (打算、已经、好、游泳 etc.) 2. Understand and use grammar structures 3. Listen to audio dialogues twice 4. Participate in class activities 5. Set up and join WeChat group	周末你有什么打算 (What are your plans for the weekend?) Texts: 1. 谈周末的打算 2. 在家 3. 聊游泳计划 4. 准备去旅游	1. 已经…了 (already) 2. V+好 (completion: finished doing) 3. 一…也/都+不/没… (not even one) 4. Use of 那 (then / in that case)	1. Picture-matching warm-up 2. Whole-class vocabulary reading aloud 3. Audio listening x2 (without text / with text) 4. Reading comprehension from textbook 5. Workbook exercises (remainder uploaded to Google Classroom) 6. Breakout: 10-min peer speaking practice (no teacher) 7. WeChat group setup and introduction

Week 1	Lesson 2	1. Learn vocabulary (回来、给、能 etc.) 2. Understand directional verb complements 3. Listen to audio dialogues 4. Participate in class activities	他什么时候回来 (When is he coming back?) Texts: 1. 下山的路上 2. 在打电话 3. 在楼门口送朋友 4. 在家	1. V+来/去 (directional complements) 2. Use of 给 (to give / for someone) 3. 能…吗? (Can…? / Is it possible?)	1. Warm-up: dialogue gap-fill from previous lesson 2. Vocabulary reading aloud 3. Audio listening x2 4. Grammar explanation with examples on board 5. Sentence construction practice (V+来/去) 6. Workbook exercises 7. Breakout: role-play phone conversation using 给 and 能…吗? 8. Class feedback

Table 3.2. Sample lesson

I adapted the existing curriculum and shifted towards more learner-centred teaching. The central redesign involved repositioning students from passive content recipients to active participants through structured RPL activities and extending learning activity into out-of-class time through a dedicated WeChat group. Aims, intended learning outcomes, and assessment arrangements for the redesigned course were as follows.

Prerequisites: It was mandatory for students to have completed the HSK 1 and HSK 2 levels, or to demonstrate equivalent competence, prior to enrolment. All participants must be Bangladeshi nationals.

Aims: The redesigned course aimed to develop students' Chinese language competence at HSK-3 level while simultaneously fostering learner agency through structured engagement in RPL activities. A further aim was to develop students' capacity to use WeChat as a learning environment for peer collaboration.

Intended Learning Outcomes: By the end of the course, students were expected to (a) demonstrate HSK-3-level proficiency in vocabulary, grammar, reading, and spoken interaction; (b) take on the role of peer teacher in at least two structured RPL activities per cycle; (c) engage constructively as peer learners in activities designed and led by their peers; and (d) use WeChat as an extension of the classroom.

Assessment: Formal assessment followed institutional existing approach. There would not be any grade for creating RPL activities.

3.4.3. Roles and responsibilities

The redesigned course involved four distinct roles and responsibilities. These roles were introduced and explained to students at the beginning of each cycle are described below.

Teacher-researcher

Throughout the study, I acted as both teacher and researcher. As a classroom teacher, my responsibilities included preparing and delivering lectures, designing peer-learning activities, facilitating classroom discussions, responding to students' questions, and assessing coursework and formal examinations. At the same time, as a researcher, I observed students' participation in classroom and WeChat interactions, documented text, audio, and video data, identified emerging pedagogical issues, and maintained systematic records of my teaching practice. This dual role is consistent with the interpretivist paradigm adopted in this study. Interpretivism views social reality as multiple, subjective, and socially constructed through individuals' experiences and interactions within specific contexts (Mustofa, 2024). Within this paradigm, knowledge emerges through interactions between the researcher and participants, as meanings are interpreted and negotiated within the research setting (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The ontological position of the study acknowledges the existence of multiple realities shaped by participants' interpretations and experiences. Epistemologically, knowledge is viewed as co-constructed through interactions between the researcher and participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017). It focuses on the researcher's construction of knowledge on their field of study to develop a deeper understanding of what they are working on (Ejnavarzala, 2019). Thus. the researcher cannot be separated from the social setting being investigated. The teacher-researcher role offers close engagement with students' experiences of peer learning and social media use. My teaching role created opportunities for collaborative learning, while my researcher role focused on understanding how learners interpreted and responded to those opportunities. This position supported continuous reflection on both pedagogical practice and learners' experiences. Observing students' responses to learning activities enabled me to refine teaching strategies and learning tasks throughout the action research cycles. These iterative adjustments informed the development of the pedagogical intervention and

provided insights into how learner agency was enacted, negotiated, and developed within the classroom context.

Students

In their role as classroom students, learners were responsible for attending the classes and examinations, providing feedback to the class teacher, and participating in classroom activities. Students were also responsible for selecting group members and forming their own group.

Students in their peer teacher role were responsible for designing a language learning activity for their classmates. This involved selecting and preparing a task appropriate to the lesson, communicating with group members, submitting the task to the teacher for feedback, distributing the corrected task via WeChat, setting a submission deadline for peer learners, and responding to peer learners' questions.

Students in their peer learner role were responsible for completing tasks designed by peer teacher groups within the agreed deadline, submitting answers via WeChat, asking clarifying questions where needed, and providing brief feedback to the peer teacher group on the activity.

3.5. Action research implementation

This section describes how the three AR cycles were implemented in practice. For each cycle, the section addresses participants' profile, pedagogical design, data sources available in that cycle, and the key reflections and informed revisions to design the subsequent cycle. **Table 3.3** presents an overview of the three-cycles for this study, along with the timeline, number of participants who started and completed the course, total number of RPL groups, and available data sources in each cycle. Cycle 1 started in July 2021 and ended in September 2021. Cycle 2 began in January 2022, following the revised plan, and ended in March 2022. The same approach was followed for Cycle 3, which ran from April to June 2022.

	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
Period	July–September 2021	January–March 2022	April–June 2022
Delivery	Fully online	In-person, online	In-person, online
No. of participants started course	7	10	14
No. of participants completed course	4	7	10
No. of RPL groups	2	2	3
RPL tasks shared	2	4	5
Data collection tool (1): WeChat logs	Yes	Yes	Yes
Data collection tool (2): Observation	Yes	Yes	Yes
Data collection tool (3): Students' reflective journal	3	5	5
Data collection tool (4): Interviews	No	4	6

Table 3.3. Overview of three-cycles of action research

3.5.1. Cycle 1: Initial implementation and reflection

Cycle 1 ran from July to September 2021. The academic year usually starts from January, but the university was closed until June because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic significantly disrupted the education system, as it did in other countries. After the government announced the closure of all universities and dormitories, students had to move out of the dormitories and return home. The sudden change in the education system forced students to adopt online learning without prior experience or training. Generally, 20–30 students enrol in the Chinese course each year, but enrolments were very low because of the sudden change. During this cycle, I was based in Dublin and students joined online classes from Bangladesh.

Participants

In Cycle 1, seven students were registered, and four completed the course. Three students dropped out of this cycle due to extenuating circumstances involving unstable internet connections and power cuts, which were beyond their control. **Table 3.4**

presents demographic and linguistic background information on four participants (C1P1–C1P4) involved in the study. The participants range in age from 20 to 28 years old. Three are male (C1P2, C1P3, C1P4) and one is female (C1P1). Regarding Chinese language learning experience, two participants (C1P1 and C1P2) have studied Chinese for 1 year, while the other two (C1P3 and C1P4) have 6 months of experience. All participants had a multilingual background: they spoke Bengali as their L1, and English and Arabic were the common additional language skills. One participant (C1P1) also spoke Japanese.

Name	Age	Gender	Years of studying Chinese	Other language skills
C1P1	25	F	1	Bengali, English, Japanese, Arabic
C1P2	28	M	1	Bengali, English, Arabic
C1P3	20	M	6 months	Bengali, English, Arabic
C1P4	20	M	6 months	Bengali, English, Arabic

Table 3.4. Participants' demographic information in Cycle 1

Table 3.5 shows the group formation of participants in Cycle 1. Participants were divided into two subgroups of equal size. Group 1 comprised C1P1 and C1P3, while Group 2 comprised C1P2 and C1P4. Group 1 created one dialogue task, whereas Group 2 created two different tasks.

RPL group	Group members	Activities
Group 1	C1P1, C1P3	Prepare dialogue
Group 2	C1P2, C1P4	Prepare dialogue Fill in the gaps

Table 3.5. RPL group in Cycle 1

Pedagogical design

In Cycle 1, I taught 12 one-hour online classes using the HSK Standard Course 3 textbook and workbook as the main materials, with Chinese as the primary medium of instruction. Each class followed a stable routine: a brief well-being check, a warm-up activity, vocabulary and grammar work based on the textbook texts, listening practice, and short speaking tasks in breakout rooms. The whole class were asked to read the lesson's vocabulary aloud to practise pronunciation, but this quickly changed because of audio delays and noise. In class, students were invited to create and share their own example sentences in Chinese. Approximately 15 minutes in each lesson were devoted to listening, using the textbook audio, and 10 minutes to small-group speaking practice in breakout rooms. All students had opportunities for direct participation.

As **Table 3.6** shows, the implementation of RPL and WeChat was followed by the idea of scripting for collaborative learning. Scripting involved specifying the expected roles of teacher, peer-teacher, and peer-learner. Students alternated their dual roles between creating and responding to RPL tasks. As peer-teachers, they designed activities for other groups, submitted drafts to me for feedback, shared finalised tasks and answers via WeChat, set timelines for responses, and replied to peers' questions. As peer-learners, they completed RPL activities, asked clarifying questions, and provided feedback to peer-teachers. Students formed their own groups and collaboratively designed RPL activities, which the script was intended to support as a way to promote learner agency. Participation in RPL activities was voluntary and did not contribute to formal assessment. This was intended to encourage experimentation, collaboration, and participation without the pressure of grading.

My role involved providing practical and pedagogical support as students adapted to unfamiliar forms of peer-led and social media-mediated learning. This included introducing WeChat, demonstrating examples of RPL activities, reviewing draft tasks, clarifying expectations associated with peer teacher and peer learner roles, and responding to challenges as they emerged during implementation. These actions were intended to help students participate confidently in the RPL process.

Phase	Actor	Roles and responsibilities	Location & tool	When & where
RPL and WeChat introduction	Teacher-researcher	Introduces dual role: peer teacher, peer learner, Sets up WeChat group	Zoom, WeChat	Week 1, in class
RPL group formation	Students	Make own groups (max. 4 members)	WeChat	Week 1–2, outside of class
Sample RPL task	Teacher-researcher	Teacher shares a sample RPL task	Zoom	Week 2, in class
RPL task design	Peer teacher group	Discuss, select, create up to three activities on WeChat	WeChat	Week 3 onwards, asynchronous
RPL task review	Teacher-researcher	Review and comment on the draft tasks (clarity, language) before sharing with peer learners	WeChat	Week 3, outside of class
RPL task posting	Peer teacher group	Post the finalised RPL task to the common WeChat group with instructions and timeline	WeChat	Week 4, outside of class, asynchronous
RPL task completion	Peer learner	Complete tasks, ask questions (if any), and share response on WeChat	WeChat	Week 4, outside of class, asynchronous
Peer feedback & interaction	Peer teacher & Peer learners	Peer teachers reply to peer learners' questions, and share the answers	WeChat	End of each RPL round, out of class, asynchronous
Reflection	Peer teacher & Peer learners	Both groups write and share their experience as peer teacher and peer learner	WeChat/Reflective journal	End of each RPL round, out of class, asynchronous
In-class review	Teacher-researcher, peer teachers, peer learners	Briefly review RPL activities prepared by peer teacher group, and discuss which tasks students liked or found difficult	WeChat	End of each RPL round, in class

Table 3.6. Sample script of implementing RPL in Cycle 1

Orchestration involved managing the real-time challenges in this cycle. As it was the first experience for students to attend online class, and they needed support in using digital tools, my role extended as a technical facilitator, which included arranging two

virtual 'IT support' orientation sessions. The first session introduced email and Zoom, focusing on account creation, accessing materials, and basic features such as chat, breakout rooms, and online etiquette. The second session introduced WeChat as a learning tool for real-time communication and content sharing and showed how it would be used for RPL activities. Real-time orchestration also needed adaptive responses to unexpected issues. For example, when I discovered in the first class that some students did not have the audio files and textbook, I immediately added Google Classroom as a shared space for all materials. This showed the need for adaptive orchestration of the online environment.

Another pedagogical adaptation during Cycle 1 was the use of the 'Shopping Cart' metaphor to help students generate peer-learning activities. Because this was their first experience of designing tasks for peers, they initially struggled to imagine what an RPL activity could look like. By observing their questions and hesitation, I realised they needed more structured guidance. The Shopping Cart technique invited students to choose linguistic items such as vocabulary and grammatical structures from the unit and combine them to create new sentences and short texts, much like a shopper selects and combines items to meet a specific need. This conceptual tool aimed to offer students a way to exercise agency in selecting language resources and generating new ideas.

Data sources

In Cycle 1, data were collected through three sources: WeChat interaction logs, observations, and students' reflective journals. Two peer-learning activities were documented from the WeChat group. During online classes, observations focused on participants' interactions with peers and the teacher-researcher, their willingness to ask questions, their engagement in group discussions, their feedback to the class, and their willingness to share their experience as a peer teacher or peer learner. These observations raised concerns about making RPL activities. Discussions with learners also helped me to understand the current state of Chinese education in Bangladesh. In addition, reflective journals were used to capture students' perspectives and learning experiences. Due to an unstable internet connection and technical difficulties, conducting real-time interviews was not feasible in this cycle.

Reflection on Cycle 1

Cycle 1 revealed that the transition from teacher-led and classroom-based learning to online reciprocal peer learning was far more demanding than initially anticipated. It helped identify the key challenges that learners faced due to the sudden shift from in-person to online classes. These included contextual challenges that disrupted students' participation and were beyond their control. The existing infrastructural disparities between the city and rural areas were very prominent. Even though identifying this issue was not the objective of this research, it was embedded in the context, which also led three participants to drop out of the course, reschedule classes several times, and have low participation in class.

As this cycle also focused on students' well-being during the COVID-19 surge, students shared in-class discussions that they were unprepared to fully transition from in-person to online classes, felt reluctant to continue online classes, and struggled with unfamiliar learning environments. In the sudden shift to online classes, they felt isolated and disconnected from their peers. They found themselves overwhelmed by the self-directed nature of online learning. Therefore, it was essential to train students to use different digital tools and understand how external factors can challenge the development of agency. Another important reflection was that students were not used to giving feedback to the teacher in class; they considered it impolite.

A key aspect of the course was the RPL activity, where students were expected to create learning materials for peers. While this sounded interesting in theory, the students lacked confidence in their Chinese proficiency and worried about making mistakes. They had no prior experience acting as peer teachers or peer learners, and the concept was unfamiliar to all participants. To shift into their role as peer teachers, participants needed more time, structured support, and modelling or examples of the peer teacher role before designing their own activities. Only one student provided feedback as a peer learner. These observations suggested that the feedback dimension of RPL was not particularly fruitful in this cycle because it was cultural, whereas students lacked experience critiquing peers. The use of WeChat was also not very common among students, and they found it difficult to log in due to an unstable internet connection.

Gathering students' data from their reflective journals was challenging; students were reluctant to complete their journals and were highly inconsistent throughout the cycle. Many entries were either brief or lacked depth, limiting their usefulness for meaningful analysis. In some cases, students submitted journals irregularly or skipped entries altogether, creating gaps in the data and making it difficult to trace the development of their learning experiences over time. This inconsistency may be attributed to a lack of familiarity with reflective practices, limited motivation, or insufficient scaffolding for engaging critically with reflection tasks.

Another significant issue in Cycle 1 was the lack of interaction with other teachers in the department, which could have provided a deeper understanding of the context. The absence of collaborative dialogue restricted opportunities to triangulate findings or gain alternative pedagogical perspectives. Engaging with colleagues could have helped validate interpretations, identify unnoticed classroom dynamics, and offer practical insights into student behaviour and engagement.

Planned revisions for the next cycle

The planned revisions to Cycle 2 were based on reflections on the experiences, challenges, and data from Cycle 1. Some key changes were planned. First, it became essential to provide print materials. This was because students with poor internet access had found it difficult to access online materials. Second, more time would be needed to prepare students for RPL, as Cycle 1 revealed that students required more time than anticipated to design peer-teaching activities. Third, as the interaction on WeChat was very limited in Cycle 1, it would be essential to discuss with students how to improve their involvement on WeChat for communication and engagement, provide feedback, and identify the reasons for the challenges of using the WeChat space. Fourth, to address inconsistent use of reflective journals, more flexibility would be offered to students in completing them, including providing printed journals. Fifth, as collecting interview data was not feasible, this would serve as another data-collection instrument for Cycle 2. Sixth, as it was not feasible in Cycle 1, communication with departmental colleagues would be beneficial to gather more information on the context and Chinese language education in Bangladesh, as well as on knowledge dissemination.

3.5.2. Cycle 2: Refinement and reflection

Cycle 2 took place in person from January 2022 to March 202. It allowed me to interact directly with participants and communicate with other faculty members. In this cycle, I had to manage real-time transitions and continuous adaptation from online to in-person classes due to the COVID-19 surge. Most of the students were mature adult students who had little experience with technology. As a result, I arranged the two 'IT sessions' like in the previous cycle and offered the students continuous assistance.

Participants

In Cycle 2, participants represented a diverse range of ages as well as academic and professional backgrounds. At the beginning of the course, there were 10 participants in total: 7 males and 3 females, aged 23 to 50. However, three students dropped out, and seven participants completed the course (see **Table 3.7**). Most participants in this cycle (n = 5) were mature adult learners and working professionals, reflected in the higher age range than in Cycle 1. All participants had previously completed the Junior Certificate Course and were expected to progress to the Senior Certificate Course. Participants varied in terms of Chinese language learning experience, with study durations ranging from 1 to 4 years. Two participants (C2P1 and C2P2) had 3 years of experience, one (C2P4) had 4 years, and the remaining participants had studied for 1 year. All participants shared Bengali as their L1 and English as a common foreign language, while some also had proficiency in other languages. Specifically, C2P1 knew Japanese and Korean, and C2P2 and C2P7 had also learned French. This suggests that, although English serves as a shared linguistic resource, several participants have broader multilingual backgrounds that may influence their language-learning approaches.

This cohort experienced a year-long study gap due to the university's closures for the COVID-19 outbreak. They were supposed to start the Senior course, but to support the long gap, the department offered a three-month review course before they began the regular course. Compared with Cycle 1, students brought more varied educational and professional experiences, but they were less confident in using digital tools. This made Cycle 2 a useful test of whether RPL and WeChat-based interaction could be sustained among learners with different profiles and constraints.

Name	Age	Gender	Years of studying Chinese	Other language skills
C2P1	42	F	3	Bengali, English, Japanese, Korean
C2P2	42	F	3	Bengali, English, French
C2P3	23	M	1	Bengali, English
C2P4	44	M	4	Bengali, English
C2P5	26	M	1	Bengali, English
C2P6	43	M	1	Bengali, English
C2P7	50	M	1	English, French

Table 3.7. Participants' demographic information in Cycle 2

As **Table 3.8** shows, there were two groups. Each group had two opportunities to create the RPL tasks. Group 1 (C2P1, C2P2, C2P7) focused on communicative and vocabulary-based tasks, including sentence rearrangement, reading comprehension, vocabulary mapping, sentence creation, and dialogue preparation. Group 2 (C2P3, C2P4, C2P5, C2P6) focused on form-based practice, including gap-filling, grammar and sentence construction, Hanzi writing practice, and sentence completion.

RPL group	Group members	Activities
Group 1	C2P1, C2P2, C2P7	RPL task 1: • Sentence rearrangement • Answer the question after reading the conversation • Vocabulary map RPL task 2: • Make sentences with the given vocabulary • Prepare dialogue with given words
Group 2	C2P3, C2P4, C2P5, C2P6	RPL task 1: • Fill in the gaps • Grammar points: write sentences with the specific structure RPL task 2: • Fill in the gaps • Hanzi practice: write the given Hanzi 5 times • Complete the sentence

Table 3.8. RPL group in Cycle 2

Pedagogical design

This cycle was mixed: the in-person class was for 1 hour 45 minutes (9.00–10.45 pm) with a 10-minute break, and the online class was for 1 hour. I taught 18 classes in this cycle. The HSK 3 textbook and workbook remained the primary teaching materials and were available in both soft copy and print formats. As this was a review class for this cycle cohort, students were already familiar with the textbook but had not solved the workbook before. Because this cohort was revisiting previously studied material, the pedagogical emphasis shifted from introducing content to deepening engagement with it. After completing each lesson, all exercises from the workbook were solved in class. The 'Shopping Cart' method was also used here to generate ideas for learning activities, as in the previous cycle. The class was highly engaged during this cycle, as shown by students' consistent contributions to class discussions, frequent questions for clarification, and meticulous preparation of peer work.

Table 3.9 shows the implementation of RPL on WeChat in Cycle 2. Compared with Cycle 1, two things changed: using 'Shopping Cart' as part of the script and adding an IT session. My role involved adapting learning activities and resources in response to students' emerging needs and preferences.

Phase	Actor	Roles and responsibilities	Location &tool	When & where
RPL and WeChat introduction	Teacher-researcher	Introduces dual role: peer teacher, peer learner, Sets up WeChat group	Classroom/Zoom, WeChat	Week 1, in class
IT session	Teacher-researcher	Organise IT sessions for students	Classroom/Zoom	Week 1, in class
RPL group formation	Students	Make own groups (max. 4 members)	Classroom, WeChat	Week 1–2, outside of class
Use Shopping Cart idea to create RPL task	Teacher-researcher & Students	Teacher shares a sample RPL task and invites students to add new idea	Classroom/Zoom	Week 2, in class
RPL task design	Peer teacher group	Discuss, select, create up to three activities on WeChat	WeChat	Week 3 onwards, asynchronous
RPL task review	Teacher-researcher	Review and comment on the draft tasks (clarity, language) before sharing with peer learners	Classroom/WeChat	Week 3, after class
RPL task posting	Peer teacher group	Post the finalised RPL task to the common WeChat group with instructions and timeline	WeChat	Week 4, outside of class, asynchronous
RPL task completion	Peer learner	Complete tasks, ask questions (if any), and share response on WeChat	WeChat	Week 4, outside of class, asynchronous
Peer feedback & interaction	Peer teacher & Peer learners	Peer teachers reply to peer learners' questions, and share the answers	WeChat	End of each RPL round, out of class, asynchronous
Reflection	Peer teacher & Peer learners	Both groups write and share their experience as peer teacher and peer learner	WeChat/Reflective journal	End of each RPL round, out of class, asynchronous
In-class review	Teacher-researcher, peer teachers, peer learners	Briefly review RPL activities prepared by peer teacher group, and discuss which tasks students liked or found difficult	Classroom/Zoom	End of each RPL round, in class

Table 3.9. Sample script of implementing RPL in Cycle 2

Cycle 2 also showed the beginnings of student initiative beyond the teacher's original plan. In this cycle, students proposed the idea of 'Five Minutes in Chinese Everyday'.

Each evening, these students had dedicated at least 5 minutes to interact in Chinese through various activities, such as short conversations or discussions of day-to-day topics relevant to their personal experiences, either with peers or individually. This was important not because it was formally assessed, but because it indicated that some students were beginning to treat Chinese use as a shared responsibility extending beyond scheduled lessons.

The interactive engagement and students' feedback called for tailoring instructional approaches to better meet the class's needs. Students proposed including audiovisual resources in class, such as videos or movie clips. Thus, the instructional design of this cycle was immediately adapted to meet students' interests. Based on their request YouTube videos were included in class activities. After watching the video, students had to discuss in Chinese what they saw and the video's story. Accordingly, to support students' learning needs, complementary internet resources, including the Chinese Zero to Hero website and stories from the DU Mandarin app, were used as supporting materials in class.

The students were working professionals with limited time outside class, so they needed extra time to complete peer-learning activities. Thus, some students preferred to finish those activities after regular class. Students who preferred immediate collaboration participated in class-based peer activities and completed activities assigned by their peer teachers after regular class. In contrast, other students were free to engage in activities in their free time. Recognising students' diverse needs, they were allowed both synchronous and asynchronous experiences.

Data sources

In Cycle 2, I gathered observation notes, WeChat interaction logs, reflective journals, and semi-structured interviews with participants. Access to WeChat logs and in-depth interviews marked an improvement over Cycle 1, as these sources provided insight into students' online peer interactions and more detailed accounts of their perceptions, challenges, and learning strategies. Four participants were available for interviews of approximately 60 minutes each, which were conducted from the middle of the semester onward. Interviewees were invited to choose the time and mode (in-person

or zoom) that best suited their schedules, to reduce the burden of participation. Most classes in Cycle 2 were held in person, but a sudden surge in COVID-19 cases prompted a temporary shift to Zoom. This hybrid pattern provided additional opportunities to observe participants in classroom interaction while also examining how they engaged with online platforms. However, students submitted very brief entries for the reflective journal, and the entries were very irregular.

Reflection on Cycle 2

In this cycle, RPL became more visible not only when students took on their dual role, but also in the classroom practice, with students demonstrating increased enthusiasm through consistent involvement in classroom discussions and group-based activities. Compared with Cycle 1, students participated more actively, asked more questions, and showed greater care in preparing peer-learning activities. Another observation was that practising listening in class was also a new experience for this cohort, and they were very engaged in the listening class. The Cycle 2 cohort also made proactive recommendations to incorporate more diverse and engaging materials into lessons, which showed a growing sense of ownership over their learning. Observing this shift in engagement and responsibility inspired me to develop a more collaborative, student-centred classroom in Cycle 3.

This cycle demonstrated the value of collegial dialogue, as discussions with colleagues in the Chinese department helped me to critically reflect on my teaching approaches. Through many conversations with colleagues, I gained alternative perspectives on classroom practices, particularly regarding the management of mixed-ability learners. Colleagues also provided practical suggestions for task design and classroom management, which helped me identify limitations in my initial implementation of RPL. In addition, these exchanges validated my interpretations of classroom interactions and strengthened the credibility of my findings. Moreover, I was granted access to the university library, which helped me find resources on Chinese language learners in Bangladesh that would otherwise have been unavailable. These resources enriched my understanding of the linguistic challenges and learning strategies adopted by students in this context.

Even though students were familiar with the content, they were anxious about speaking in Chinese. Also, some mature students expressed anxiety and frustration when they were assigned technology-driven tasks, including submitting assignments online, participating in Zoom classrooms, or using WeChat or other social media. But their younger peers were very supportive, and students did not hesitate to ask for help when needed. In this cycle, students showed little interest in keeping reflective journals, which they found tedious and time-consuming. This suggested the need to reconsider the design of reflective activities. For Cycle 3, alternative approaches such as brief verbal or written reflections at the beginning of class could be proposed to encourage more consistent, meaningful student engagement in reflection.

In this cycle, three students dropped out. The reason was related to scheduling conflicts between the class timetable and their professional commitments. All three were working professionals. As the classes were held in the morning, they were unable to continue attending regularly because the scheduled class time overlapped with their office hours. During this cycle, the university resumed regular operations following an extended pandemic-related closure. Because of the busy period and institutional scheduling constraints, it was not possible to reschedule the classes. The dropouts therefore appear to have been related to participants' professional commitments and not to their experiences of the course.

Planned revisions for the next cycle

The main revisions planned for Cycle 3 were as follows. First, the design would shift further from a predominantly teacher-led approach to a more student-centred model, in which both students and the teacher could collaboratively co-construct the learning process. This aimed to enhance learner agency by giving students greater responsibility in shaping classroom activities and learning trajectories. Second, a mid-term evaluation would be introduced to systematically capture students' emerging needs, challenges, and perceptions of the course. This would allow for timely pedagogical adjustments and ensure that the course remained responsive to learners' experiences. Third, to reduce students' workload and address the limitations observed in Cycle 2, the weekly reflective journals would be replaced with shorter, more focused reflections delivered either verbally or in writing at the beginning of each class. This adjustment

was intended to encourage more consistent and meaningful reflection without overburdening students. Fourth, the 'Five Minutes in Chinese' initiative would be more actively promoted to support regular language practice and help students build a habit of consistent engagement with the target language beyond structured tasks. Finally, students would be more explicitly consulted about their specific challenges in writing Chinese, allowing the teacher to provide more targeted support and adapt instructional strategies to better address their difficulties.

3.5.3. Cycle 3: Consolidation and reflection

I conducted the final cycle in person from April to June 2022. Before redesigning Cycle 3, I reflected on the challenges and reflections of Cycle 2. I placed strong emphasis on collaborative classroom design, where students and I, as a teacher, worked together to share ideas and make decisions about teaching and learning to meet students' needs and desires. Classroom instruction shifted from in-person to online several times due to COVID-19 government restrictions.

Participants

As **Table 3.10** shows, 14 students enrolled at the beginning of the course; 4 dropped out, and 10 attended regularly. Participants' ages ranged from 18 to 30, indicating a younger cohort compared to previous cycles. The group was predominantly female, with seven females and three males. Regarding Chinese language learning experience, most participants (9 out of 10) had 1 year of study, while one participant (C3P3) had 2 years of experience. All participants learned English as a common foreign language. Several also demonstrated multilingual backgrounds, with additional languages including Spanish (C3P1, C3P10), German (C3P2), Hindi and French (C3P3), and Arabic (C3P4, C3P5, C3P7). Most (90%) of the participants in this cycle were regular university students enrolled in various undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.

Name	Age	Gender	Years of studying Chinese	Other language skills
C3P1	20	F	1	English, Spanish
C3P2	25	F	1	English, German
C3P3	30	F	2	English, Hindi, French
C3P4	23	M	1	English, Arabic
C3P5	26	F	1	English, Arabic
C3P6	25	F	1	English
C3P7	24	M	1	English, Arabic
C3P8	18	M	1	English
C3P9	22	F	1	English
C3P10	21	F	1	English, Spanish

Table 3.10. Participants' demographic information in Cycle 3

RPL group	Group members	Activities
Group 1	C3P1, C3P2, C3P7	RPL task 1: • Make sentences • Rearrange the words to make correct sentences RPL task 2: • Answer the following question based on Lesson 7's texts • Match the verb with the complement (i.e. 买到) • Make sentences with the given words (周末 (zhōu mò) -weekend, Example: 我们下个周末去老家。 (We are going to our hometown next weekend.)
Group 2	C3P3, C3P4, C3P8	RPL task 1: • Vocabulary map • Sentence rearrangement • Fill in the blanks RPL task 2: • Fill in the gaps • Identify the opposite words • Fill in the blanks by using measure words • Grammar points: make sentences with the following grammar structure
Group 3	C3P5, C3P6, C3P9, C3P10	RPL task 1: • Match the dialogue by following Section A and Section B • Match the object/ noun with appropriate measure word • Confusing Hanzi: write down the pinyin and meaning of these Chinese characters

Table 3.11. RPL group in Cycle 3

Table 3.11. presents the group formation of participants in Cycle 3. Participants were divided into three groups. Group 1 consisted of C3P1, C3P2, and C3P7; Group 2 consisted of C3P3, C3P4, and C3P8; and Group 3 consisted of C3P5, C3P6, C3P9, and C3P10. Each group created different RPL tasks focusing on vocabulary, sentence construction and rearrangement, grammar practice, measure-word usage, text comprehension, and character recognition.

Pedagogical design

The design of Cycle 3 was a refined version of earlier cycles, aimed to establish student-driven interventions. Student attendance and participation were very consistent

throughout this cycle, and students were more engaged in class and on WeChat. I taught 16 classes. This cycle was also a mix of in-person (1 hour 45 min) and Zoom classes (1 hour 15 min). Unlike in previous cycles, students were already comfortable with using digital tools and did not need technical training. However, Google Classroom and WeChat were introduced as part of the course design, and guidance was provided on how these platforms would be used for learning activities and communication.

Phase	Actor	Roles and responsibilities	Location &tool	When & where
RPL and WeChat introduction	Teacher-researcher	Introduces dual role: peer teacher, peer learner, Sets up WeChat group	Classroom/Zoom, WeChat	Week 1, in class
RPL group formation	Students	Make own groups (max. 4 members)	Classroom, WeChat	Week 1–2, outside of class
Use Shopping Cart idea to create RPL task	Teacher-researcher & Students	Teacher shares a sample RPL task and invites students to add new idea	Classroom/Zoom	Week 2, in class
RPL task design	Peer teacher group	Discuss, select, create up to three activities on WeChat	WeChat	Week 3 onwards, asynchronous
RPL task review	Teacher-researcher	Review and comment on the draft tasks (clarity, language) before sharing with peer learners	Classroom/WeChat	Week 3, after class
RPL task posting	Peer teacher group	Post the finalised RPL task to the common WeChat group with instructions and timeline	WeChat	Week 4, outside of class, asynchronous
RPL task completion	Peer learner	Complete tasks, ask questions (if any), and share response on WeChat	WeChat	Week 4, outside of class, asynchronous
Peer feedback & interaction	Peer teacher & Peer learners	Peer teachers reply to peer learners' questions, and share the answers	WeChat	End of each RPL round, out of class, asynchronous
Mid-term evaluation	Students	Students took part in the evaluation	Classroom	After Week 3
Reflection	Peer teacher & Peer learners	Both groups write and share their experience as peer teacher and peer learner	WeChat/Reflective journal	End of each RPL round, out of class, asynchronous
In-class review	Teacher-researcher, peer teachers, peer learners	Briefly review RPL activities prepared by peer teacher group, and discuss which tasks students liked or found difficult	Classroom/Zoom	End of each RPL round, in class

Table 3.12. Sample script of implementing RPL in Cycle 3

As **Table 3.12** shows, mid-term evaluation was part of the pedagogical script of this cycle, and other components were the same as in the previous cycle. To understand students' needs and challenges, a mid-term evaluation was conducted after three weeks. This evaluation encouraged the students to reflect on their learning so far and share their thoughts on how the course could be improved. The students appreciated the opportunity to express their ideas. In the mid-term evaluation, students reported struggling with writing Chinese characters and speaking Chinese. Accordingly, a five-minute writing session was established, during which students wrote a short dialogue from their textbook within the given time. Based on students' suggestions, a character-writing game on the blackboard began in class, requiring them to divide into groups and write random vocabulary words from their previous lesson. It simultaneously supported students in receiving teacher and peer feedback and in writing Chinese characters in the correct order. Also, students practised 5 minutes of Chinese after class.

The orchestration in this cycle shifted from the researcher serving as a technical facilitator to a collaborative partner. My role increasingly involved responding to student feedback and collaboratively designing learning activities. Based on student feedback about their struggles with Chinese writing and speaking, I introduced a 5-minute writing session and blackboard character-writing games for practice. Also, the requirement for weekly reflective journals, which students in Cycle 2 found time-consuming and discouraging, was replaced by a more flexible approach. At the beginning of the class, students were given 5 minutes to reflect on what they did, their plans for the week, and whether they needed to change anything in their learning.

Data sources

In this cycle, students divided themselves into three groups and created five RPL activities. Interactions inside the WeChat group generally took place late in the evening. These evening sessions provided a flexible, relaxed atmosphere that fostered more natural and enjoyable language exchanges. Cycle 3 generated the richest dataset of the study. Observations, WeChat logs, interviews, and short written or oral reflections were collected as part of reflective journals. The increased quantity and quality of WeChat interaction were especially important because they provided

evidence of learner initiative, peer support, resource sharing, and language use beyond the classroom. Six interviews were conducted in this cycle that offered more reflections on how students understood their own development as peer teachers and peer learners.

Reflection on Cycle 3

I implemented adjustments from previous cycles to address the challenges identified in Cycle 2, and overall, they proved effective. First, the shift towards a more student-centred, collaborative design increased student engagement, as learners participated more actively in both peer-teaching and peer-learning activities. RPL became more structured and visible, with students demonstrating greater responsibility in preparing and facilitating tasks.

Second, introducing short verbal or written reflections at the beginning of each class, in place of weekly journals, led to more consistent student participation in reflective practices. Students appeared more willing to share their thoughts when the process was less time-consuming and more integrated into classroom routines.

Third, the inclusion of a mid-term evaluation enabled timely identification of students' needs and challenges, allowing adjustments to teaching strategies during the cycle rather than after its completion. This made the course more responsive to learners. Also, although students were initially hesitant to share feedback on the class, the mid-term evaluation made it easier for them.

However, some challenges persisted. For example, despite active engagement, many students expressed anxiety about speaking Chinese, driven by fear of making mistakes and embarrassment in front of peers. This situation gradually improved through continuous peer encouragement and collective support.

In this cycle, four students also dropped out. Two students attended only three classes and were unable to continue because they needed to prepare for upcoming examinations and attend classes in their major subjects. Most participants in this cohort were full-time university students studying different disciplines. The other two students were working professionals and could not continue because the class schedule

overlapped with their office hours. These withdrawals appear to have been related to academic and professional commitments.

3.6. Data analysis procedures

3.6.1. Analytic framework

The analytical framework selected for this thesis was thematic analysis. This involved six steps: familiarisation with the data; generating initial codes; categorising the codes; reviewing themes; defining and naming themes; and final analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021). These phases were not treated as a strictly linear sequence. Instead, the analysis moved back and forth between the data, codes, categories, and emerging themes as new insights developed and connections between datasets became clearer. Thematic analysis was selected because it is a flexible yet rigorous approach for identifying patterns of meaning across complex qualitative datasets. It was particularly well suited to this project because the study drew on several different sources of evidence, namely interviews, classroom observations, WeChat logs, and reflective writing, and because the research questions required attention to both participants' perceptions and their enacted practices. Thematic analysis enabled the researcher to move iteratively between detailed engagement with individual data extracts and broader interpretation of recurring patterns relevant to learner agency, reciprocal peer learning, and WeChat-mediated interaction.

In the initial familiarisation phase, I immersed myself in the data by reading and re-reading all transcripts and field notes. Coding began by identifying initial units of meaning from the transcriptions. I then expanded and grouped these initial codes into specific segments of information (e.g., 'active involvement' or 'shared ideas'). As analysis progressed, similar codes were grouped into more abstract categories and then refined into a smaller set of analytic codes. I carefully categorised overlapping data into sub-codes, which eventually formed the final codes that led to the emergence of central themes. This approach reduced the number of categories to a minimal set. A final set of themes allowed me to examine more effectively how students develop or exercise learner agency. I finalised five themes based on my different code categories.

I solely did coding. NVivo software was used as a coding tool to manage and analyse the data, rather than as a substitute for analytical judgement. The reason for selecting NVivo was that it accommodated different types of data, such as audio, PDFs, and Word documents, and helped create a concept map for visualising ideas (Jackson & Bazeley, 2019). I created a separate folder for each data type, ensuring data were systematically maintained throughout the research process and could be preserved, verified, and reused in the future. After familiarisation, nodes were created in NVivo to represent initial codes. I read through the transcripts to identify units of meaning, which were then coded to the relevant nodes. For each node, brief memos were written to record key ideas, decisions, and emerging questions; together, these node descriptions and memos functioned as a codebook that helped maintain consistency across the three-cycles.

As analysis progressed, nodes were merged, split, or reorganised to reflect the development of categories and themes, and visual tools such as concept maps were used to explore relationships between codes. During data coding, data overlap was carefully considered when assigning to a category or subcategory. Coding generated possible categories, which I considered as sub-codes. The sub-codes formed the final code, which led to the emergence of a theme. Themes were considered the subjective meanings of data, with similar pieces of data tied together (Saldana, 2021).

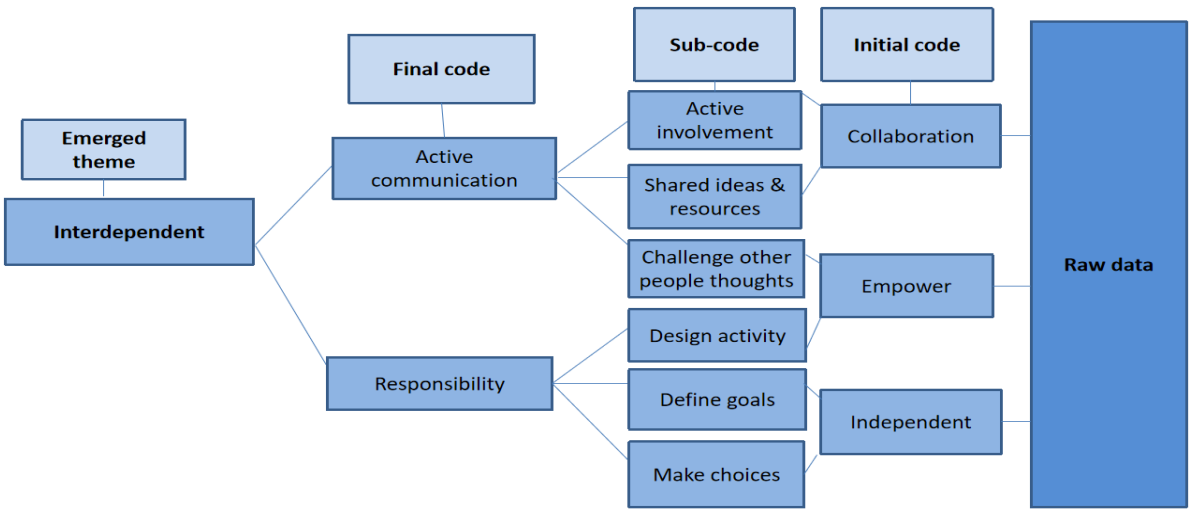


Figure 3.2. Example of connecting coding to theme

Figure 3.2 shows how I developed the theme across different coding stages from the raw data. Coding started with the initial three codes: collaboration, empower, and independent. Based on this initial coding, specific segments of information emerged from the texts and were grouped for continuous coding. It then expanded from three to six extended codes: active involvement, sharing ideas and resources, challenging others' thoughts, designing activity, defining goals, and making choices. I labelled these categorisations either with interviewees' phrases or with my own words, based on their descriptions. It further connected with two final codes: active communication and responsibility; and a theme emerged: interdependent.

These themes were developed with the three research questions in mind. Themes concerning factors that enabled or constrained learners' initiative, decision-making, and participation supported RQ1 (factors that promote or challenge learner agency in technology-supported Chinese language learning). Themes that showed patterns of mutual support, feedback, resource sharing, and the mediating role of WeChat reflected RQ2 (the impact of reciprocal peer learning and the role of social media). Themes relating to task design, student's role, and the integration of online and offline activities were used to understand RQ3 (design and implementation of learning environments that promote learner agency).

3.6.2. Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness was addressed through several strategies integrated into the analytic process. Following widely cited guidance on trustworthiness in qualitative thematic analysis, I attended to credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. Credibility was supported by triangulating multiple data sources (interviews, classroom observations, WeChat logs, and reflective journals), allowing for the examination of convergences and divergences between self-reports and observed practices. Dependability and confirmability were enhanced through maintaining an audit trail in the form of dated memos, an evolving codebook, and records of decisions about coding and theme development, as well as regular supervisory discussions that provided opportunities for peer debriefing. Reflexive notes were used to monitor the influence of my dual role as teacher-researcher on interpretation. Finally, a detailed

description of the research context and learning environment was used to help readers judge the transferability of the findings.

3.6.3. Cross-cycle and triangulated analysis

Thematic analysis was conducted not only within each dataset, but also across the three AR cycles. This cross-cycle dimension was essential because the pedagogical design changed over time. Within-cycle analysis focused on understanding how learners experienced the specific pedagogical arrangements implemented in that cycle, including the extent and nature of WeChat use and reciprocal peer learning activities. Across-cycle analysis then compared codes and themes to trace developments in learner agency and reciprocal peer learning over time, and to examine how modifications to the learning environment influenced these trajectories.

The analytical procedure proceeded in two broad steps. First, each cycle was analysed in its own right so that contextual differences and cycle-specific issues were not obscured. For example, Cycle 1 had to be interpreted considering complete online delivery and severe infrastructural constraints. At the same time, Cycle 2 needed attention to the experiences of mature learners returning after interruption. Cycle 3 involved a younger cohort in a more stable environment. Second, the coded material was compared across cycles to identify developmental trajectories and examine whether modifications introduced after reflection changed the nature or extent of learner participation.

NVivo facilitated this cross-cycle analysis by enabling nodes to be consistently applied to data from different cycles and by allowing queries that compare the occurrence and co-occurrence of key codes across time. For example, patterns of active participation, discussion initiation, and peer support evident in WeChat logs and classroom observations in Cycles 2 and 3 were compared with the more limited interactions in Cycle 1 to understand the evolving nature of learner agency in response to changes in design.

Triangulation was central to integrating findings from different data sources. Interviews provided insights into learners' interpretations of their own agency, challenges, and motivations. Observations documented interaction patterns and

scripting and orchestration of the design. Observation data were recorded as field notes using the observation guide presented in Appendix B1 and were imported into NVivo for coding alongside interviews, reflective journals, and WeChat data.

WeChat logs showed how reciprocal peer learning unfolded on WeChat, how students participated, how they helped others, and how, without the teacher's intervention, they used their WeChat learning space. The WeChat logs also included student-generated RPL activities, task instructions, peer responses, and feedback exchanges, which provided evidence of learners' decision-making, task design, language use, and creativity. Reflective journals traced learners' goal setting, reflections on strengths and weaknesses, changes in mindset, strategies used, and emotional responses over time. By comparing evidence across these sources, themes were finalised.

This cross-cycle, triangulated analysis enabled the development of the study findings from the final themes and provided a basis for addressing the research questions. For RQ1, integrating evidence across cycles and data sources enabled identification of the key factors that promoted or challenged the development of learner agency in technology-supported Chinese language learning environments. For RQ2, classroom and WeChat-based interactions were analysed alongside learners' reflections to examine the impact of reciprocal peer learning on agency and the specific role that WeChat played in mediating opportunities for initiative, collaboration, and support. For RQ3, recurrent patterns across themes allowed empirically grounded principles and criteria to be derived for designing and implementing language learning environments that could foster learner agency among learners of Chinese in Bangladesh and similar contexts.

3.7. Ethical considerations

The ethical questions of this action research project start with 'who is to be involved; how and why; who makes decisions and how; whose interpretations are to prevail and why' (Eikeland, 2006, p. 38). This is because in the AR process, the researcher needs direct involvement with participants – unlike in non-participatory research, where the researcher can observe and maintain a distance from participants. In educational action research, the teacher–student relationship raises several ethical concerns,

including the teacher-researcher's position of authority in relation to students' assessment and progression within the course, as well as the possibility of response bias. Thus, throughout iterative cycles, continuous monitoring is necessary to address any issues that emerge during the planning, action, observation, and reflection stages (Davison et al., 2022).

Ethics in this study extended beyond formal approval procedures. Because the project involved the teacher researching her own students over repeated cycles, ethical attention had to be ongoing and responsive. The central issues concerned power imbalances in the teacher–student relationship, voluntary participation and the right to withdraw without negative consequences, confidentiality in a small cohort, and the potential impact of researcher interpretations on students' learning experiences. These concerns were considered throughout the planning, implementation, and analysis stages of the project, for example in how participation was explained, how data were anonymised, and how classroom changes were negotiated with students.

3.7.1. Researcher–participant relationship

My dual role as a Chinese language teacher and researcher created an inherently asymmetrical power dynamic, which I sought to mitigate through a set of deliberate ethical safeguards across all cycles. As the course instructor, I held institutional authority over classroom activities, learning tasks, and assessment. To mitigate this asymmetry with the participants, I disclosed my identity, explained the research aims, and provided detailed information about the data collection procedure. At the beginning of each cycle, I clearly explained my role in the classroom and outside the classroom, and students' right to voluntary participation and withdrawal at any stage without any impact on their grade. I assured students that their individual performance and research data would be kept strictly confidential and anonymised, and that their engagement in RPL activities would not influence their final grade. Accordingly, no marks were allowed for participation in or contribution to the RPL activities. To further support informed participation, I shared assessment criteria and grading rubrics with all students at the start of the semester, which ensured full transparency between my institutional and research roles.

The cultural context presented another challenge. Educational culture in Bangladesh emphasises respect for a teacher's authority. This embedded cultural dimension might influence how students express their disagreements or provide course feedback. Thus, to minimise the authority role, at the end of each class, I asked students to comment on the lecture and emphasised that their critical perspectives were valuable for improving teaching and learning. Though initially students were reluctant to comment on the teacher's lectures and address their problems, as the practice happened regularly, they became accustomed to it and provided more constructive feedback. The iterative feedback strategy gradually shifted classroom dynamics and systematically addressed the power imbalance. In addition, the midterm feedback form was designed and distributed to gather anonymous responses, which allowed students to express their opinions and evaluate the course without risk of identification. Across all cycles, I also maintained reflexivity through keeping field notes and discussing my interpretations with my colleagues and supervisors.

3.7.2. Data security and management

The data management plan addressed significant concerns in the research regarding data confidentiality and storage, which helped me maintain clarity in handling data during the research and after it was completed. At the beginning of each cycle, participants were fully informed about the data management procedures. Through the plain language statement, consent form, and oral explanations, I thoroughly emphasised what type of data would be collected, participants' rights regarding their own data, participants' rights to withdraw, how data would be stored and protected, how long data would be retained, who would have access to data, and how data would eventually be destroyed.

Each cycle's data was stored weekly in DCU's designated Google Cloud Storage to mitigate data loss and ensure that data were not left unattended. All audio and video recordings were transferred from recording devices and from WeChat to Google Cloud Storage. Paper-based materials, such as handwritten journals and feedback forms, were initially stored in a locked cabinet in the Chinese department, and I brought them to Dublin in a secure file. While gathering any handwritten data, I clearly stated that it would be shredded after the final thesis was submitted. At the end of each week,

WeChat's log was copied and converted into a Word file to avoid any data loss. During data collection, participants had been assured that data transcriptions and coding would be anonymous. Therefore, each participant was assigned a unique code in each cycle (e.g., C1P1), which ensured that the combination of demographic details provided would not allow participants to be identified.

3.7.3. Ethical approval

Approval for this PhD research was granted by two institutions: the Chinese department at the University of Dhaka (DU) in Bangladesh, and the ethics committee at Dublin City University (DCU) (both are attached in the appendix). Permission from both institutions was necessary, because the research was conducted at DU whilst being undertaken as part of a doctoral programme at DCU. I first had to seek approval from the Chinese department at DU, and this process involved submitting the research proposal outlining research aims, objectives, methodology, participants' involvement, institutional roles, duration of data collection period, data collection procedures, rights and confidentiality of participants, consent form, and plain language statement. In addition, I had to submit a detailed course plan and a data-collection request letter from my supervisors.

The approval from the Chinese department confirmed that this research aligned with departmental and institutional policies, that this study would not disrupt or conflict with regular teaching and learning activities, and that participants' rights and identity would be safeguarded throughout all cycles. After receiving this approval, I was required to submit a comprehensive ethics application to the DCU ethics committee. Along with the research proposal, I also added detailed descriptions of participant recruitment, online class rules and policies, risk assessment, data management plan, informed consent forms, plain language statement, and evidence of DU approval.

Although both institutions prioritised participants' welfare and research integrity, differences in the review process reflected their respective contexts and institutional policies. The DCU ethics committee prioritised data protection procedures that complied with European Union requirements under the General Data Protection Regulation. It involved detailed documentation of how personal data would be stored,

who would have access to it, and how long it would be retained. DU's approval process focused more on the feasibility of this research for the local educational context, institutional permission, and how it would affect students' learning experience. Both approvals clarified my role as a teacher-researcher and helped me understand organisational rules to maintain research integrity throughout the data collection period.

Moreover, at the beginning of each cycle, I explained the study's design, participants' roles, and their rights to withdraw from the project until the end of each semester through a plain language statement given to all participants (see Appendix A2). The plain language statement provided a brief overview of the conditions of student involvement, the direct benefits of participation, the right to withdraw, and the confidentiality of their data. Afterwards, students completed the informed consent form (see Appendix A3), which aimed to ensure that participants could participate voluntarily, with a clear understanding of the study and without physical or psychological coercion. Both the plain language statement and the consent form were translated from English into Bengali to ensure that participants fully understood the implications of the study. Also, participants' confidentiality and privacy issues were properly maintained. For example, when forming WeChat groups, all participants were asked to use an anonymous nickname to protect their social platform identities. Before the beginning of each interview, participants' permission was gained for recording it. All recordings were stored securely, and access to the data was limited to me and my supervisors.

3.8. Summary and conclusion

This chapter has explained and justified the methodological framework of the study. It demonstrated that action research was selected because the research enquiry required pedagogical intervention, contextual sensitivity, and redesign within an authentic educational setting. Then presented the three-cycle research design situated in the Chinese language programme at the University of Dhaka. Throughout the chapter, I addressed the institutional context, the evolving role of the teacher-researcher, the structure of the intervention, the pedagogical logic of RPL and WeChat use, the qualitative data analysis procedures, and the ethical principles governing the project.

A central argument of the chapter is that the methodology was developmental by design. Each cycle generated evidence about how students experienced the learning environment, what enabled or constrained their participation, and what changes were needed in order to support agency. Cycle 1 exposed the fragility of digital participation and the unfamiliarity of peer-teaching roles under pandemic conditions. Cycle 2 strengthened the intervention through clearer guidance, improved support, and greater responsiveness to students' needs. Cycle 3 consolidated the design and produced the richest evidence of agency enacted through peer interaction and WeChat-mediated communication.

The chapter has also shown that the study's analytic and ethical procedures were closely aligned with its methodological commitments. Thematic analysis allowed the researcher to work across multiple data sources and to examine both within-cycle experience and across-cycle development. Ethical practice involved not only formal approval and consent, but also ongoing management of confidentiality and data protection in a teacher-researcher context. Having established the methodological foundation of the thesis, the next chapter presents the findings of the study. It examines in detail how learner agency was enacted, challenged, and supported across the three-cycles, and it shows how RPL and WeChat-mediated interaction contributed to the emerging learning environment.

Chapter 4
RPL AND SOCIAL MEDIA IN PRACTICE: FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings from the implementation of reciprocal peer learning and the use of WeChat and other social media platforms during the three AR cycles. The findings were presented from different data sources such as WeChat logs, students' reflective journals, observation notes, and interviews. The findings illustrate how participants engaged in RPL activities, acted on their dual peer roles, developed their Chinese language skills, and extended their learning experience through social media.

The chapter begins with an overview of the RPL activities implemented throughout the study to provide context for group formation and the learner-generated RPL activities developed by participants. It then examines learning through reciprocal peer roles, focusing on participants' experiences as peer teachers and peer learners and the ways in which these roles shaped their learning interactions. The findings further demonstrate how RPL and WeChat provided opportunities for linguistic development, independent learning, and reflection. At the same time, the chapter explores the pedagogical and technological challenges encountered by participants and how these challenges influenced their experiences of RPL and social media-mediated learning.

4.1. Overview of RPL activities in three-cycles

From Cycle 1 to Cycle 3, learners alternated their roles between peer teachers and peer learners. They formed their own group and selected group members. **Table 4.1** summarises the variety of activities designed by peer teachers in each cycle (sample activities attached in Appendix C3). Before initiating the RPL activities, the teacher-researcher and students collaboratively created sample tasks in class, such as fill-in-the-gaps and picture matching and conducted a practice session by temporarily dividing the class into peer learners and peer teachers. Following this practice, students received ideas to work as peer teachers.

When acting as peer teachers, students followed a consistent procedure: they took responsibility for designing RPL activities, shared their drafts with the teacher-researcher for review, posted the revised versions in their WeChat group, set a timeline for submission, responded to peer learners' questions, shared the correct answers after the designated deadline, and reflected on their experiences. Peer teachers designed these activities based on lessons already taught in the class. Conversely, when acting as peer learners, participants solved the assigned tasks, shared their answers via the WeChat group, asked clarifying questions, and provided feedback to the peer teachers. In each cycle, peer teachers started to design activities from Week 4. There were two groups in Cycle 1, two groups in Cycle 2, and three groups in Cycle 3. In Cycle 1, each group created RPL activities once; in Cycle 2, both group created the activities twice; in Cycle 3, Group 1 and Group 2 created the activity twice, and Group 3 created it once. This was conducted after the semester was over. When one group played the peer teacher's role, all other groups of students acted as peer learners, and all learners were able to rotate their roles.

In Cycle 1, peer teachers from two groups produced three activities, focusing primarily on preparing dialogues and fill-in-the-gaps exercises. The pattern here reflected an initial focus on basic conversational practice to help peers form sentences with new vocabulary. Group 2's inclusion of fill-in-the-gap tasks showed that they designed activities that were based on HSK exam formats. In Cycle 2, the two groups each took turns designing activities twice, and the activities were noticeably more varied. Peer teachers introduced sentence rearrangements, vocabulary maps, reading comprehension questions, grammar-specific structures, and Hanzi (character) writing practice. The pattern here showed peer teachers perhaps actively identifying and addressing shared learning gaps. For example, the absence from classes during COVID-19 pandemic regulations, the peer teachers recognised this gap, the lack in writing practice during incorporating Hanzi. Cycle 3 showed more variations in task complexity from the three groups. Tasks evolved from basic sentence-level practice to highly structured, multi-layered linguistic exercises. Peer teachers asked their classmates to match verbs with complements, differentiate between confusing Hanzi, identify opposite words, and accurately match nouns with appropriate measure words. Activities were scheduled on a weekly basis, with peer learners giving them three to four days to complete and return each task via WeChat.

Cycle number	Time period	Group name	Types of activities prepared as peer teacher
Cycle 1	August, 2021	Group 1	Activities: • Prepare dialogue
Cycle 1	September, 2021	Group 2	Activities: • Prepare dialogue • Fill in the gaps
Cycle 2	January, 2022	Group 1	Activities: • Sentence rearrangement • Answer the question after reading the conversation • Vocabulary map
Cycle 2	February, 2022	Group 2	Activities: • Fill in the gaps • Grammar points: write sentences with the specific structure
Cycle 2	February, 2022	Group 1	Activities: • Make sentences with the given vocabulary • Prepare dialogue with given words
Cycle 2	March, 2022	Group 2	Activities: • Fill in the gaps • Hanzi practice: write the given Hanzi 5 times • Complete the sentence
Cycle 3	April, 2022	Group 1	Activities: • Make sentences • Rearrange the words to make correct sentences
Cycle 3	April, 2022	Group 2	Activities: • Vocabulary map • Sentence rearrangement • Fill in the blanks
Cycle 3	April, 2022	Group 3	Activities: • Match the dialogue by following Section A and Section B • Match the object/ noun with appropriate measure word • Confusing Hanzi: write down the Pinyin and meaning of these Chinese characters
Cycle 3	May, 2022	Group 1	Activities: • Answer the following question based on Lesson 7's texts • Match the verb with the complement (i.e. 买 到) • Make sentences with the given words (周末 (zhōu mò) - weekend, Example: 我们下个周末去老家。 (We are going to our hometown next weekend.)
Cycle 3	May, 2022	Group 2	Activities: • Identify the opposite words • Fill in the blanks by using measure words • Grammar points: make sentences with the following grammar structure

Table 4.1. Overview of RPL groups and activities in three-cycles

4.2. Learning through reciprocal peer roles

Learning through reciprocal peer roles is another central theme that emerges from the data across different cycles. In each cycle, learners alternated between the roles of peer

teachers and peer learners as discussed in Section 4.1. This redistribution of role shift involved different steps such as exploring personal interest, identifying gaps or challenges, sharing responsibilities with own group members, and responding to peer learners' questions.

In each cycle, learners alternated between the roles as shown in **Figure 4.1**. The dual roles provided them with opportunities to take instructional responsibility for their peers, engage critically with peer-designed tasks, and through these dual roles build a sense of belonging within the WeChat learning community. The data show how each cohort executed these roles differently as the intervention progressed over the cycle.

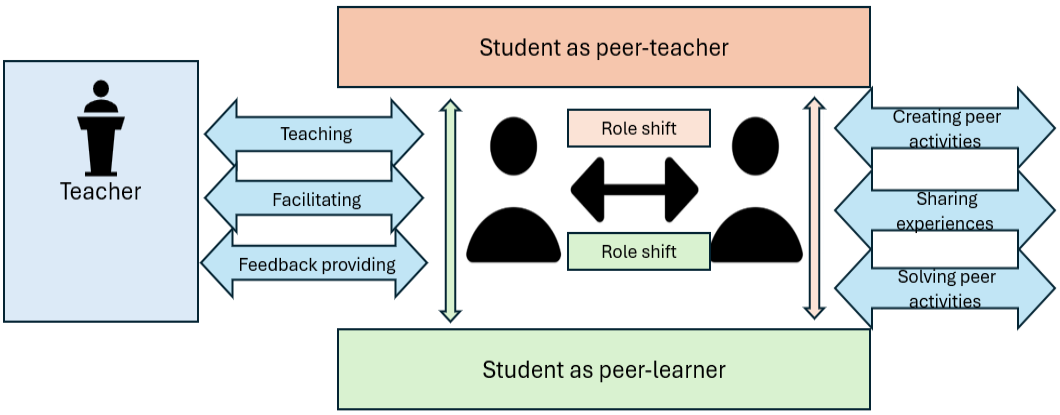


Figure 4.1. Reciprocal peer learning structure

4.2.1. Taking instructional responsibility as peer teacher

Acting as a peer teacher positioned participants to move beyond the role of general students and take on an instructional role for other peers. When learners took on the peer teachers' role, they did not simply repeat what the teacher-researcher had done in class. Three things gradually shifted as the study moved through the cycles: groups attempted more tasks, their reasons for designing activities moved from fixing a personal gap towards preparing for the HSK exam, and by Cycle 3 some groups began designing tasks in direct response to observing what other peers found difficult.

Peer teachers in Cycle 1

There were two groups in Cycle 1. Group 1 created one task (preparing a dialogue), while Group 2 created two tasks (preparing a dialogue and a fill-in-the-gap activity). In the dialogue activity, each group created and shared its own dialogue and asked peer learners to produce a sample dialogue based on the lesson. No specific vocabulary was provided, as the focus was on the lesson theme. Group 1 made the dialogue by using Lesson 1's content. Group 2 used Lesson 2's and Lesson 3's vocabularies in their sample dialogue. Both groups selected dialogue making as an opportunity for learners to create their own conversation using words they had already studied. The rationale behind this activity was that they knew vocabulary but struggled to build sentences with it. As Group 1 put it, dialogue-writing was an opportunity to let them 'use those words, which makes it easier for them to remember' (C1P1, **Excerpt 4.1**).

Excerpt 4.1. Observation notes from class:

প্রতি ক্লাসেই আমরা নতুন নতুন শব্দ শিখি, কিন্তু বাক্য তৈরি করতে সমস্যা হয়। যদি ডায়লগ বানানো হয়, শব্দগুলো ব্যবহার করা যায়, মনে রাখা সহজ হয়ে যায়। এইভাবে ডায়ালগ বানাতে পারলে আরো চাইনিজ প্রাকটিস করা যাবে।

In each class, we learn new vocabulary, but we struggle to form sentences. If we create dialogues, we can use those words, which makes them easier to remember. In this way, constructing dialogues would allow for more effective practice of Chinese. (C1P1, Group 1: Cycle 1, 10.8.21, observation from classroom, translation).

While Group 1 focused solely on dialogue practice, Group 2 combined this with fill-in-the-gap exercises (**Excerpt 4.2**). C1P3's statement showed two elements: exam-oriented practice and personal language use. First, Group 2 chose the fill-in-the-gap exercise because the format appears in the HSK exam. Their reasoning was that practising a familiar exam format would better prepare the peers for their final assessment. This behaviour showed learners' awareness about their choice of task that had a purpose beyond the peer activity itself. C1P3 from Group 2 mentioned:

Excerpt 4.2. Reflective journal

শূন্যস্থান পূরণ HSK পরীক্ষার একটি অংশ; তাই পরীক্ষার মতো অনুশীলন করলে আমরা পরীক্ষায় ভালো নম্বর পাওয়ার জন্য প্রস্তুত হতে পারি। এছাড়া, ডায়লগের মাধ্যমে আমরা শেখা শব্দগুলো ব্যবহার করে নিজেদের মতো করে কথোপকথন তৈরি করতে পারি।

Fill in the gap exercises are part of the HSK exam, so if we practise something similar to the exam, it will prepare us to get good marks in the final exam. Also, through dialogue we can create our own conversations using the words we have studied' (C1P3, Group 2: Cycle 1, 8.9.21, Reflective journal, translation).

Peer teachers in Cycle 2

In Cycle 2, there were two groups, and each group had two opportunities to design activities. Group 1 thought strategically about how to make learning easier for others by providing support before asking them to work independently. In their first peer teacher session in January 2022, Group 1 prepared a short dialogue and provided some questions that needed peer learners to read the dialogue and answer related questions. In their second peer teacher session in February 2022, they used the work environment to make small dialogues and asked peer learners to make their own dialogue by using given vocabularies. As C2P1 mentioned this technique would be much easier for peer learners to understand how to construct a relevant dialogue using the given words (C2P1, **Excerpt 4.3**). C2P2 pointed out particularly that they considered dialogue-making to be a challenging task that involved several layers of thinking (C2P2, **Excerpt 4.3**). Peers had to choose appropriate vocabulary, decide how to organise sentences and apply the correct grammar points. Moreover, C2P2's acknowledgement of the time constraints on their decision cohort, and to design something beneficial for peers within the limited time reflected a commitment to collective learning. Peer teachers' roles were not limited to creating tasks for others but also involved a sense of responsibility towards their peers' learning process and a reflection on their decision-making skills.

Excerpt 4.3. Interview:

প্রথম কাজটায় আমরা নিজেরা ডায়ালগ তৈরি করে প্রশ্ন করেছিলাম। সেজন্য এইবার শব্দ দিয়ে ডায়ালগ বানাইতে দিছি।, এতে করে সবার ডায়ালগ বানানো প্র্যাকটিস করা হবে। আর আগে যেহেতু সেম্পল আছে, সবাই সহজে বুঝতে পারবে যে কী করতে হবে।

In our first activity, we created our own dialogue and then asked peers to answer questions after reading it. In the second activity, we asked them to create their own dialogue using the words

we provided. As we had already provided a sample dialogue in our previous activity, it would be much easier for them to understand how to construct a relevant dialogue using the given words. (C2P1, Group 1: Cycle 2, 2022)

এই প্রথম টিচার হিসেবে নিজের ক্লাসমেটদের জন্য এক্টিভিটি বানাচ্ছি। ক্লাসের বাইরে যেহেতু পড়ার সময় কম, আমরা চাচ্ছিলাম এতে সবার যেন উপকার হয়, যেমন, ডায়লগ বানাতে গেলে অনেক চিন্তা করতে হয় কোন শব্দ বসবে, ,ভাষাটা কেমন হবে, কোন গ্রামার ব্যবহার করা যাবে।

This was my first experience as a peer teacher creating activities for my classmates. Since we do not have much time to study after our class, we aimed to design activities that would benefit others. For example, creating dialogue requires clear thinking, as learners need to decide which vocabulary is needed, how the language should be structured, and which grammatical forms to use. (C2P2, Group 1: Cycle 1, 2022)

The interview data also align with what both learners documented in their reflective journals (**Excerpt 4.4**). C2P1's journal entry showed how students, as peer teachers, took responsibility for the content. In this role, they were not simply reciting information but were actively involved in creating knowledge by extending classroom content. C2P2 highlighted their interest in seeing the different conversations produced by other groups, which indicated how they were considering peer learners as valuable learning resources and had an appreciation for multiple ways of approaching the same task.

Excerpt 4.4. Reflective journal:

C2P1: As a peer teacher, I gathered positive experience with my groupmates. We had many discussions when making the dialogue. Then we prepared questions based on our dialogues. We did not use the textbook's dialogue; we made our own. (30 January 2022, originally written in English)

C2P2: We created make-sentence activities with particular words and prepared dialogue with given words. We made a sample dialogue using the given words with our teammates and decided to share it only after the other groups had shared their own dialogues. We wanted to see the different conversations that other groups had come up with. (15 February 2022, originally written in English)

Group 2's choices were influenced directly by context. Due to the disruption caused to regular classes by the pandemic, C2P3 reported that the group had largely stopped practising Hanzi [1] at home. Therefore, they added handwriting practice specifically to

[1] Hanzi: Hanzi (汉字) refers to the traditional and modern symbols used in the Chinese writing system.

address the lack of practice (**Excerpt 4.5**). This group chose to design fill-in-the-gaps tasks twice. C2P5, as a group member, gave the same HSK exam-alignment reasoning which was already seen in Cycle 1 for repeating this format. This group described how they decided on tasks by having each member propose ideas individually before settling on a shared set of tasks together (**Excerpt 4.5**). This implies that all tasks were discussed and negotiated and not designed by one person and agreed by the rest. This shows how peer teachers intended to address multiple dimensions of Chinese language learning. Furthermore, C2P5 described the group's working process, which involved many discussions with groupmates. This discussion would involve each member individually presenting ideas before the group collectively decided on which activities to include. This equal participation indicated that peer teaching experience needed to consider negotiation between individual preferences and shared goals.

Excerpt 4.5. Interview:

কোভিডের পরে আপনার সাথে আমাদের প্রথম চাইনিজ ক্লাস। অনেকদিন রেগুলার ক্লাস না হওয়ায় বাসায় তেমন কিছু লেখা হয়নি। আমরা হানজি লেখা প্রায় ভুলেই গিয়েছিলাম, তাই হানজি লেখার ওপর বেশি গুরুত্ব দিয়েছি এই এ্যাক্টিভিটিতে। এতে করে একটু হলেও হয়তো সবাই লেখার আগ্রহ পাবে।

This is our first Chinese course after COVID-19 closure. It has been a long time since we had regular class. We also did not practise character writing much at home and almost forgot to write Hanzi. Thus, we added a task with Hanzi writing, hoping this might motivate some students to write. (C2P3, Group 2: Cycle 2, 2022, translation)

এইবারের গ্রুপের কাজে আমরা fill in the gaps, complete sentence, Hanzi practice এইগুলো করেছি। fill in the gaps এই একই টাস্ক রাখার কারণ HSK পরীক্ষাতেও এটা আসে। সেজন্য শব্দ দিয়ে পরীক্ষারমত করে টাস্কটা বানানো হয়েছে। গ্রুপ ওয়ার্ক করতে গিয়ে অন্যদের সাথে অনেকবার কথা হয়েছে, কতগুলো আইডিয়া থেকে আমরা বাছাই করছি কোনটা দিব।

For this group task, we worked on fill-in-the-gaps, sentence completion, and Hanzi practice. The reason for keeping the same fill-in-the-gaps task is that it also appears in the HSK exam. Therefore, the task was designed in an exam-like format using vocabulary. While doing the group work, we had many discussions with others and selected several ideas to include. (C2P5, Group 2, 2022, translation)

This group also reflected on the broader impact of the peer teaching experience (**Excerpt 4.6**). The participant noted that collaborative group work had led to more frequent use of Chinese, and that communicating with team members had created additional opportunities for language practice. The role of WeChat was significant as a platform for peer learning and the benefits of using it to practise writing Hanzi and

reading and listening to Chinese text. This active peer interaction environment also helped the learner to become more confident. It reflects how he noticed individual growth while interacting with others.

Excerpt 4.6. Reflective journal entries:

গ্রুপ ওয়ার্ক করতে গিয়ে নিয়মিত চীনা ভাষার ব্যবহার বেড়েছে। যখন এক্টিভিটিগুলো তৈরি করা হয়েছে, আমরা প্রথমে আলোচনা করেছি কীভাবে করা যায়, কি কি হতে পারে। HSK এর প্রশ্ন ফলো করে শূন্যস্থান পূরণ এবারো রাখা হয়েছে। সবার সাথে কথা বলতে গিয়ে নিজেরর আত্মবিশ্বাস বাড়ছে। WeChat ব্যবহারের মাধ্যমে হানজি লেখা, চাইনিজ পড়া ও শোনার নতুন সুযোগ তৈরি হয়েছে।

Working in groups has led to more regular use of Chinese. When we created the activities, we first discussed how they could be done and what could be done. Following the HSK format, we also included fill-in-the-blank questions this time. Talking with everyone is helping to build my confidence. Using WeChat has created new opportunities for writing Hanzi, as well as reading and listening to Chinese. (C2P5, 22 February 2022, translation)

Peer teachers in Cycle 3

The data from Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 show how peer teachers design their activities, their experience and their rationale for selecting particular tasks. As the cycle progressed, Cycle 3, a different cohort shifted their role. The reasoning that peer teachers gave for their design choices became more specific and more directly tied to the difficulties the groups had experienced.

Group 1, in their first activity in April, created two tasks: making sentences with given words and rearranging the words to make correct sentences. They gave one sample answer for the word ‘weekend’ (周末) 我们下个周末去 老家 (We are going to our hometown next weekend) and requested others to make a sentence for the other nine given words and provided the English meaning of those words. The group member C3P1 (**Excerpt 4.7**) mentioned in the interview that it was their first experience creating learning tasks for peers, in contrast to their previous experience as class teachers preparing activities for students. Thus, this group decided to prepare similar activities from their workbook because something familiar would help peers complete it. Also, as the group was not experienced with using WeChat, they expressed doubt about whether anyone would respond on their task on WeChat at all:

Excerpt 4.7. Interview:

> এটাই আমাদের প্রথম অভিজ্ঞতা ক্লাসের অন্যদের জন্য টাস্ক বানানো। এর আগেতো ক্লাস টিচার তৈরি করতো আর আমরা সলভ করেছি। আমরা ওয়ার্কবুকে যেধরনের কাজগুলো করেছি, ওই রকম বানানোর চেষ্টা করছি যেন অন্যরা বুঝতে পারে কীভাবে করতে হবে। আসলে মনে করেছিলাম কেউ তেমনভাবে অংশগ্রহণ করবে না, আর উইচ্যাটে তো আরো সম্ভাবনা কম।
>
> This was our first experience of creating tasks for others in the class. Previously, the class teacher used to prepare them and we would solve them. We tried to design tasks similar to those in our workbook so others could understand how to complete them. In fact, we thought that hardly anyone would participate, and on WeChat, the chances seemed even lower. (C3P1, 2022, translation)

By their second activity in May, Group 1 moved on to a more complex task. They prepared a set of questions based on Lesson 7's text, which needed peer learners to review the lesson before answering it. This indicated an increased expectation of peer learners that involved recall, comprehension, and application of the lesson. Two other tasks were related to matching verbs with their complements (e.g., 买到) and creating sentences using given words such as 周末. These tasks needed closer attention to form connections and appropriate use within the context. As C3P7 mentioned in classroom discussion (20.4.2022): 'To solve these tasks, memorisation of word list won't be sufficient, these tasks need logical thinking' (এইবারের টাস্কগুলোর সমাধান করতে গেলে মুখস্ত ওয়ার্ড দিয়ে হবে না, চিন্তা করে কাজগুলো করতে হবে).

Group 2 designed three activities in their first peer teacher role, with each task serving a distinct learning purpose. The vocabulary map encouraged peer learners to think about how to categorise a particular word group, by providing a sample map on the theme of occupations (职业). This task offered peer learners the freedom to make their own linguistic choices. As the group member C3P3 mentioned in Chinese, their intention was to integrate peers' individual experiences and interests in the learning process (**Excerpt 4.8**). Their third task, 'fill-in-the-gaps' was designed based on HSK's question pattern. As C3P3 mentioned in the interview 'Our common goal is to pass the HSK 3 examination. Some exercises we did follow HSK 3's structure, which will offer exam-focused practice' (C3P3, Cycle 3, 2022).

Excerpt 4.8. Reflective journal:

在每个课程中我们学到了很多东西。询问方向与中国朋友交谈， 商场交谈， 商务会谈，旅行时进行交谈。我们想朋友们 能用自己的词汇做 vocabulary map. (C3P3, reflective journal, original)

In each lesson, we learned many things: asking for directions and conversing with Chinese friends, interacting in shopping malls, engaging in business meetings, and communicating while travelling. We would like our peers to create a vocabulary map using their own words. (C3P3, reflective journal, translation)

The second task, 'sentence rearrangement' was inspired by Group 1's task. This group noticed that Group 1's task was challenging for them to solve. Their decision to repeat a similar task showed an example of self-awareness and a willingness to work on difficulties. The group member C3P2 stated in the interview that:

Excerpt 4.9. Interview:

গ্রুপ ১ -এর বাক্যগুলো সাজাতে গিয়ে অনেকগুলো ভুল করেছিলাম। অনেকের কাছেই এটা খুব কঠিন টাস্ক মনে হয়েছে, আমরা শব্দ জানলেও বাক্যগুলো সাজানোতে ভুল করতেছিলাম।

We made many mistakes while arranging the sentences in Group 1. Many peers found this task quite difficult; even though we knew the words, we were making mistakes when putting the sentences together. (C3P2, 2022, translation)

Group 2's second activity also had three tasks. The antonym task offered peers the opportunity to review what they had learned before. The 'sentence making' task needed peers to follow a specific grammatical structure, and they repeated the 'fill-in-the-gaps' exercise in this session too. The group member C3P3 noted in the reflective journal that the tasks were collaboratively designed through discussion on WeChat.

Excerpt 4.10. Reflective journal (C3P3, 2022):

* 我和同学们一起找反义词。(original)

I identified opposite words together with my classmates. (translation)

* 我们在微信聊天儿。(original)

We chatted on WeChat. (translation)

* 我们一起做完了作业 (with group members) 。(original)

We completed the homework together with group members. (translation, here homework means the task)

Group 3 created three tasks: matching relevant dialogue to Parts A and B, selecting measure words, and identifying confused Hanzi. This group put more emphasis on how

they were taking responsibility for addressing shared problem areas in the class by designing Task 3 (**Excerpt 4.11**). As C3P6 mentioned:

Excerpt 4.11. Interview

হানজিগুলোর মধ্যে কিছু অক্ষর দেখতে অনেকটা একই রকম হওয়ায় সেগুলো চেনা আমাদের সবার জন্যই কঠিন। সেজন্যই তিন নম্বর টাস্কটা বানানো হয়েছে।

Because some Hanzi characters are visually very similar, distinguishing between them can be challenging for everyone. For this reason, Task 3 was developed. (C3P6, 2022, translation)

While students were acting as peer teachers, one consistent pattern stood out across all three cohorts. Several groups designed their peer teaching activities by following HSK exam formats, which suggests a shared exam preparation among the learners. However, each cohort showed its own distinct progression. Cohort 1 in Cycle 1 produced two types of activities. Cohort 2 in Cycle 2 grew more ambitious, putting together a wider range of activities. However, interaction largely stayed within the group, and members did not share or discuss their experiences on WeChat. Cohort 3 in Cycle 3 marked the most noticeable shift; peer teachers not only designed more varied tasks but also moved towards interaction on WeChat. Importantly, some participants (i.e., C3P2, C3P3) also began documenting their experiences in Chinese, which reflects their confidence in using the target language to express their own thoughts and reflections. The shift across cycles could be connected more to the different teaching context than to anything that changed in the students themselves. Cycle 1 ran entirely online during the pandemic; Cycles 2 and 3 were taught in-person and online. Compared to Cycle 1 online classes, in-person classes in the next two cycles gave students a chance to build rapport and observe what other peers were doing in class and on the WeChat group, which was absent for the Cycle 1 cohort. However, the pattern did not explain the further difference between Cycle 2 and Cycle 3, since both were taught in the same way. The only difference between the two cycles was using WeChat. Another explanation could be related to facilitating RPL which was no longer new for me by the third round, even though it was still new for each cohort of students. The cycle-by-cycle progression had also contributed to the teacher-researcher's own practice.

4.2.2. Critical engagement and peer feedback as a peer learner

As peer learners, students engaged actively in carrying out tasks prepared by their peer teachers and offered feedback on the activities. There was no written peer feedback in Cycle 1; however, learners mentioned that working with others made learning in class more fun. In Cycle 2, peer learners shared their feedback during the classroom discussions and in interviews. Learners in Cycle 3 provided the highest amount of feedback compared to the other two cycles. By Cycle 3, learners were posting feedback directly on the WeChat group immediately after completing a task.

Providing peer feedback for peer teachers designed tasks

Peer learners in Cycle 3 provided feedback that showed how peer teachers' activities were helping them improve language skills, gain confidence, and access opportunities for collective study. Feedback on Group 1's and Group 2's tasks indicated three benefits. The first was grammar review: C3P2 posted that solving Group 1's tasks allowed her to 'apply grammatical rules while making sentences' and increased her pace of learning (**Excerpt 4.12**). C3P4 mentioned a similar gain despite finding the sentence-rearrangement task difficult, and he treated the difficulty itself as useful because it forced a systematic review of the lesson first.

Excerpt 4.12. WeChat log:

গ্রুপ এ আমাদের জন্য যে কাজ দিয়েছিলো সেটা থেকে আমার অভিজ্ঞতা হলো-
- বাক্য রচনা করতে অনেক গিয়ে ব্যাকরণ এর ব্যবহার শিখতে পেরেছি
- গতানুগতিক পড়াশোনার বাইরে নতুন কিছু করার অভিজ্ঞতা হয়েছে
- পড়াশোনার গতিকে আরেকটু বাড়িয়ে দিয়েছে এই কাজ

My experience of solving Group 1's tasks: 1) I had been able to learn and apply grammatical rules while making sentences; 2) I had gained the experience of engaging in a new learning experience beyond the conventional classroom system; 3) these activities had increased the speed of my Chinese learning. (C3P2, 18.4.22)

গ্রুপ ১-এর কাজগুলা আমাকে আগের লেসন রিভিউ করতে সাহায্য করেছে। গত লেসনে যেসন গ্রামার শিখেছিলাম ওইগুলো রিভিউ করতে হইছে। আমার কাছে sentence rearrangement করাটা কঠিন মনে হইছে, গ্রামার রুলসগুলো না জানলে এটা করা ঝামেলার। তবে এক্টিভিটিগুলো সল্ভ করতে খুবই ভালো লাগছে, এগুলো করতে গিয়ে নিজের সমস্যা বের হয়ে আসতেছে। অন্য গ্রুপদের থেকেও ভালো কাজ করার আশা রাখছি।

> The work designed by Group 1 allowed me to review the lesson and apply the grammar rules when constructing sentences. I found rearranging word order particularly difficult, as it requires a good understanding of grammatical structures. However, the exercise was beneficial because it helped me identify areas for development. I am hoping to see more good work from other groups. (C3P4, 19.4.22)

The second feedback was related to gaining confidence in using the Chinese language. C3P3 wrote her feedback in Chinese: 'I really enjoyed solving Group 1's exercises' (**Excerpt 4.13**), which itself is evidence of growing comfort with the language, not only a comment about the task.

> **Excerpt 4.13.** WeChat log:
> 我非常喜欢 Group1 做的 activity. 我写了句子和复习了语法。很棒！ (C3P3, 19.4.2022) (Original)
> I really enjoyed solving Group1's exercises. I made sentences and reviewed grammar. Excellent! (Translation)

The third feedback was on the benefits of studying in a group (**Excerpt 4.14**). C3P3 said that material studied alone 'does not stay in my memory', whereas peer learning gave her the opportunity to verify her own understanding against others' responses.

> **Excerpt 4.14.** WeChat log:
> No matter how much we study on our own, it does not stay in my memory. Peer learning is a good approach for sharing and learning with others. By engaging with others, we can verify what we have already learnt while doing the homework and check other students' responses (C3P3, 29.4.22, original).

In Cycle 3, Group 3 received the most feedback from their peers compared to Group1 and Group 2. After solving Group 3's activities, six participants shared their feedback in the WeChat group (**Excerpt 4.15)**. This feedback from participants reflects a consistently positive response to Group 3's peer-designed activities, with participants highlighting both the enjoyment and the practical learning value of the tasks. In their comments, a recurring theme was how engaging with the peer-designed activities transformed their experience of revisiting previously covered material. Instead of reviewing previous content to solve those tasks, they found the materials engaging. For example, C3P8 commented on how revisiting completed lessons through Group 3's task made vocabulary and grammar points more accessible. C3P2 considers this experience one of moving from randomly memorising a list of vocabulary to logical and

contextual thinking. Both suggest that the peer-designed format encouraged a more active and flexible engagement with the language than conventional study did.

Excerpt 4.15. WeChat log:

গ্রুপ সি এর গ্রুপ ওয়ার্ক কি আমার কাছে অনেক ভালো লেগেছে। কারন এখানে নতুন কিছু শেখার পেয়েছি যেমন এখানে measure word গুলো জানতে পেরেছি। তাছাড়া pinyin সহ হানজি লেখা এবং এর অর্থ গুলো জানতে পেরেছি খুবই ভালো লেগেছে। এই গ্রুপের মাধ্যমে আমরা আমাদের চাইনিজ ভাষা কে আরো সমৃদ্ধ করতে পারব।

I greatly appreciated the collaborative efforts of Group C. It allowed me to investigate new concepts, such as measure words. I found it beneficial to practise writing Hanzi with Pinyin and to comprehend their meanings. Group work has significantly enhanced our proficiency in Chinese. (C3P5, 28.4.22)

গ্রুপ সি এর গ্রুপওয়ার্ক আমার কাছে অন্যদের চেয়ে আলাদা মনে হয়েছে। অনেক নতুন কিছু জিনিস শেখার সুযোগ পেয়েছি। আশা করি অনন্যা গ্রুপ থেকে ও আমরা এইরকম নতুন নতুন জিনিস শিখছে পারব। আর এভাবেই আমরা আমাদের চাইনিজ ভাষাটাকে খুব ভালো ভাবে Improve করতে পারব। ধন্যবাদ আমাদের Laoshi সহ সবাইকে। (29.4.22)

Group 3's work felt different from the others to me. It provided several opportunities for acquiring new knowledge. I hope we will continue to gain similar insights from other groups as well. This approach will certainly improve our proficiency in Chinese language. We wish to convey our heartfelt gratitude to our teacher and all participants. (C3P1, 10.5.22, translation)

গ্রুপ ৩ এর কাজ করতে গিয়ে অনেক মজা পেয়েছি। ওদের এক্টভিটিগুলো নতুন শব্দ আর গ্রামার শেখার ব্যাপারটাকে আনন্দময় করে তুলছে। ভোকাবুলারি ম্যাপ বানানো, দেখতে প্রায় একইরকম হানজিগুলোকে আলাদা করা, আবার কনফিউশনে না পরার জন্য লিসেনিং এ্যাড করা, এইগুলো আমার কাছে একেবারেই নতুন অভিজ্ঞতা।

The activities prepared by different groups were based on the lessons that have already been completed. Completing those activities made the new vocabulary and grammar points more fun. By reviewing others' work, it became easier to see how a single word can be used to construct different sentences. This new method of learning made my studies more enjoyable and engaging. (C3P8,10.5.22)

গ্রুপ ৩ এর ভোকাবুলারি ম্যাপ বানানো খুব ইন্টারেস্টিং লাগছে। সবার উত্তরগুলো দেখে আমি অনেকগুলো নতুন শব্দ জানতে পারছি।

Group 3's idea of creating a vocabulary map was very interesting. I learnt a lot by reading everyone's answers. (C3P7, 10.5.22)

Several participants also mentioned the quality of the activities. C3P1 found that Group 3's work felt different from others'. C3P7 indicated that the variety and creativity embedded in Group 3's tasks contributed towards sustaining learner engagement

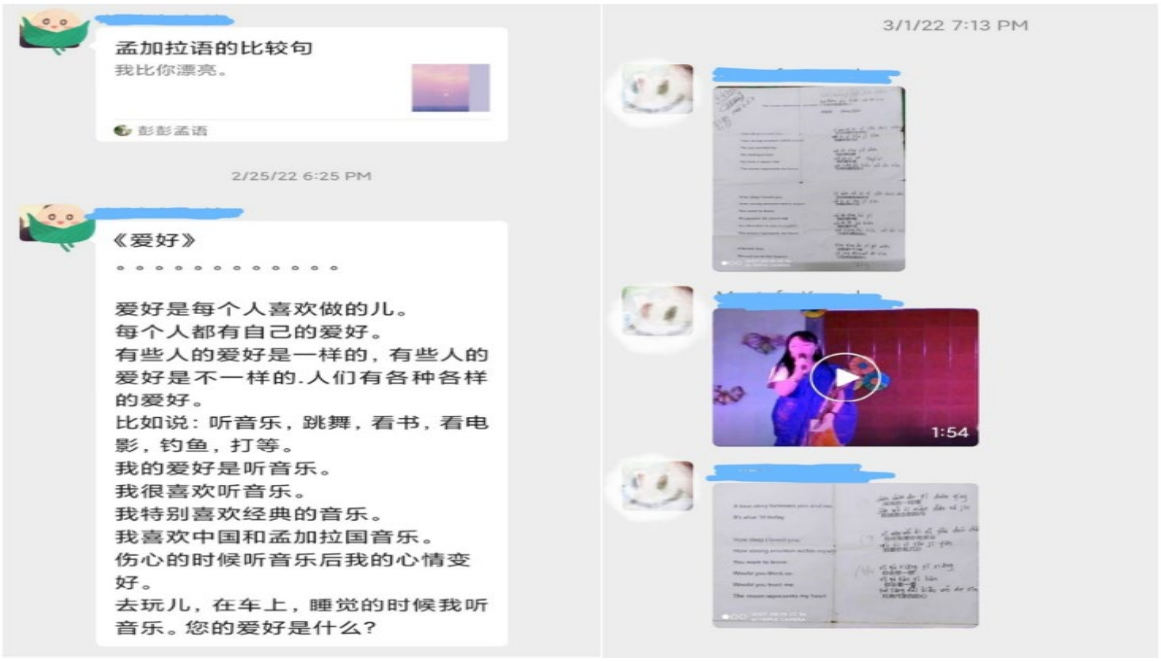
across the group. C3P7's reflection adds a further dimension that he gained considerable knowledge simply by reading his peers' answers. This indicates that observing and engaging with peers extended the learning experience beyond the task itself, whereas the group's collective responses became an additional source of knowledge. Also, peer engagement encouraged learners to play with the language. In particular, the feedback from these learners suggests that the RPL process not only developed participants' linguistic competencies but also gradually reshaped how they understood their own role and that of their peers. Additionally, the feedback shows how they addressed the challenges they faced in solving those tasks, and how the whole process made learning more fun.

4.2.3. Developing a sense of belonging through peer community

Learners were not only completing tasks set by peer teachers but actively contributing to the group's collective learning resources on their own initiative. As individual learners, students made contributions by providing useful resources, discussing ideas, and engaging actively in group discussions.

Resource sharing as community-building

From Cycle 2 onward, students shared self-generated material with no task attached to it. **Figure 4.2** shows examples of sharing resources by some students in Cycle 2 in WeChat. C2P4 posted a website comparing Bengali and Chinese sentence structure and a personal reflection on his hobbies; C2P5 shared song lyrics as a study tool.



First image:

1) Link: Bengali comparative sentences: I am more beautiful than you.

2)Own paragraph about Hobbies (爱好)

Hobbies are things that everyone likes to do. Everyone has their own hobbies. Some people's hobbies are the same, some people's hobbies are different. People have all kinds of hobbies. For example: listening to music, dancing, reading books, watching movies, fishing, playing [sports/games], etc. My hobby is listening to music. I really like listening to music. I especially like classical music. I like Chinese and Bangladeshi music. When I'm sad, my mood gets better after listening to music. When going out to play, in the car, when sleeping, I listen to music. What is your hobby?

Second image:

1) Shared lyrics of a Chnese song
2) Shared a video of someone singing that song
3) Shared 2nd part of the lyrics

Figure 4.2. Screenshot of sharing resources in WeChat group (Cycle 2, January 2022, translation)

Figure 4.3 shows two instances of self-initiated resource sharing by two students from Cycle 2 in their WeChat group. In the first image, C2P4 shared a proverb in Chinese 'kill two birds with one stone', which showed the students exposed peers to new content. In the second image, C2P3 firstly shared a 'good night' text in Chinese, then shared a list of computer related words in Chinese with English translation. Finding a word list for a specific theme to match with vocabulary map exercise indicated the student started to create a similar task during self-study as well.

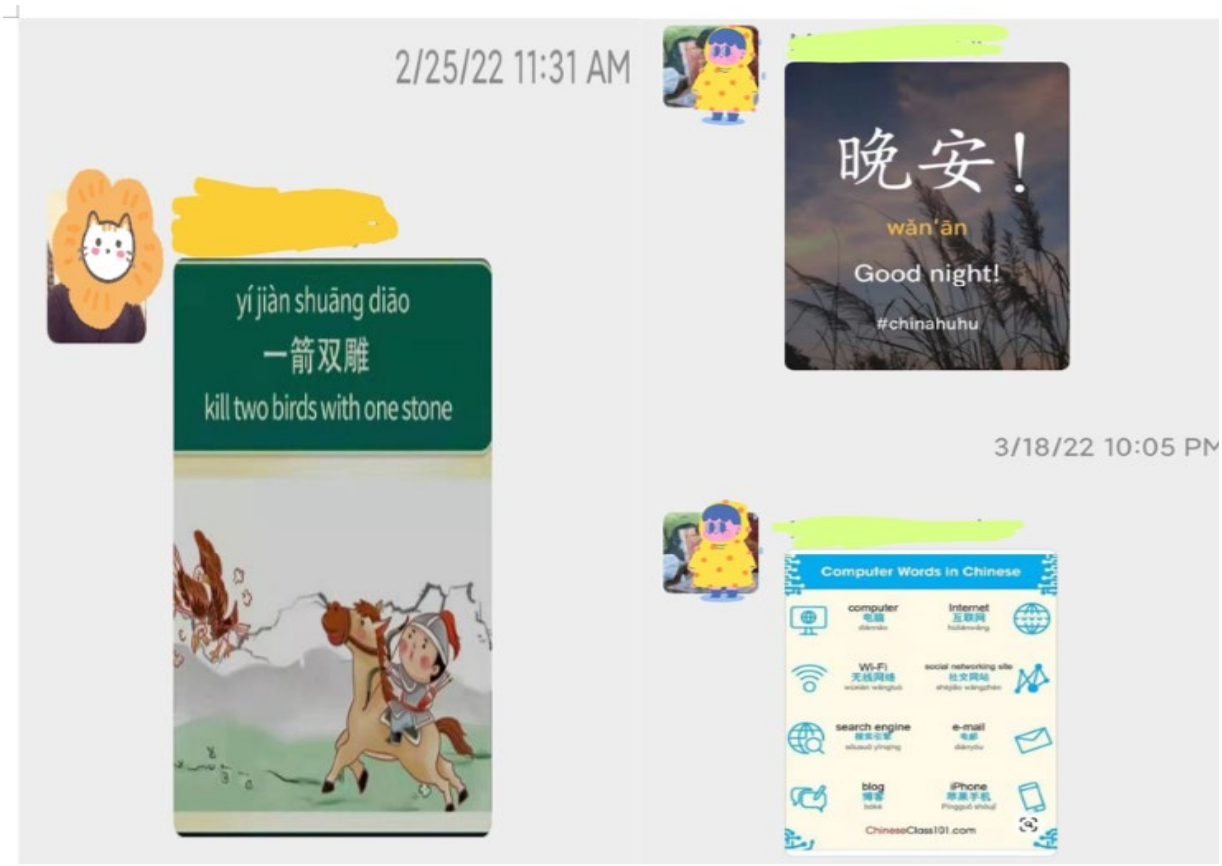
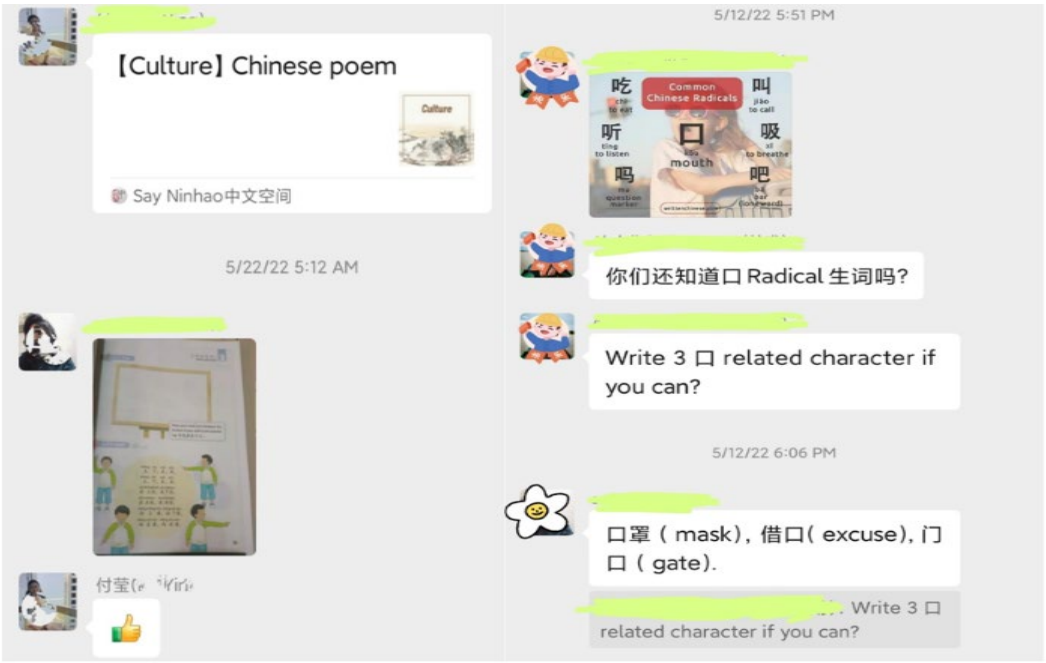


Figure 4.3. Screenshot of sharing resources in WeChat group (Cycle 2)

In Cycle 3, four students (C3P1, C3P2, C3P3, C3P4) consistently provided valuable contributions through sharing vocabulary charts and grammar explanations, which were appreciated by their peers. For example, **Figure 4.4** presents different resources shared by students in Cycle 3. C3P2 shared a link to a Chinese poem (The moon over the west river) from the website Say Nihao. This poem was written by a famous poet

named Su Shi[2]. C3P3 replied to her, by sharing another poem of direction from the textbook. In the other image, C3P4 posted a picture that describes words related to the 'mouth' radical. He asked his peers to write three words related to this radical [3]. In reply, C3P3 wrote three words related to the 'mouth' radical. The interaction described the spontaneous learning activities that happened among students in their WeChat group that involved integrating cultural content, reviewing the textbook's content, visual learning aids, and prompt responses from peers.

Student C3P3 further stated in the interview, 'Learning and sharing with others helps to remember words and grammar points. We do not have the opportunity to practise Chinese outside of our regular class, so we really appreciate it when others share materials, links, videos or anything in Chinese' (C3P3, Cycle 3, 2022). This comment showed the social and collaborative dimensions of language learning. Students' appreciation for peers who shared materials indicated a strong sense of reciprocal peer learning, where students both contribute to and benefit from each other.



[2] Su Shi is the famous poet of Song Dynasty
[3] 'Radical' refers to a root component of a Chinese character. Each is associated with a few strokes and is used to group characters with similar elements

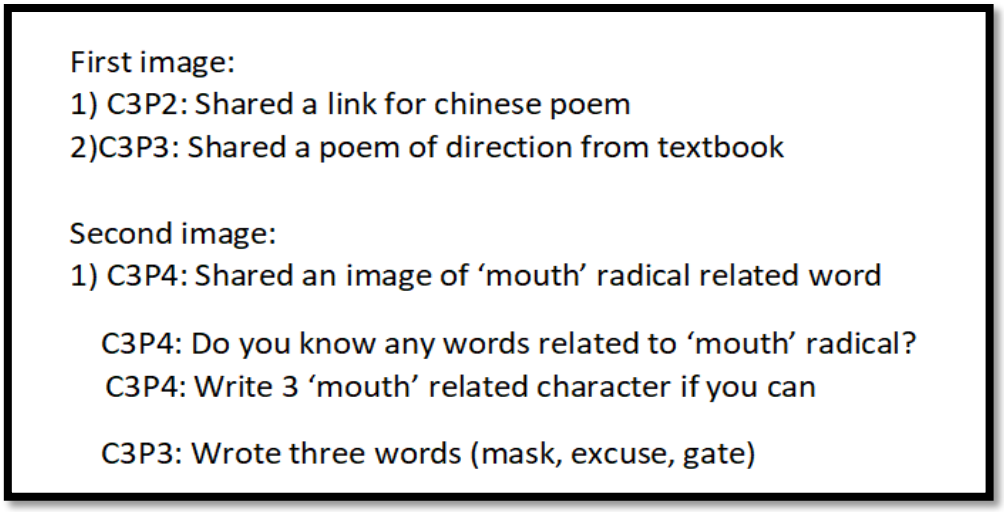


Figure 4.4. Screenshot of sharing resources in WeChat group (Cycle 3, 2022, translation)

Students also shared content related to grammar, particularly C3P4. **Figure 4.5** shows two screenshots from the WeChat group. In the first image, C3P4 shared several images relating to grammatical rules taught in the previous classes. He collected those images from another Chinese learning group on Facebook, which indicates that students were also taking advantage of other social media for learning Chinese. The student sent voice messages requesting classmates to review the grammar structure with examples. To solve this activity peers needed to associate images with the corresponding words. Student C3P1 promptly completed the exercise and submitted all the correct answers shortly after the task was posted. This exemplifies the collaborative yet autonomous nature of the students' interactions within the digital learning environment.

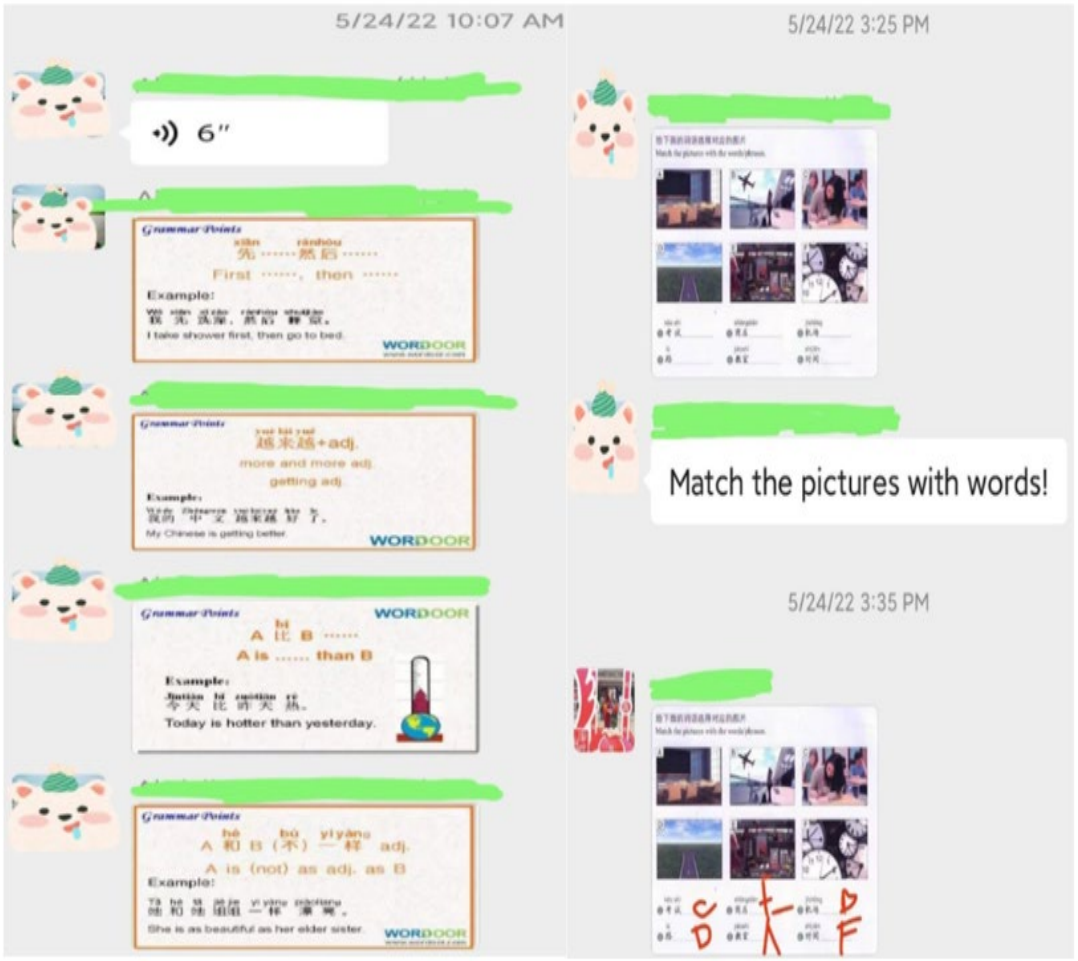


Figure 4.5. Screenshot of sharing resources in WeChat group (Cycle 3, 2022)

This shift from sharing to interactive engagement indicated the development of a community norm in which WeChat was used as a live learning space in which peers actively participated in each other's self-initiated activities.

Deepening community engagement

Many students across all three-cycles noted that peer encouragement contributed to their engagement and overall learning. During Cycle 1, in online classes, students motivated each other not to drop out, as the dropout rate was very high. The statement below from C1P3 underscores the challenges that learners faced with dropping out during the pandemic. The request to maintain communication with peers shows an emergent sense of peer solidarity, which emphasises the social need for maintaining

communication during isolation. It also suggests that taking initiative relates not only to academic tasks but also to the creation of emotional and interpersonal connections for the continuity of learning.

Excerpt 4.16. observation:

প্লিজ সবাই ক্লাস মিস না দেয়ার চেষ্টা করবেন। আমাদের যোগাযোগ থাকাটা অনেক জরুরী।

Please everyone, try not to miss our class. In this isolated situation it's essential to keep communication. (C1P3, 25.7.21)

In Cycle 2 and Cycle 3, students felt more connected to each other, both in the class and on WeChat. In Cycle 2, three students particularly stated that using WeChat and observing other peers interacting on WeChat encouraged them to engage more. C2P1 observed how integrating WeChat alongside regular classes offered her a sense of closeness with peers. The learner tried to arrange a practice session after the class with peers before this semester; however, it was not feasible for the peers, as they were busy with other real-life commitments. The flexibility of social media (i.e., WeChat) to connect from any location and at any time removed the logistical barriers and made peer collaboration more feasible. Hence, her peers started interacting on WeChat.

Excerpt 4.17. C2P1: Interview:

গত বছর, কোভিডের আগের সময়ে, আমি আমাদের ক্লাসের পর ক্যাম্পাসে সহপাঠীদের সঙ্গে দেখা করে একসঙ্গে শেখার চেষ্টা করেছিলাম। কিন্তু তারা পড়াশোনা, চাকরি, ব্যবসা আর পারিবারিক দায়িত্ব নিয়ে এত ব্যস্ত থাকত যে কোনো অনুশীলনের সেশন আয়োজন করা বাস্তবসম্মত মনে হয়নি। সামাজিক যোগাযোগ মাধ্যমে যেকোনো সময় ও যেকোনো জায়গা থেকে যুক্ত হতে পারায় আমি সহপাঠীদের সঙ্গে আরও বেশি কানেক্টেড ফিল করেছি।

In the previous year before COVID, I tried meeting my classmates on campus after our regular class to learn together. But they remained very busy with studies, jobs, businesses, and family, so arranging a practice session did not seem feasible. Connecting with people on social media at any time and place has made me feel more connected to my classmates. (C2P1, March 2022)

In line with **Excerpt 4.18** two students shared how other peers encouraged them. C2P2 described how observing peers' progress evoked positive rivalry when she was sick at the beginning and could not participate like others. She observed her peers becoming more serious and attentive. The combination of classroom and online interaction made them more responsive during class participation too, which also had a positive impact on her learning and participation. Student C2P3 was pleasantly surprised by others' involvement. The reciprocal nature of peer interaction prompted

him to ask questions and help others in return. It indicates the mutual support culture that the group environment had cultivated.

Excerpt 4.18. Interview:

আমি প্রথম দিকে অসুস্থ ছিলাম, খুবই হিংসা লাগছে যে সবাই এগিয়ে যাচ্ছে। সবাই ভীষণ সিরিয়াস আর মনোযোগী হয়ে গেছিলো। আসলে উইচ্যাট গ্রুপ আর ক্লাসে সবার এত যোগাযোগ আমাদের ক্লাসের অংশগ্রহণ বাড়িয়ে দিছিলো। এটা আমাকেও উৎসাহিত করেছে, পড়ালেখাও ভালো করে করা শুরু করেছিলাম।

I was sick at the beginning, felt very jealous after seeing everyone's progress. Everyone became more serious and attentive. The classroom and online interaction both made us more responsive in class too. It also encouraged me to respond more and study better. (C2P2, March 2022, translation)

অন্যদের সঙ্গে একসঙ্গে শেখা এবং এত মানুষের সঙ্গে আলোচনা করার এই প্রক্রিয়াটি আমাকে অনেক উৎসাহ দিয়েছে। উদাহরণ হিসেবে বলতে পারি, কোনো সমস্যা হলে আমি অনেকের কাছ থেকে সাহায্য পেতে পারতাম, যা আমাকে অবাক করেছিল। ক্লাসমেটদের কোনো সমস্যা হলে আমিও অন্যদের সাহায্য করার চেষ্টা করতাম।

The system of learning with others and discussing with so many people encouraged me a lot. For example, when there is any problem, I can get help from many people which surprised me. If my peers had any problem, I also tried to help others. (C2P3, March 2022, translation)

Encouragement from peers was also evident in Cycle 3, especially when students described their overall experience of the course. Students stated that their experience in the WeChat group both exceeded expectations and transformed their engagement patterns (**Excerpt 4.19**). C3P4 was surprised by the high level of peer responsiveness, which he had not anticipated before the course. Active responses from peers created a self-reinforcing cycle, where observing others' dedication motivated continued participation. This was noticed especially when no formal assessment incentive was attached to the group engagement. This suggests that peer encouragement functioned as an intrinsic motivator for students. Voice message exchange and resource sharing further reinforced this dynamic. C3P6 similarly highlighted how the WeChat environment offered more opportunities that had previously limited after-class interaction. Peer encouragement also led her to experiment with new forms of communication, such as sending voice messages in Chinese, something she had never considered before.

Excerpt 4.19. Interview:

শুরুর দিকে আমি আশা করিনি যে আমাদের WeChat গ্রুপে সহপাঠীদের কাছ থেকে এত বেশি সাড়া পাব। সময়ের সাথে দেখলাম মানুষ আরও বেশি সাড়া দিচ্ছে এবং ক্লাসের বাইরে বাড়তি পড়াশোনাও করছে, এটা দেখে আমি অবাক হয়েছিলাম। আমিও ধীরে ধীরে রেসপন্স করা শুরু করি এবং অন্যদের সঙ্গে কথা বলতে স্বাচ্ছন্দ্য বোধ করি। এই প্ল্যাটফর্মটি সহপাঠীদের সঙ্গে ভালো সম্পর্ক গড়তে সাহায্য করেছে। যদিও আমরা জানতাম যে এই গ্রুপে অংশগ্রহণের জন্য কোনো নম্বর নেই, তবুও অন্যদের প্রতিক্রিয়া আমাকে আরো বেশি যুক্ত হতে উৎসাহিত করেছে।

At the beginning I did not expect so many responses from my classmates in our WeChat group. Throughout the time I found that people became more responsive and were really doing extra studies, which surprised me. I become more responsive and comfortable engaging with others. This platform contributed to fostering deeper connections with peers. Even though we knew that there were no marks for engaging in this group, other responses encouraged me to become actively engaged. (C3P4, June 2022, translation)

এই গ্রুপ কার্যক্রম শুরু করার পর সহপাঠীদের সঙ্গে আমাদের সম্পর্ক ভালো হয়েছে, বিশেষ করে WeChat গ্রুপে যুক্ত হওয়ার পর। আগে ক্লাসের পর সবার সঙ্গে খুব বেশি যোগাযোগ হতো না। কিন্তু গ্রুপে কাজ শুরু করার পর শুধু নিজের দলের সদস্যদের সঙ্গেই নয়, অন্যদের সঙ্গেও কথা বলা শুরু হয়। আমরা ভয়েস মেসেজ পাঠাতাম, রিসোর্স শেয়ার করতাম। এগলো আমাকে বেশি মোটিভেশন দিয়েছে। আমরা চীনা ভাষায় ভয়েস মেসেজও পাঠাতাম, আগে আমি কখনও ভাবিনি যে এমনটা করব।

Our relationship with classmates has improved, especially since we started doing this group activity and engaging in the WeChat group. Before, there was not much interaction with everyone after class, but after we started working in groups not only group members but also others were started to communicate, send voice messages, and resources. These were the things that motivated me more. We were sending voice messages in Chinese, I never thought of doing this before. (C3P6, June 2022, translation)

This peer support dynamic extended beyond motivational encouragement to include collaborative problem-solving around specific language learning challenges, as illustrated in **Figure 4.6**, where students discussed how to add a tone mark for writing Pinyin on a mobile keyboard. The entire conversation unfolded within 44 minutes (timestamps 9.58 am to 10.42 am) combining three different languages (i.e., Bengali, English, and Chinese), which suggested the group's capacity for responsive, real-time interaction. C3P1 initiated the discussion in Bengali. C3P4 took on the role of the more knowledgeable peer, offering a comprehensive explanation in Bengali, while also describing confusion about writing the third tone on the keyboard. C3P6 checked and

assured other peers that the third tone was in fact accessible. This shows that knowledge construction within the group was bidirectional rather than one-directional. When C3P1 reported that the method was ineffective on her device, C3P4 responded with reassurance, reflecting the supportive dynamic that characterised peer interactions in this environment.


C3P1 09:58
Ami pinyin a tone dea likhty pari na keu bolben kivaby lekha hai ki board a
[C3P1 asked others in Bengali how to add tone markers in pinyin from keyborad]
C3P409:59
Hmm system ase.. [C3P4 replied to C3P1in Bengali that there is a system to add tone in pinyin.]
C3P6 10:00
আমিও জানি না [C3P6 said she also doesn't know how to do it.]
C3P1 10:00
什么制度 [C3P1 asked C3P4in Chinese that what is the system.
C3P6 10:00
আমাদের জানাও তাহলে ভালো হয় [C3P6 requested to C3P4in Bengali that share the technique to add tones.]
C3P410:04
Suppose ami difang likhbo akhon d likhe tarpor jokhon i ee upor click kore rakhbo tokhon i er upor tone mark gula asbe same proti ta character er jnoo tone mark asbe..apnar jeita dorkar oikhne theke choose kore boshaben..but 3rd tone ta maybe nai..e chara onnano tone mark gula ase..
[C3P4 described the procedure in Bengali with examples. He also added that it's difficult to add 3rd tone from mobile's keyboard.]
C3P410:04
difang = dǐfāng
[C3P4 added an example where he wrote a word without tone and then added tone.]
C3P6 10:05
3rd tone আছে।মাত্র দেখলাম করে।ধন্যবাদ ভাইয়া
[C3P6 thanked C3P4in Bengali and said she found the 3rd tone too.]
C3P1 10:05
Amr to hoy na [C3P1replied to C3P6and C3P4that she couldn't do it.]
C3P4 10:06
It's okay [C3P4replied to C3P6and said it's ok in English.]
C3P4 10:06
Welcome [C3P4said welcome to C3P6in English.]
C3P410:08
[Images: 76b291bd6d7e4ff666037db8f3a7dc60.jpg(View in attachment)]
C3P1 10:08
paisi Ami to Gboard use Kori na tai Asy nai
[C3P1 replied to C3P4that she finally understood how to add tones. She used Gboard to do it.]
C3P4 10:09
Hmm oh default keyboard o ashe. Gboard e hoy! [C3P4replied to C3P1in Bengali that default keyboard works too and Gboard also can do the work.]
C3P1 10:09
Hmm [C3P1replied hmm to C3P4]
C3P1 10:09
dǐfāng [C3P1wrote a word in Chinese with tone marks.]
C3P410:11
太好了，最后你成功了。[C3P4replied to C3P1in Chinese and said great, finally you are made it.]
C3P1 10:11
是的，谢谢你 [C3P1replied to C3P4in chinese and said yes, thank you for that.]
C3P3 10:42
ওহ আমার ও Pinyin আসে না। Google থেকে copy করে এনে বসিয়ে দেই।এতে অনেক time kill হয়। [C3P3 said she didn't know to add tone marks too. She usually copies tone marks from google and add with words, which kills lot of time.]

Figure 4.6. Original texts of responding peer's queries in WeChat group with translation by the researcher

Collectively, this exchange demonstrates that the WeChat group functioned as an informal yet educationally meaningful space, where students collaboratively resolved language learning difficulties in real time.

Beyond problem-solving, peer engagement in Cycle 3 increased through spontaneous error correction. It shows how correcting one student's error in the WeChat group became a valuable insight for the whole group. **Figure 4.7** illustrates how students corrected their peers when errors occurred. At timestamp 00:10, student C3P10 greeted classmates in Chinese by writing: 你们好马? (How are you all?). The letter 马 (mǎ), means horse, which was incorrectly used in the place of the question particle 吗 (ma). At the timestamp of 00:18, student C3P6 noticed the error and replied with a correction message: 不是写这个马，你写这个吗。但是 (马意思 horse), (吗意思 questioning?). That translation of her text means: you're not supposed to write '马'; you should write '吗'. '马' means horse, and '吗' is used for questions. Following this interaction, at timestamp 00:20, another group member C3P4 expressed appreciation for the clarification by writing: 谢谢你讲的得, which means thank you for explaining so well! This correction was unsolicited, showing that C3P6 was actively attentive to peers' language use in the group. It also suggests that the WeChat environment fostered a psychologically safe space where linguistic errors could be addressed and received constructively. The fact that the entire exchange unfolded within ten seconds reflects the high level of attentiveness and engagement among group members.

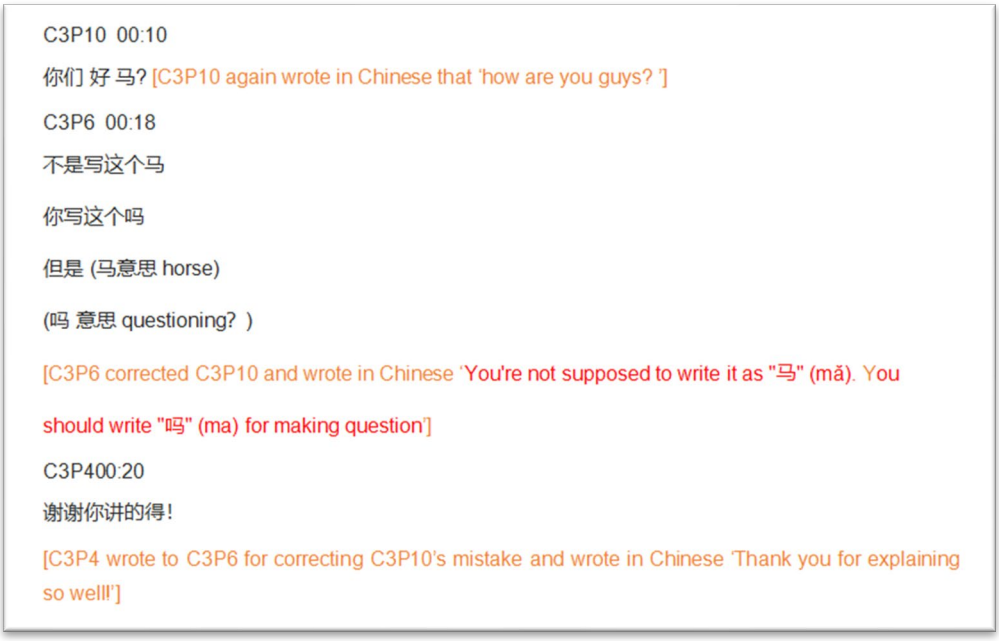


Figure 4.7. Sample of students correcting peers (original text and translation by the researcher)

In Cycle 2 and Cycle 3, seeing others engage, share ideas, and contribute, appeared to motivate learners to become more responsive and involve themselves. This created a self-reinforcing cycle of involvement, where students became inspired to contribute even without any formal assessment incentive attached to the group participation. Peer interactions were reciprocal in nature, where students both sought and offered support, reflecting a mutual accountability that deepened over time.

4.3. Learners' engagement in linguistic development through RPL and WeChat

Learners' perceptions of linguistic growth emerged as one of the most prominent recurrent themes across all cycles during this research. Regular classroom sessions and peer interactions, both in-person and online via WeChat, provided students with various opportunities to practise and improve their proficiency in Chinese through diverse exercises. Data from different sources show these exercises facilitated work

across various language domains, including vocabulary enhancement, proficiency in grammatical structures, and improvement in listening and speaking skills.

4.3.1. Vocabulary development through peer interaction and the use of the Chinese language

Data across three-cycles showed a consistent pattern of vocabulary growth. The growth was not only dependent on memorising vocabulary lists or on attending lectures but was related to learners' engagement in social context.

Table 4.2 presents a sample reflective journal entry for C1P3 from Cycle 1, which showed how he applied the lesson's vocabulary to create a sample conversation in Chinese. The idea of this dialogue was based on the content of Lesson 1 周末你有什么打算 (what is your plan for the weekend?). C1P3 used key vocabulary from the lesson, such as 周末 (zhōumò, weekend), 打算 (dǎsuàn, intend), 看电影 (kàn diànyǐng, watch movie), and 一起 (yīqǐ, together). This example showed his ability to use newly learned vocabulary appropriately in a meaningful communicative context.

Describe the application process of this week's lesson knowledge in real-life context (i.e., produce connected text on topics, ask a direction, describe experiences and events, and make relevant dialogue…) Answer: - I (C1P3) make a dialogue and make a word map.		
Source	**Chinese (written by student)**	**English Translation (translated by teacher-researcher)**
Reflective journal**:**C1P3 11 August 2021	C1P2: 周末你有什么打算?	C1P2: What are your plans for the weekend?
	C1P3: 这可周末我去看电影。	C1P3: This weekend I will go to watch a movie.
	C1P2: 你为什么去看电影?	C1P2: Why are you going to watch a movie?
	C1P3: 我认为看中国电影会提高我中文口语能力。	C1P3: I think watching Chinese movies will improve my Chinese speaking ability.
	C1P2: 真的嘛?	C1P2: Really?
	C1P3: 使得。我还将通过观看中国电影了解中国丰富的历史和文化。你会跟我一块去吗?	C1P3: Yes. I will also learn about China's rich history and culture by watching Chinese movies. Would you like to go with me?
	C1P2: 当然。	C1P2: Of course.
	C1P3: 行。这个周末早上我们一起去看电影。	C1P3: Okay. This weekend morning we will go to watch a movie together.
	C1P2: 谢谢。再见。	C1P2: Thank you. Goodbye.

	C1P3: 再见。	C1P3: Goodbye.

Table 4.2. Application of lesson's vocabulary by students (C1P3's reflective journal, 11 August 2021)

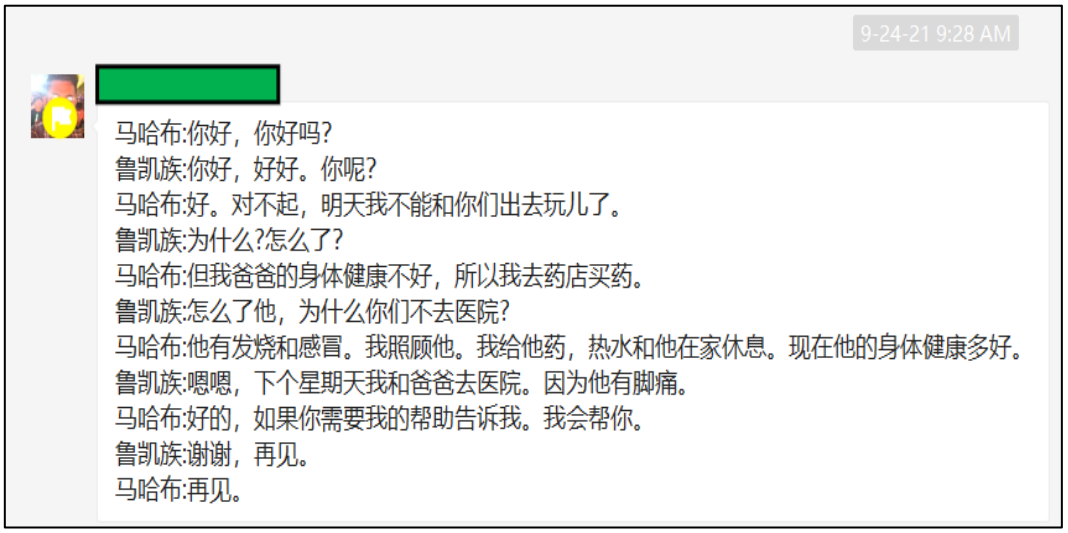
A similar pattern was found in the other 8 students' journals in different cycles. For example, **Table 4.3** shows the application of lesson vocabulary that participants documented in their reflective journals. C1P1 and C1P2 had a conversation on WeChat about speaking different languages, based on the HSK1 lesson they studied earlier. A similar conversation was a part of their textbook's lesson on '你会说 Nǐ huì shuō (can you speak ...?)', C1P1 started the conversation by asking, 'Can you speak Chinese?' In response, C1P2 replied that 'he can speak but can't write', and the rest of the conversation carried coherent responses. However, C1P1 made mistakes with writing characters (Hanzi). They initiated the conversation about speaking Chinese, but in some places, it was written in the Korean character set. In Chinese, the language is called Hànyǔ 汉语, whereas the Korean language is called 韩语 Hányǔ. Although the Pinyin form appears similar, it has different tones and characters (Hán vs Hàn), which completely changes the meaning. These errors provided an opportunity for learners to identify and address lexical gaps independently within a peer-supported environment.

Participant(s)	Date	Chinese Text	English Translation
C1P1	18.08.21	C1P1: 你会说汉语吗？ C1P2: 我正在学习韩语，会一点儿。你呢？ C1P1: 我会说但不会写。 C1P2: 你在什么地方学习韩语？ C1P1: 我在达卡大学中文文学学习韩语。 C1P2: 汉语难吗？ C1P1: 听和说不太难，写汉字很难。 C1P2: 你的汉语说得很好。 C1P1: 谢谢！但我的汉语发音不太好。 C1P2: 我说的你能听懂吗？ C1P2: 一点点。 C1P1: 我真的很喜欢和你说话。	Can you speak Chinese? I am learning Korean and can speak a little. What about you? I can speak but cannot write. Where do you learn Korean? I study Korean at the Chinese Department of Dhaka University. Is Chinese difficult? Listening and speaking are not too difficult; writing Chinese characters is difficult. You speak Chinese very well. Thank you, but my Chinese pronunciation is not very good. Can you understand what I am saying? Just a little bit. I really enjoy talking to you. Me too. Goodbye.

		C1P2: 我 也 是 。 C1P1: 再见。	
C2P1	31.03.22	在每个课程中我学到了很多东西。	I learned a lot in each course. HSK 1–2 vocabulary revision, new HSK-3 vocabulary, video creation, WeChat submission, and group work.
C2P4	31.03.22	在每个课程中我学到了很多东西。询问方向与中国朋友交谈，商场交谈，商务会议，旅行时进行交谈。	I learned a lot in each course. I enquired about directions and had conversations with Chinese friends, in shopping malls, business meetings, and while travelling.
C3P3	12.05.22	1. 我做一个对话 '怎么用地图'。 2. 我写了五个句子用我喜欢喝什么。	1. I made a conversation on 'How to use a map'. 2. I wrote five sentences about what I like to drink.
C3P4	23.05.22	上个星期我学了很多生词和一些语法。我听了中国音乐。我写了课文生词、看电影，我的同学们一起跟我聊天，我去了图书馆看书，我复习了很多语法，也很多生词。	Last week, I learned a lot of new vocabulary and some grammar. I listened to Chinese music. I wrote down new words from the text, watched films, chatted with my classmates, went to the library to read, and revised a lot of grammar and vocabulary.

Table 4.3. Application of lesson's vocabulary by students (original & translation), sample of students' reflective journal

Figure 4.8 illustrates another example of a conversation created by students using the lesson's target vocabulary in Cycle 1. C1P1 and C1P3 collaborated to make this conversation, and C1P1 shared it on WeChat. They used pseudonyms to create a scenario where one participant was unable to attend the following day due to his father's illness. Although this conversation closely reflected the thematic context of Lesson 2 in the course textbook, the students produced their own version of the dialogue for the same theme. This activity indicated that vocabulary learning was happening through negotiation and shared construction of meaning between the learners.



Conversations shared in WeChat prepared by using lesson's vocabulary, 24 September 2021 (original)

Mahabu: I'm good. Sorry, I won't be able to go out with you tomorrow.

Lukai: Why? What's wrong?

Mahabu: My father isn't in good health, so I need to go buy medicine for him.

Lukai: What's wrong with him? Why don't you take him to the hospital?

Mahabu: He has a fever and a cold. I'm taking care of him. I've given him medicine, and he's resting at home. He's doing much better now.

Lukai: I see. Next week I'll take my dad to the hospital because he has leg pain.

Mahabu: Okay. If you need my help, let me know. I'll help you.

Lukai: Thanks. Goodbye.

Mahabu: Goodbye.

Figure 4.8. Conversations shared in WeChat prepared by using lesson 2's vocabulary, 24 September 2021 (translation)

Group 1 in Cycle 3 also designed a character recognition task (**Figure 4.9**) and shared on WeChat. It needed learners to identify the Pinyin and meaning of ten pairs of Chinese characters. Each pair consisted of characters that are commonly confused by

Chinese language learners, including tonal homophones such as 那 (nà – that) and 哪 (nǎ – which), graphically similar characters such as 记 and 已, semantically related compounds such as 下雨 (raining) and 下雪 (snowing), and characters that share a component but differ in meaning, such as 很 (very) and 跟 (with).

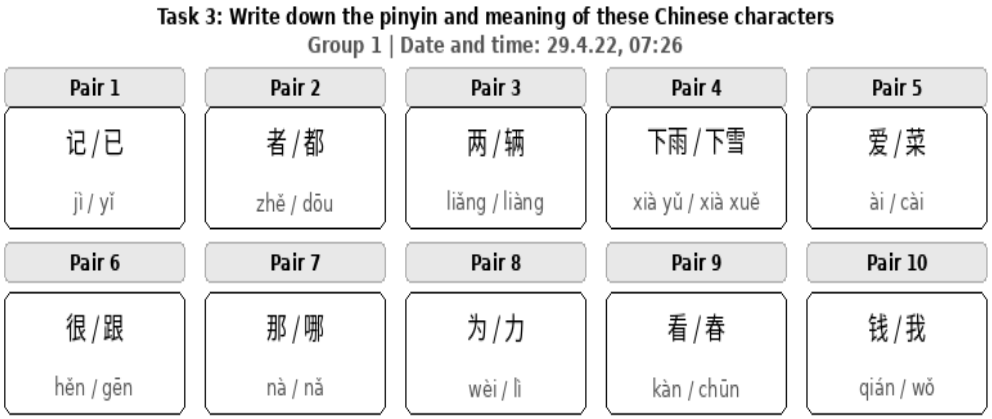


Figure 4.9. Sample task of group activities shared by peer teachers Group 1 in WeChat, Group 1, Cycle 3

In response to the task, as shown in **Table 4.4**, C3P4 solved all ten items with Pinyin and English meaning of each character and shared his answers on WeChat at 8.20 pm. C3P4's accurate responses across all ten pairs indicated a well-developed lexical knowledge base that extends beyond simple word recognition. For example, Pair 3 needed both vocabulary knowledge and understanding of Chinese grammatical classifiers. Pair 7 demonstrated phonological awareness, as both characters share near-identical romanisation but differ in tone and yet have entirely distinct meanings.

Solution of task 3 (write down the Pinyin and meaning of these Chinese characters)	
Participant name: C3P4	
Date and time: 29.4.22, 8:20 pm	
1. 记= jì (to remember/record) 已 = yǐ (already) 2. 者 = zhě (person/one who) 都 = dōu (all/both) 3. 两 = liǎng (two) 辆 = liàng (measure word for vehicles) 4. 下雨 = xià yǔ (to rain) 下雪 = xià xuě (to snow) 5. 爱 = ài (love) 菜 = cài (vegetable/dish)	6. 很 = hěn (very) 跟 = gēn (with/and) 7. 那 = nà (that) 哪 = nǎ (which) 8. 为 = wéi (for/because of) 力 = lì (strength/power) 9. 看 = kàn (to look/see) 春 = chūn (spring) 10. 钱 = qián (money) 我 = wǒ (I/me)

Table 4.4. Sample of Task 3's solution by peer learners, shared on WeChat

Figure 4.10 presents a vocabulary map designed by Group 2 in Cycle 3, which was shared in the WeChat group. It needed peer learners to identify and categorise vocabulary across five semantic domains: 教室（classroom items), 电子东西（electronic things), 职业（occupations), 方向（directions), and 水果（fruits). To solve this task, peer learners needed to understand the connection between words. This group added an example of occupation related vocabulary (*i.e.*, teacher), so that peers could understand how to solve this task. Instead of learning a random vocabulary list, this task encouraged peers to find relational connections between words that were related to the given topic.

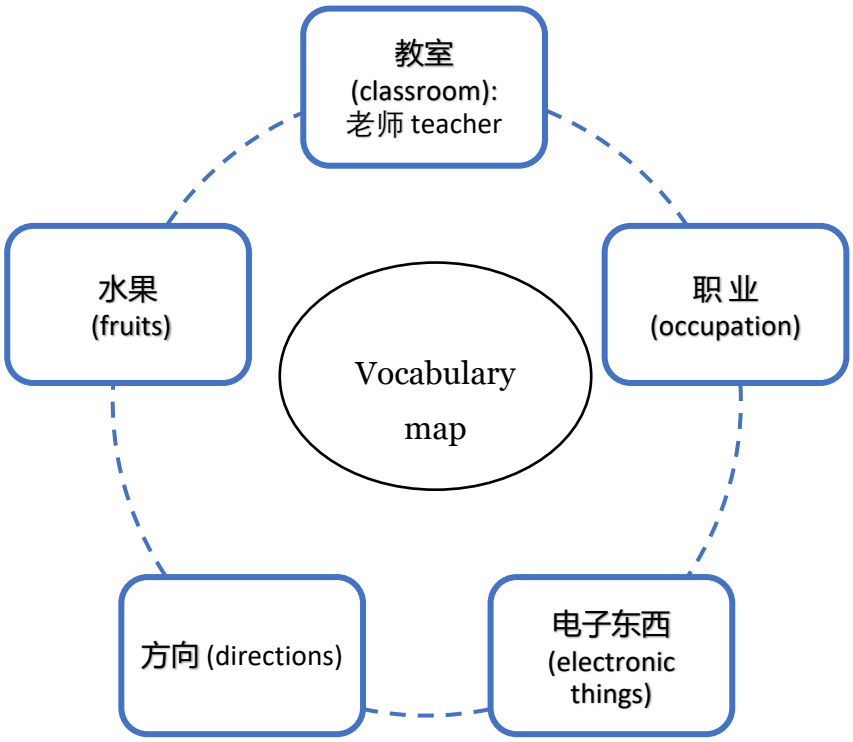


Figure 4.10. Vocabulary map designed by peer teachers, Group 2, Cycle 3, shared on WeChat on 22 April 2022

Table 4.5 presents the solution of a vocabulary map by peer learner C3P3 (see more sample solution in Appendix C4). C3P3 completed the vocabulary map by adding all the relevant vocabulary to the given topic. Under 教室 (classroom), C3P3 listed four items relevant to classroom: projector, table, bench, and chair. For 电子东西 (electronic things), she listed mobile phone, television, fridge, and elevator. The domain of 职业 (occupations) included doctor, engineer, business, and farmer. For 方向 (directions), she added besides, west, opposite, and outside. Finally, under 水果 (fruits), she categorised watermelon, banana, mango, and peach. This learner added all the relevant vocabulary to the given topic, which indicated the participant's understanding of the connection with relevant vocabulary and maintaining the semantic relationship with the given topic.

Solution of task 1 (vocabulary map) by peer learners	
Participant name: C3P3	
Date and time: 22.4.22, 15:02	
Vocabulary map (related words) 1) 教室（classroom) • 投影仪（projector) • 桌子（table) • 长椅（bench) • 椅子（chair) 2) 电子东西（electronic things) • 手机（mobile) • 电视（television) • 冰箱（ fridge) • 电梯（ elevator)	3) 聪业（occupation) • 医生（doctor) • 工程师（engineer) • 营业（business) • 农民（farmer) 4) 方向（directions) • 旁边（beside) • 西面（west) • 对面（opposite) • 外边（ outside) 5) 水果（fruits) • 西瓜 (watermelon) • 香蕉（banana) • 芒果（mango) • 桃子（peach).

Table 4.5. Solution of a vocabulary map by a peer learner

As shown in **Table 4.6**, a vocabulary development activity was prepared by Group 3 in Cycle 3. C3P6, as a member of Group 3, shared this task on WeChat. The task was designed to support vocabulary development by matching dialogue in halves from Part A and Part B columns, where each half, rightly paired, forms a coherent conversation. A sample was provided beforehand to guide peer learners that illustrated the matching process between two columns. This task had ten pairs that covered real-life conversational contexts including greeting, requesting, responding to illness, and planning arrangements. As peers worked together to identify appropriate dialogue segments, they encountered vocabulary usage in realistic interactions, prompting them to recognise and interpret words based on contextual clues. This interactive process revealed how learners interpreted unfamiliar lexicon items and worked collaboratively to identify the correct pair within the same theme category.

Group: Group 3 **Participant name:** C3P6 **Date & Time:** 29 April 2022, 1:00 pm			
Matching dialogue: Match the two parts (Part A &Part B) to form the dialogue			
	Part A		**Part B**
Example: 4. 你知道怎么去那儿吗？ → K. 当然。我们先坐公共汽车，然后换地铁。			
No.	**Part A dialogue**	**Label**	**Part B dialogue**
1.	今天你怎么了？一直在睡觉。	**A.**	我今天不舒服，觉得很累。
2.	啊，对，我记得你，你瘦了。	**B.**	你还认识我吗？在们在中国见过。
3.	桌子上放着饮料，你先喝点儿吧。	**C.**	你喜欢吃红苹果还是绿苹果？
4.	我喜欢吃红苹果，我觉得红苹果甜。	**D.**	妈妈，我下课回来了。
5.	这和雨伞多钱一把。	**E.**	上面写着二十元把。
6.	你每天进了办公室就坐在电脑前，身体能好吗？	**F.**	今天的题一点儿也不难。
7.	妈，我今天太累了，不想看书了。	**G.**	我的头怎么这么疼？
8.	他现在出去了，十点回来。	**H.**	喂，我到你家楼下了。
9.	好，你等我一下，我现在就下去。	**I.**	那喝了这杯牛奶就睡觉吧。
10.	因为你准备得好，所以觉得很容易。	**J.**	请问，周明在吗？

Table 4.6. Dialogue matching task prepared by Group 1, Cycle 3, shared on WeChat (Original)

Table 4.7 shows the solution of dialogue matching tasks by members of Group 1. C3P1 shared the solution on WeChat in the evening on behalf of Group 1. Out of ten pairs, they answered 8 pairs correctly and made two mistakes. Part A No. *3* dialogue*, 'There are drinks on the table, have some first (桌子上放着饮料，你先喝点儿吧)'* was matched with Label G from Part B*, 'Why does my head hurt so much? (我的头怎么这么疼?)'*. However, the correct match should be with Label I. Furthermore, Label G is the correct match for No. 6 from Part A, *'Then drink this cup of milk and go to sleep (那喝了这杯牛奶就睡觉吧).'* Both dialogues involved physical wellbeing and care, which might have confused learners with the two closely related options. The error suggests that though the learners recognised the broader semantic context, they were unable to

differentiate between the two exchanges at the level of specific lexical and contextual fit.

Interview data from Cycles 2 and 3 (n=6 participants across both cycles) also shows how solving various tasks improved vocabulary. Participants highlighted several specific mechanisms through which vocabulary development occurred:

Excerpt 4.20. Interview:

> Dialogue Making এ কে কি বলছে সেটা চিন্তা করে নতুব শব্দ শেখা, বাক্য তৈরি করা, পাশাপাশি গানের মাধ্যমে শব্দ শেখা ভালো লেগেছে। কোর্স শুরু হবার সময় থেকে এখন নিজের সাথে তুলনা করে বলতে পারি জড়তা কেটে গেছে, ভুল হওয়ার ভয়ে আগে কথা বলার সাহস না পাওয়াটা চলে গিয়েছে,। নতুন অনেক শব্দ শিখেছি, শব্দের ব্যবহার শিখেছি।

In the dialogue making exercises, I've enjoyed thinking about what someone is saying and putting together those lines. It helped me to learn new vocabulary, also learning new words through listening to music. Comparing myself since the course began, I can say that my hesitation in speaking and fear of making mistakes for not knowing vocabulary has improved a lot. I've learnt many new words and how to use them properly. (C2P3, Cycle 2, 2022)

Excerpt 4.21. Interview:

> টাস্ক করতে গিয়ে জিনিসগুলো বেশ হেল্পফুল ছিল, সবাই এক্টিভিটিগুলো যেভাবে সাজিয়েছে ফিল ইন দ্যা গ্যাপ, সেনটেন্স এরেঞ্জ এই সেই, এগুলো খুব হেল্পফুল ছিল। এগুলো করতে গিয়ে দেখা গেছে যে অনেক ওয়ার্ড এর হয়তো মিনিং জানিনা, সেটা আবার দেখে শেখা। এভাবে অনেক ওয়ার্ড শেখা হয়েছে, সেই সাথে এক্টিভিটিগুলোর জন্য বেশ অনেকটাই প্রাক্টিস হয়েছে, এই সবকিছু অনেক হেল্পফুল ছিল।

There were some benefits of solving tasks that were designed by peer teachers. Every group included Chinese language-based tasks such as filling in the gaps, sentence rearrangement, I found those very helpful. There were many words whose meanings I did not know. My vocabulary knowledge developed while solving those activities. (C3P6, Cycle 3, 2022)

Excerpt 4.22. Interview:

> ক্লাসের লেসনটাই আমরা ক্লাসের বাইরে ডিসকাস করতাম। তবে স্পিকিং প্রাক্টিসের সময় অনেক সময় নতুন শব্দ ব্যবহারের প্রয়োজন মনে হয়েছে কিন্তু শব্দ না জানায় কথা বলতে একটু সমস্যা হয়েছে। আমার আরেকটু ভোকাবুলারি ডেভলাপ করা দরকার।

We used to practice our lesson after class with some classmates. I need to increase my vocabulary. While we were practicing speaking, we found it difficult sometimes because it needed appropriate vocabulary to make the conversation. (C3P7, Cycle 3, 2022)

C2P3 (**Excerpt 4.20**) reflected that the dialogue matching exercise prompted thinking about meaning and contextual use, contributing towards growth in both vocabulary knowledge and speaking confidence since the course began. The improvement of vocabulary knowledge helped him minimise the hesitation and reduced fear of making mistakes. He also mentioned learning new vocabulary via listening to music outside the classroom. Similarly, C3P6 (**Excerpt 4.21**) mentioned vocabulary improvement directly by solving peer-designed tasks, emphasising that encountering unfamiliar words within meaningful activities facilitated his learning. However, C3P7 (**Excerpt 4.22**) did not report explicit vocabulary gains. The excerpt highlighted learners' awareness of vocabulary as a key resource for spoken communication. Her struggle for finding the right word was a challenge during peer practice. To summarise Section 4.1.1, findings across all 3 cycles indicate that students applied newly learned vocabulary in a communicative context by designing peer activities, completing tasks created by peers, and initiating their own dialogue.

Solution of task 1 (match the two parts of the same dialogue) by peer learners
Participants: Group 1, Cycle 3
Date & time: 29.4.22, 07:26 pm
1 今天你怎么了？一直在睡觉。 → What is wrong with you today? You've been sleeping the whole time. A. 我今天不舒服，觉得很累。 → I am not feeling well today, I feel very tired. 2. 啊，对，我记得你，你瘦了。 → Ah, yes, I remember you have lost weight. B. 你还认识我吗？我们在中国见过。 → Do you still recognise me? We met in China. 3. 桌子上放着饮料，你先喝点儿吧。 → There are drinks on the table, have some first. G. 我的头怎么这么疼？ → Why does my head hurt so much? 4. 我喜欢吃红苹果，我觉得红苹果甜。 → I like eating red apples, I think they are sweet. C. 你喜欢吃红苹果还是绿苹果？ → Do you prefer red apples or green apples? 5. 这把雨伞多少钱一把？ → How much is this umbrella? E. 上面写着二十元一把。 → It says 20 yuan each. 6. 你每天进了办公室就坐在电脑前，身体能好吗？ → Every day you go into the office and sit at the computer, can your health be good? I. 那喝了这杯牛奶就睡觉吧。 → Then drink this cup of milk and go to sleep. 7. 妈，我今天太累了，不想看书了。 → Mum, I am too tired today, I do not want to study. D. 妈妈，我下课回来了。 → Mum, I am back from class. 8. 他现在出去了，十点回来。 → He has gone out now; he will be back at ten. J. 请问，周明在吗？ → Excuse me, is Zhou Ming in? 9. 好，你等我一下，我现在就下去。 → Okay, wait for me a moment, I'll come down now. H. 喂，我到你家楼下了。 → Hello, I am downstairs at your place. 10. 因为你准备得好，所以觉得很容易。 → Because you are prepared well, you find it easy. F. 今天的题一点儿也不难。 → Today's questions are not difficult at all.

Table 4.7. Dialogue matching task solution by Group 1, Cycle 3 (original with translation)

4.3.2. Grammar development through RPL activities and peer interaction

Learners' perception of grammar development was closely related to participating in class lectures and their preparation for and participation in RPL activities. In Cycle 1, this could be seen in their classroom interactions. In Cycles 2 and 3, this work extended beyond the classroom, as students continued to design RPL tasks and interacted more with peers on WeChat. In both cycles participants emphasised the group activities as they supported their review and understanding of grammar points through tasks such as sentence rearrangement, using measure words, and applying grammatical structures in context.

Group 1 designed a sentence-rearrangement task for peer learners in Cycle 1, which C2P1 shared in the common WeChat group. This group did not use Bengali or English to guide peers but provided the instructions entirely in Chinese and titled the task 重新排列句子 (rearrange the sentences). The task contained five scrambled sentences that peer learners needed to rearrange into the correct order. To complete it, peer learners had to recognise question patterns, apply correct word order, understand verb–complement structures and degree complements, and identify the use of adverbs in Chinese.

Table 4.8 presents the responses of four participants (C2P4, C2P5, C2P6, C2P7) to each sentence in the rearrangement task. The peer teachers also provided explanations when they noticed mistakes. Although students knew the meaning of individual vocabulary items, they struggled to apply structural rules to form grammatically correct sentences.

No.	*Participant*	*Response to Task 1*	*Translation*	*Explanations by peer teachers*
1	C2P4	明天有考试吗不？	Is there an exam tomorrow or not?	Incorrect question structure: '不' placed at the end instead of forming a yes–no pattern (是不是)
1	C2P5	明天是不是有考试？	Is there an exam tomorrow?	—
1	C2P6	明天是不是有考试？	Is there an exam tomorrow?	—
1	C2P7	明天有考试吗？	Is there an exam tomorrow?	Did not apply the '是不是' structure
2	C2P4	我早就复习了好	I already reviewed early well	Incorrect word order: '好' should follow the verb as part of '复习好' (finish reviewing)
2	C2P5	我好早就复习了	I reviewed very early already	Wrong placement of '好' before '早' (adverb order not typical in Chinese)
3	C2P4	你怎么一直玩儿啊？	Why are you always playing?	—
3	C2P5	你怎么一直玩儿啊？	Why are you always playing?	—
3	C2P6	怎么你一直玩儿啊？	Why are you always playing?	Mistake with word order: subject '你' appears after '怎么'
3	C2P7	你怎么一直玩儿啊？	Why are you always playing?	—
4	C2P4	南方太热了	The south is too hot	—
4	C2P5	南方太热了	The south is too hot	—
4	C2P6	南方太热了	The south is too hot	—
4	C2P7	南方太热了	The south is too hot	—
5	C2P4	不冷也不热	It is neither cold nor hot	
5	C2P5	不冷也不热	It is neither cold nor hot	—
5	C2P6	不冷也不热	It is neither cold nor hot	—
5	C2P7	也不冷不热	It is also neither cold nor hot	Incorrect use of '也' (also) without prior context

Table 4.8. Sentence rearrangement task solution by peer learners (translated and marked by teacher-researcher)

Observing these responses prompted me to reflect on which grammar points remained unclear, so I revisited this task in the lesson for the next class. In the interview, participants expressed appreciation for opportunities to dedicate a session to review the grammar points. Consequently, they could raise their questions and show their examples to the teachers and discuss among peers. Also, they shared appreciation for their peers for having discussions and addressing their questions, including peer teachers' group as well groupmates (**Excerpt 4.23**).

Excerpt 4.23. Interview:

গ্রুপ ১-এর এই টাস্ক করতে আমার সবচেয়ে বেশি সময় লাগছে। আমি ভোকাবুলারির অর্থ জানা স্বত্তেও বাক্য সাজাতে পারতেছিলাম না। রিঅ্যারেঞ্জ করতে গিয়ে নিজের বোঝার সমস্যাগুলা বেশি বুঝতে পারছি, বাক্য তৈরি করতে গিয়ে আগে পরে করে ফেলছি। ২ নম্বর বাক্যটা বুঝতে পারি নাই, তাই ওইটা তখন বাদ দিছি। তবে পরে C2P1 আমাকে বুঝাইছে, আর আপনি যখন ক্লাসে আবার ব্যখ্যা করছেন আর নিজেরা ৩টা করে উদাহারণ বানালাম, তখন আরও সহজ মনে হয়েছে।

The Group 1 task required the most time to complete. Although I was familiar with the meanings of the vocabulary, I was initially unable to construct coherent sentences. When I tried to rearrange them, I became more aware of my own comprehension difficulties. When forming sentences, I kept mixing up the order. I could not understand sentence number 2, so I skipped it at the time. However, later C2P1 from Group 1 explained it to me, and when you explained it again in class and we each created three examples ourselves, it became clearer. (C2P7, Cycle 2, 2022)

গ্রামারের রিভিউ ক্লাস হওয়ায় অনেক উপকার হয়েছে। গ্রুপ ১ -এর কাজ করতে গিয়ে গ্রামারগুলোর ব্যবহার শিখতে পারছি। আমার ভুল হইছিলো কোশ্চেন মার্ক ব্যাবহারে, () ভাবছি প্রথমে হবে বাক্যর , যেমন আমরা ইংরেজিতে বাক্য গঠন করি। যখন গ্রুপ ১ টাস্কের উত্তর শেয়ার করলো, তখন দেখলাম যে আমার উত্তর ভুল। পরেরদিন ক্লাসে আমার গ্রুপমেট (C2P4) -এর সাথে ডিসাকাস করে বুঝতে পারছি।

The grammar review session in class was highly beneficial for me personally. Through engaging in the Group 1 task, I developed a better understanding of how to apply the grammar points. One of my mistakes involved the use of question marks; initially, I assumed they would be placed at the beginning of the sentence, as we usually follow patterns used in English sentence formation. When Group 1 shared their answers, I realised that some of my answers were incorrect. The following day, after discussing the task with my groupmate (C2P4) in class, I was able to understand it more clearly. (C2P6, Cycle 2, 2022)

The sentence rearrangement task was also very prominent in Cycle 3. For example, two sentence rearrangement tasks were designed by Group 1 and Group 3 in Cycle 3. Both Group 1 and Group 3 constructed sentences that combined multiple grammatical structures, which showed peer teachers had reviewed and engaged with these rules

before designing the task. In Group 1's task, the recurrence of 没有/没 across four sentences signals that peer teachers recognised negation as a persistent challenge for learners, and the use of 也 and 都 encouraged peer learners to understand similar forms and select each item according to its specific grammatical function.

Table 4.9 presents peer learners' responses to two sets of tasks designed by peer teachers from two groups. Five different peer learners attempted to solve both group's tasks. For Group 1, three participants (C3P2, C3P3, C3P6) completed the full task, one participant (C3P7) attempted only two sentences, and one participant (C3P9) did not answer the task at all. Group 1 errors were more scattered and less consistent, supporting the observation that more structured tasks produced more predictable learner outcomes. C3P7 partially attempted both tasks, which raises a question about whether incomplete engagement reflects linguistic difficulty or a wider issue with participation on WeChat. For Group 2, four participants completed the task, and one participant (C3P7) solved only three sentences. For Group 2, all participants made errors for sentences three and four. Group 1, focused on specific grammatical components, and learners were able to solve those. In contrast, the Group 2 task incorporated greater variation and complexity, resulting in more diverse learner responses and a higher frequency of mistakes. These patterns indicate that task structure and linguistic complexity influenced both learner performance and the consistency of responses.

Participants name with date and time	**Solution of task 2 of Group 1 by peer learners**	**Participants name with date and time**	**Solution of task 2 of Group 2 by peer learners**
C3P2 *18.4.22: 14:20*	1. 商店里一个面包也没有。 2. 我还没想好吃什么。 3。今年一点儿雪都没下。 4。今天下午我一杯咖啡也 喝。 5。你洗好水果了吗?	C3P3 22.4.22, 15:02	1. 上山 难下山 容易。 2. 我跟你一起去吧。 3. 我告诉了就到办公室。 4. 我们等你在楼上。 5. 今天的考试一点儿也不难。
C3P3 *18.4.22: 15:42*	1：商店里一个面包也没有。 2：我还没想好吃什么。 3：今年 一点儿 需 都 没下。 4：今天下午我也一杯没喝咖啡。 5：你洗水果好了吗?	C3P6 22.4.22, 19.30	1。上山难下山容易。 2。 我跟你一起去吧。 3。我到了办公室就你告诉 4。 我们在等你上楼。 5。 今天的考试也不一点儿难。

C3P6 *18.4.22: 19:35*	1：商店里一个面包也没有。 2：我还没想好吃什么。 3：今天一点儿需都没。 4：今天下午我一杯咖啡没喝。 5：你洗好水果了吗？	C3P5 22.4.22, 20:18	1。上山难下山容易。 2。 我跟你一起去吧。 3。我到了办公室就告诉。 4。 我们在上楼 等你 5。 今天的考试也不一点儿难
C3P7 *19.4.22: 03:18*	1：商店里也没有一个面包 2：我还没想好吃什么？	C3P1 22.4.22, 23:43	1. 上山 难下山 容易。 2. 我跟你一起去吧。 3. 我告诉了就到办公室。 4. 我们等你在楼上。 5. 今天的考试一点儿也不难。
C3P9 *19.4.22: 03:53*	Did not answer this	C3P7 23.4.22, 10:00	2. 你跟我一起去吧。 4. 我们等你在楼。 5. 今天 的 考试 也 不 一 点 儿 。

Sample solution of Group1 and Group 3's sentence rearrangement task by peer learner (Original, shared in WeChat)

Participants name with date and time	***Solution of task 2 of Group 1 by peer learners***	***Participants name with date and time***	***Solution of task 2 of Group 2 by peer learners***
C3P2 *18.4.22: 14:20*	1. There isn't even one piece of bread in the shop. 2. I haven't decided what to eat yet. 3. It hasn't snowed at all this year. 4. I didn't drink even a cup of coffee this afternoon. 5. Have you finished washing the fruit?	C3P3 22.4.22, 15:02	1. Climbing a mountain is hard; going down is easy. 2. I'll go with you. 3. I told (you) then went to the office. 4. We are waiting for you upstairs. 5. Today's exam was not difficult at all.
C3P3 *18.4.22: 15:42*	1. There isn't even one piece of bread in the shop. 2. I haven't decided what to eat yet. 3. It hasn't snowed at all this year. 4. I didn't drink even a cup of coffee this afternoon. 5. Have you finished washing the fruit?	C3P6 22.4.22, 19:30	1. Climbing a mountain is hard; going down is easy. 2. I'll go with you. 3. When I arrive at the office, I will tell you. 4. We are waiting for you to go upstairs. 5. Today's exam was not at all difficult.
C3P6 *18.4.22: 19:35*	1. There isn't even one piece of bread in the shop. 2. I haven't decided what to eat yet. 3. There isn't even a little snow today. 4. I didn't drink even a cup of coffee this afternoon. 5. Have you finished washing the fruit?	C3P5 22.4.22, 20:18	1. Climbing a mountain is hard; going down is easy. 2. I'll go with you. 3. I arrived at the office then tell. 4. We are upstairs waiting for you. 5. Today's exam is not at all difficult.
C3P7 *19.4.22: 03:18*	1. There isn't even one piece of bread in the shop.	C3P1 22.4.22, 23:43	1. Climbing a mountain is hard; going down is easy.

	2. I haven't decided what to eat yet.		2. I'll go with you. 3. I told (you) then went to the office. 4.We are waiting for you upstairs. 5. Today's exam is not difficult at all.
C3P9 *19.4.22: 03:53*	Did not answer	C3P7 23.4.22, 10:00	2. I'll go with you. 3. We are waiting for you upstairs. 5. Today's exam is not at all difficult.

Table 4.9. Sample solution of Group1 and Group 3's sentence rearrangement task by peer learner (translated and marked by the teacher-researcher)

Grammar practice was further facilitated by peers' presence and support, as peers offered immediate explanations, clarifications, and feedback when peer learners encountered difficulties. In interviews, six students combining Cycle 2 and Cycle 3, commented on how solving peer activities and support from them not only developed their grammatical knowledge, but also the pace of learning. For example,

> **Excerpt 4.24.** Interview:
> The group activities have increased the pace of my Chinese learning. For example, while doing the rearrangements I was able to apply the grammar rules that had been covered in my regular class by the teacher. (C2P3,2022, original)

> **Excerpt 4.25.** Interview:
> When I have a question, there are peers to reply or explain it. Engaging with others and solving group activities have increased the pace of my learning. (C2P2, 2022, original)

Both statements indicate that group-based activities and peer interactions played a significant role in grammar learning and practicing. C2P3's statement emphasised how sentence rearrangement activities helped him to apply grammar rules that he encountered in class. C2P2's statement reveals how peers' availability during group tasks directly accelerated her learning pace. The immediate peer feedback filled the gaps that independent study alone could not.

Moreover, as presented in **Table 4.10**, in Cycle 2 and Cycle 3, peer teachers designed tasks related to identifying appropriate measure words (MW), which provided more opportunities for peer learners to practise more grammar. In Cycle 2, Group 2 designed a task on identifying MW and provided an example. In Cycle 3, Group 1 prepared a Fill-in-the-gaps activity that needed to use proper MW, and Group 3 provided ten nouns to identify the corresponding MW. In the Chinese language a numeral cannot usually

quantify a noun independently, it needs a classifier, commonly known as a measure word. A MW is used when a noun is preceded by a numeral or a demonstrative, following the structure: 'subject + verb + number + MW + noun'. The use of an inappropriate MW produces a grammatically incorrect expression, as MW often carries semantic information that reflects the nature, shape, and function of the noun they accompany. To solve all three activities, peer learners needed knowledge of specific classifiers in Chinese grammar. The recurrence of measure word tasks in both Cycle 2 and Cycle 3, despite involving different cohorts, indicates a shared challenge among Bangladeshi Chinese language learners. Their similarity in task design indicates that peer teachers, perhaps based on their own learning experiences, were likely aware of this challenge and prioritised it when designing the tasks. The similar task repetition during all cycles may indicate that peer teachers from different cohorts were not selecting topics randomly but were making informed decisions about what needs more focused practice. In this sense, the repeated attention to MW can be understood as a collective response to a recognised area of difficulty, where both peer teachers and learners contributed to strengthening grammatical control through ongoing practice.

Task prepared by group, cycle	**Date and time**	**Types of activity: Measure word**
Group 2, Cycle 2	**12.3.22**	**Choose the appropriate measure word:** **Example 书 = 本** **Measure words:** 位，张，家，条， 支， 只， 块， 把， 件 1）猫 = 2）老师 = 3）笔 = 4）椅子 = 5）桌子 = 6）蛋糕 = 7）公司 = 8）路 =
Group 1, Cycle 3	**18.4.22**	**Fill in the blank using measure word** 双，只，杯，件，家 1）这___ 衣服很好看。 2）我买了一____鞋。 3) 这___鸟不能飞。 4) 那___茶三十快。 5) 打卡大学附近有两____银行。
Group 3, Cycle 3	**29.4.22**	**Match the objects with suitable measure words:** **Example: 衣服=件** 1. 书 2. 茶

		3. 地图 4. 车 5. 人 6. 元 7. 房间 8. 发 9. 手机 10.公司 11.衣服

Table 4.10. Identify appropriate measure word activity in Cycle 2 and Cycle 3 designed by peer teachers (original, shared on WeChat)

The fact that most participants attempted the tasks and shared their responses via WeChat despite making mistakes indicates that they were developing their grammatical knowledge through practice and experimentation. Moreover, learners' willingness to attempt and submit responses showed that the WeChat platform supported a low-pressure environment where learners felt confident enough to participate without the fear of making mistakes.

4.3.3. Listening and speaking skills development through peer exchange on WeChat

It was established that in Cycle 2 and 3, while interacting with peers on WeChat, learners had opportunities to practise listening and responding to spoken input through exchanging voice messages. Unlike the grammar and vocabulary activities examined in sections 4.1.1 and 4.1.2, which were primarily task-based and structured by peer teachers, the listening and speaking development emerged through self-initiated conversations in Chinese. Compared to Cycle 2's conversations that were conducted among the group members, Cycle 3 involved other peers and were done in the common WeChat group.

The WeChat voice messaging function supported learners to exercise listening and speaking practice in real-time (**Excerpt 4.26**). In Cycle 2, two learners C2P3, C2P4 found this feature very useful. These students started a '5 minutes in Chinese' session in WeChat group, and the conversation exchange happened only among them. This behaviour indicates that peer interaction and regular conversational practice positively influenced the learner's Chinese language development. Specifically, the learner perceived improvements in speaking, listening, and pronunciation. Furthermore, the

repeated practice session in their WeChat group had reduced anxiety and helped develop learners' confidence for speaking in Chinese.

Excerpt 4.26. Interview:

আমরা (C2P3 এবং C2P4) আমাদের নিজস্ব গ্রুপে চীনা ভাষায় কথা বলা শুরু করেছি। এই তাৎক্ষণিক কথোপকথনগুলো আমাকে চীনা ভাষায় কথা বলতে উৎসাহিত করেছে এবং অন্যদের চীনা ভাষায় কথা শুনে আমার শোনার দক্ষতাও উন্নত হয়েছে। আমি আশা করি এটি আমাদের উচ্চারণ উন্নত করতে সাহায্য করবে। আমরা একসঙ্গে পাঁচটি সেশন করেছি, এবং এখন আমি নিজেকে আরও আত্মবিশ্বাসী মনে করছি।

We (C2P3, C2P4) started speaking in Chinese in our personal WeChat group. These real-time conversations encouraged me to speak Chinese, also helped me improve my listening skills by hearing others speak Chinese. I hope this will help us improve our pronunciation. We have had five sessions together, and I am now feeling more confident.

In Cycle 3, students were more engaged in their common WeChat group. **Table 4.11** presents a sample voice message exchange from Cycle 3 in which C3P3 shared a personal situation: a headache preventing her from studying effectively. As C3P3 says, '我的头疼了，所以我不能学习' (I have a headache, so I can't study). C3P4 immediately asks, '你们怎么了?' (What's going on with you all?). C3P1 also joined in the conversation and said '姐姐好好休息一下， 和你吃药' (Sister take a good rest and have medicine). Basically, two peers, C3P1 and C3P4, throughout the whole conversation responded with empathy and practical advice in Chinese. The exchange indicated that learners were able to respond appropriately to an unscripted personal situation in Chinese.

Time	***Participant***	***Audio to text conversion (original version)***	***Translation***
21:12	C3P3	我的头疼了所以我不能学习。	I have a headache, so I can't study.
21:12	C3P4	你们怎么了？	What's going on with you people?
21:12	C3P1	姐姐好好休息一下，和你吃药。	Sister, take a good rest and take your medicine.
21:13	C3P3	我已经吃药了，谢谢你！	I have already taken my medicine, thank you!
21:13	C3P3	我也吃了东西，喝了咖啡！	I also ate something and drank coffee!
21:14	C3P3	有时候想看大脑	Sometimes I want to see my head (doctor).
21:14	C3P3	你们都祈祷我。	Pray for me.
21:15	C3P3	现在我想给 steam	I would like to get steam.
21:18	C3P4	你好好休息，吃点儿药！	Have a good rest and take some medicine!

21:20	C3P3	我感觉 steam 以后很好！	I think I will feel better after taking steam!
21:20	C3P4	谢谢我已经休息！	Thank you, I had already gotten some rest!

Table 4.11. Sample of students sending voice messages to each other

Other learners such as C3P2 and C3P6 shared in an interview that voice messaging was the initial fear of speaking in Chinese aloud, however, it improved their pronunciation and confidence (**Excerpt 4.27**). C3P6 described her hesitation rooted in fear of making mistakes. Nevertheless, when she observed her classmates were sending short voice messages confidently, she adopted the same practice herself (**Excerpt 4.27**).

> **Excerpt 4.27.** Interview:
> I loved the voice message practice on WeChat. I had a fear of speaking in Chinese, sending voice messages and listening to others' reply really helped to work on my pronunciation and speaking. I feel more confident and try to speak more. (C3P2, 2022)
>
> Initially, I felt hesitant and somewhat self-conscious about sending voice messages. This was basically my fear of making mistakes and my poor speaking skills in Chinese. After noticing my classmates regularly and confidently sharing short voice messages about daily life, I felt encouraged. Inspired by my peers' ease and informality, I began sending short voice messages to the group. This practice not only saved time compared to typing but also significantly boosted my speaking proficiency and comfort when interacting in Chinese. My confidence in speaking grew and I noticed myself communicating more clearly and naturally. (C3P6, 2022)

Another example from the same learner, C3P6 showed she was very anxious about speaking in Chinese and committing mistakes (**Excerpt 4.28**). To address this challenge, she sought assistance from the group members to find the appropriate vocabulary and to draft a video script on 'how to make a dumpling'. Before recording the video, she practised the script with group members, which proved to be a positive and encouraging experience for her. She realised that practising speaking alone is a difficult task. However, engaging in collaborative discussion with another speaker brought opportunities not only to learn new vocabulary but also helped in reviewing previously learnt words.

> **Excerpt 4.28.** Interview:
> I made a cooking video, and my peers helped me with that. I was preparing to make 饺子 (Jiǎozǐ =dumpling). I was anxious about speaking in Chinese and making mistakes. Tones and

> pronunciation are both difficult for me. I asked my group members for some words and prepared the script. Before making the video, I practised the script with my group members. This feels very positive and encouraging for me. Practicing speaking on my own is impossible. But if two speakers are engaged in it, many new words can be learnt and the previously learnt words can be revised. (C3P6, 2022)

In both the cycles, students experienced fear, hesitation, and self-consciousness in speaking Chinese due to concerns of making mistakes and lacked confidence in their speaking ability. Through regular participation via WeChat group's voice-message exchanges, they started to feel more comfortable speaking in Chinese. This practice helped them improve pronunciation, speaking skills, and confidence. Furthermore, observing peers actively and confidently sharing voice messages served as a source of encouragement, and motivated them to participate more frequently.

4.4. Independent and Self-initiated learning on WeChat and social media

Independent learning here is understood as learners' self-initiated exploration with learning materials and tools by their choice outside the classroom. Independent learning was not a formal requirement of the course, but it emerged as an outcome of learners' self-initiated decision to find and engage more with Chinese language content during their leisure time. This theme was more prominent in Cycle 2 and Cycle 3, where independent learning was driven by personal interest. Six participants shared their strong belief in the importance of independent learning as a prerequisite to becoming a better learner. According to them, this learning approach offered a chance for enjoyment, freedom and more connection with the language. More precisely, as it is not a part of the course, this puts students at ease and allows them to explore their own interests.

4.4.1. Self-initiated exploration of resources and tools

Independent resource exploration moved from isolated, tool-specific use to classroom-compensatory practice. In Cycle 1, three students experimented with a single digital tool out of personal interest. In Cycle 2, students used self-study time specifically to fix problems they had noticed during the class, such as struggling with word order or not

getting enough listening practice. By Cycle 3, independent learning had grown into something larger and more social, with students combining several resources, creating their own Chinese learning Facebook page, using WeChat for learning and practising Chinese.

In Cycle 1, independent learning was largely tool-specific and individually driven, with three students, each identifying a single platform suited to a particular need (**Excerpt 4.29**). C1P1, for example, used YouTube for its multimodal input combining audio, visual and text to support vocabulary learning. Similarly, C1P2 adopted the TrainChinese app to learn stroke order for Chinese character (Hanzi) writing, which was mentioned in the class. C1P3 extended her practice into a community space by following two Chinese-learning Facebook groups. The Facebook groups shared short conversational exchanges and grammar explanations that combined with both informal and colloquial register and structured linguistic content. This pattern showed that the learners identified a specific gap, selected a targeted tool for that gap, and evaluated its effectiveness by using it for learning. Even though students mentioned using different platforms in Cycle 1, there was no particular data on using WeChat for learning Chinese. This might be related to their unfamiliarity with this app.

Excerpt 4.29. Observation notes from online class (18 September 2021, original with translation):

শিক্ষক-গবেষক: নিজেরা যখন পড়াশোনা করো, তখন কী করো?

C1P1: আমি ইউটিউবে মাঝেমাঝে চীনা ভাষা শেখার ভিডিও দেখি। বিভিন্ন লেসনের ভোকাবুলারি দিয়ে বাক্য তৈরি করে দেখায়, নতুন শব্দ শিখতে আমার ভালো লাগে।

C1P2: ক্লাসে আপনি ট্রেইনচাইনিজ (Trainchinese) অ্যাপের কথা বলার পর আমি এটি ইনস্টল করেছি এবং হানজি লেখার সঠিক স্ট্রোক অর্ডার শেখার জন্য ব্যবহার করছি। আগে আমি এই অ্যাপের নাম জানতাম না । (সেপ্টেম্বর ২০২১)

C1P3: আমি ফেসবুকের কয়েকটা গ্রুপ ফলো করা শুরু করেছি। এসব গ্রুপে চীনা ভাষায় ছোট ছোট কথোপকথন আর ব্যাকরণের ব্যাখ্যা শেয়ার করে।

Teacher-researcher: What do you do when you study on your own? Do you watch videos or read other books?

C1P1: I watch Chinese learning videos on YouTube. I like to see words with example sentences.

C1P2: Since you have mentioned TrainChinese 4 in our class, I have installed and used it to learn appropriate stroke order for writing Hanzi. I was not following the appropriate stroke order for my writing but made a huge progress after using the app.

C1P3: I started following some groups on Facebook. These groups share short conversations and explanations of grammar points in Chinese.

In Cycle 2, self-initiated learning for some students centred on reviewing class content (**Excerpt 4.30**). C2P3 described a structured post-class routine. He revisited textbook lessons and class lectures, completed the corresponding exercises, and then returned to in-class listening tasks to identify and reflect on the mistakes he made during the class. He extended this routine by solving reading and writing tasks in the workbook and keeping a personal notebook to write down key points specifically for pre-exam revision. From the same cohort, C2P1 mentioned following the Chinese Wiki website to review grammar and watching YouTube videos. She liked the website for its structured explanations that made rules easier to remember. She identified the word order of Chinese as difficult to remember, as there is a difference between Bengali and Chinese. The student actively connected what she learned on Chinese Wiki with her class lectures. These behaviours seemed to reflect that students were making strategic choices and planning by independently deciding what to review, identifying their own difficulties, acting on those difficulties, and preparing for future examinations.

[4] Train Chinese is a free Chinese- English dictionary that is available for both android and apple stores. This dictionary offers pinyin, Hanzi, stroke order, etymology of the Hanzi. I also used it for learning Chinese.

Excerpt 4.30. Observation notes from class (original with translation)

শিক্ষক-গবেষক: ক্লাসের পরে আপনি কীভাবে পড়াশোনা করেন? যেমন, কী ধরনের উপকরণ বা রিসোর্স ব্যবহার করেন এবং কীভাবে ব্যবহার করেন?

C2P3: ক্লাসের পরে আমি সাধারণত পাঠ্যবইয়ের পাঠগুলো এবং ক্লাসের লেকচারগুলো আবার পড়ি এবং লেসনগুলোর যে এক্সসারসাইজ থাকে সেটা সমাধান করার চেষ্টা করি। এরপর ক্লাসে শোনার অনুশীলনে যে ভুলগুলো করেছি, সেগুলো খুঁজে দেখি। তারপর, ওয়ার্কবুকের পড়া ও লেখার এক্সসারসাইজগুলো করি। আমি গুরুত্বপূর্ণ বিষয়গুলো নোটবুকে লিখে রাখার চেষ্টা করি, যাতে পরীক্ষার আগে সহজে সেগুলো রিভিউ করতে পারি। (১৮ মার্চ ২০২২)

C2P1: ব্যাকরণ রিভিউ করার জন্য আমি *চাইনিজ উইকি* ব্যবহার করি। এই ওয়েবসাইটে ব্যাকরণের বিস্তারিত ব্যাখ্যা দেওয়া থাকে। আমি ইউটিউবের ভিডিওও দেখি। আগে শব্দের ক্রম (word order) মনে রাখতে আমার খুব কষ্ট হতো, কারণ এটি বাংলার থেকে সম্পূর্ণ আলাদা। *ওয়েবসাইটায়* সহজে মনে রাখার মতো ব্যাখ্যা দেওয়া থাকে। ফলে আমি এগুলো আমার ক্লাসের লেকচারের সঙ্গে মিলিয়ে বুঝতে পারি। (২০ মার্চ ২০২২)

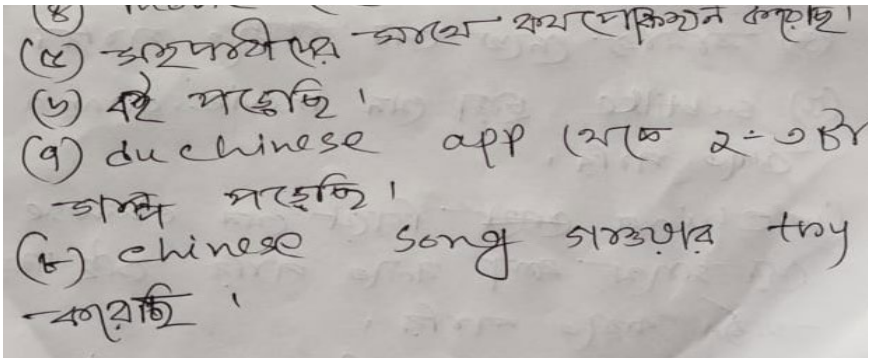
Teacher-researcher: How do you study Chinese after class? For example, what materials or resources do you use and how?

C2P3: After the class, I usually review textbook lessons and class lectures and solve the exercises of each lesson. After that, check the mistakes that I made in the listening exercise in the class. Then I work on reading and writing exercises in the workbook. I try to write down the important points in my notebook, so I can easily review those notes before the exam. (18 March 2022)

C2P1: Chinese Wiki for reviewing grammar, this website has descriptions of grammars. Previously I had struggled with remembering word order, because it's completely different from Bengali. The Chinese wiki website provides proper structure and explanations that are easy to remember, and I can connect it with my class lecture. I also watch YouTube videos. (20 March 2022)

In Cycle 3, learners documented their self-learning journey in their reflective journal. The findings showed they used multiple digital and non-digital resources. These included social media platforms (Facebook and WeChat), language-learning applications (DU Chinese and Pleco), online videos (YouTube and listening-skills videos), entertainment media (Chinese songs and dramas), textbooks, and vocabulary lists. Participants also reported interacting with other Chinese speakers or learners through conversations with classmates and reading Chinese friends' WeChat posts. For example, in **Figure 4.11**, C3P1 engaged with the language through both educational resources (books and the DU Chinese app) and recreational activities

(singing Chinese songs), which indicated her willingness to integrate Chinese into everyday life.



Original copy of student's documentation of self-learning (C3P1)

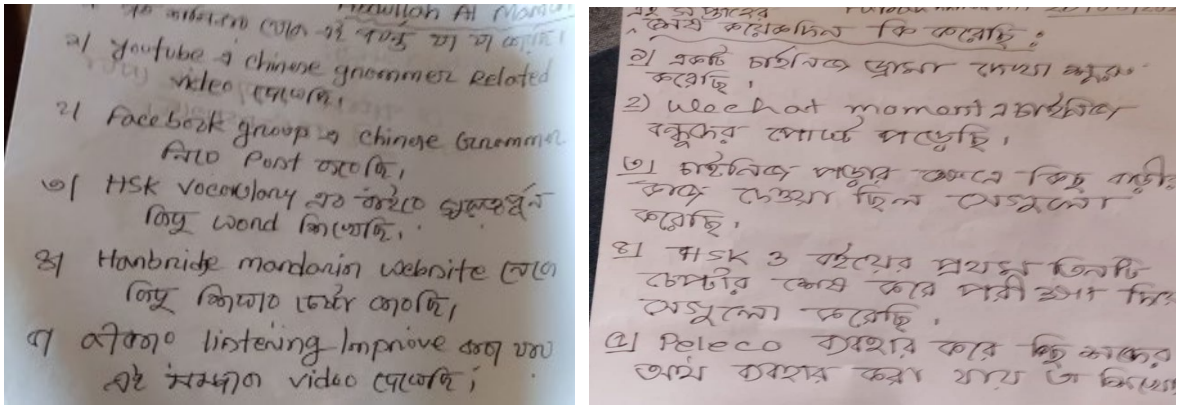
1)Had conversation with my classmates

2) Read books

3) Read 3 stories from DU Chinese app

Figure 4.11. Translated copy of student's documentation of self-learning (C3P1)

C3P4's journal (**Figure 4.12**) showed the learner created his own Facebook page. He shared Chinese learning content with other Chinese language learners. This initiative suggested that independent learning extended into collaborative knowledge exchange outside the classroom not only with peers from class but also with other learners. Moreover, C3P6's journal showed how she incorporated a wide range of Chinese-learning activities that combined formal study with authentic language exposure. Formal learning activities included completing homework, reviewing textbook lessons, taking a mini-exam, and consulting the Pleco dictionary to understand the vocabulary. At the same time, the learner sought authentic input by watching Chinese dramas and reading Chinese friends' WeChat posts.



Original sample copy of student's documentation of self-learning (C3P4, C3P6), May 2022

C3P4:
1) Watched Chinese grammar related video in YouTube

2)Posted about Chinese grammar in my Facebook group

3)Learnt some important words out of HSK 3's vocabulary list

4) Checked Hanbridge Mandarin website

C3P6:
1) Started to watch a Chinese drama

2)Read WeChat moments of my Chinese friends

3) Completed my homework

4) Reviewed Lesson 1 to Lesson from textbook and solved the mini exam

5) Used Pleco dictionary learn the meanings

Figure 4.12. Translated sample copy of student's documentation of self-learning (C3P4, C3P6), May 2022

Listening comprehension was a particular focus of self-learning in Cycle 2 and Cycle 3 (**Excerpt 4.31**). This was not a regular focus in their previous Chinese classes, but in this course, it was embedded as a recurring component of the pedagogical design. This shift encouraged students to invest more time in practising listening skills during self-study. In Cycle 2, C2P2 explained the difficulty of understanding spoken texts in real time during class listening activities. Because the class time was fixed and it was not possible to repeat the text multiple times during class. During self-study, the learner can control the frequency and pace of audio, which helps him comprehend through repeated exposure. C2P3 similarly described reviewing the listening mistakes made

during class workbook tasks. He considered his self-correction practice as preparation for the HSK examination. Another learner, C3P6 offered to describe how watching short TikTok videos during commuting made listening practice incidental and enjoyable. She also reflected that sharing video links with peers extended that practice into a social and informal learning community.

Excerpt 4.31. Interview:

C2P2: ক্লাসে শুনে শুনে, লেখা না দেখে পুরো পাঠ্যটি বুঝতে পারা আমার জন্য খুবই কঠিন। অনেক সময় পুরো টেক্সট থেকে শুধু এক-দুইটি শব্দই বুঝতে পারি, যা খুব হতাশাজনক। ক্লাসে একটি টেক্সট বারবার শোনার সুযোগ থাকে না। এ ধরনের অনুশীলন বারবার করা সম্ভব হয় যখন আমি একা পড়াশোনা করি।

C2P3: ক্লাসে ওয়ার্কবুকের অনুশীলন করার সময় শোনার অংশে যে ভুলগুলো করি, সেগুলো পরে রিভিউ করার চেষ্টা করি। ক্লাসের পরে ভুলগুলো আবার দেখে ভালো লাগে। আমি মনে করি, যদি এভাবে নিয়মিত চালিয়ে যেতে পারি, তাহলে এইচএসকে পরীক্ষার জন্য আরও ভালোভাবে প্রস্তুতি নিতে পারব। আমি ইউটিউবে কিছু ভিডিওও দেখেছি এবং লিসেনিং উন্নত করার বিষয়ে দেওয়া পরামর্শগুলো অনুসরণ করার চেষ্টা করেছি।

C3P6: যানজটে আটকে থাকলে চীনা ভাষার ছোট ছোট টিকটক ভিডিও দেখা আমার কাছে বেশ মজার একটি কাজ। আমি এসব ভিডিওর লিংক আমাদের গ্রুপেও শেয়ার করি, যাতে আমার বন্ধুরাও মজা পেতে পারে এবং একই সঙ্গে চীনা ভাষার কথোপকথন শোনার অনুশীলন করতে পারে।

Understanding the text without looking at the text while practising listening in class is very challenging. Sometimes I understood only one or two words of the text, which is frustrating. The repetition of texts multiple times is not possible in class. It's only flexible to do that when I am studying alone. (C2P2, March 2022)

I try to review my listening mistakes that I made when solving the workbook in class. Reviewing the mistakes after class makes me feel good. If I continue to do this, I feel it will prepare me better for the HSK examination. I also watched some videos on YouTube and tried to follow the advice on improving my listening skills. (C2P3, March 2022)

Watching short TikTok videos in Chinese while I am stuck in traffic is a fun activity for me. I also send video links to our groups, so my friends can have fun too and practice listening to Chinese conversations at the same time. (C3P6, May 2022)

4.4.2. Learner-initiated engagement with Chinese culture through social media

Beyond language skills, several learners independently engaged with Chinese cultural content. Reading stories from different websites was a common choice of learners to enjoy the narrative and learn about the culture. Different social media such as Facebook, YouTube videos, Du Mandarin app, WeChat group and TikTok were the common platforms used by many learners to get access to the contents in Chinese

language. Being part of some Chinese learning groups in WeChat and Facebook also helped students to find daily life related content. Learners became familiar with Chinese festivals, Chinese food, social norms and values. In other words, exploring these resources fosters cultural awareness and offers more exposure to Chinese society.

In Cycle 2, C2P3's statement showed how the student connected the social media videos with the classroom content. The student learned the meaning of 加油 in class, while watching TikTok video. The learner not only understood the expression but also enjoyed the cultural humour built around it. Another learner watched videos on WeChat regarding how to celebrate Chinese New Year. This exposure appeared to help learners connect classroom learning with broader aspects of Chinese society and culture.

> **Excerpt 4.32.** Observations:
> I came across a funny TikTok video about 加油 [5] (jiā yóu), I recently learnt the expression from class. This made the video very meaningful as I can recognise and understand the phrase, as well as understand the humour behind the video. For Chinese learners like me, watching this type of short video has been beneficial to remember the words and expressions. (C2P3, 8 April 2022, classroom observation, translation)
> C2P6: Watched short videos in other WeChat groups about celebrating Chinese New Year.

The similar approach had been observed in Cycle 3, when C3P1 was reading a story in DU Mandarin app about the content 哪里, 哪里 (where, where). She learned how this expression can mean something different. As in the class, she learned it as a question marker, and not as the other expression of this word. This suggested how students were able to relate their textbook content when they heard and read something related to the content in their leisure time. In Cycle 3, two students mentioned using YouTube and WeChat to explore more about Chinese culture. Their choices indicated how social media and online content could support intercultural learning and help learners identify the difference between Bangladeshi and Chinese culture. For example, C3P6 described being fascinated by a YouTube video on Chinese festivals, especially the Mid-Autumn Festival and its symbolism of the full moon as a time of reunion, which aligns with how the festival is widely presented in contemporary media and cultural

[5] The phrase 加油 (jiā yóu), commonly used to express encouragement, as like the expression 'keep it up' or 'you can do it'. But it has a completely different meaning when those words used separately.

explanations. This fascination was strengthened by a personal association with Bengali literature and the shared cultural appreciation of the full moon, showing how new cultural knowledge is interpreted through existing cultural frames. Also, sharing the YouTube link with friends indicates that learning is not an isolated process but becomes a social activity.

> **Excerpt 4.33.** Interview:
> DU Mandarin is my favourite app for reading. I read an interesting story about how to show modesty when praised in Chinese. They use 哪里，哪里 (nǎ lǐ, nǎ lǐ), to show politeness [6]. If someone gives me a complement, now I also use 哪里，哪里 (*nǎ lǐ, nǎ lǐ*) as reply. I realised that without the appropriate cultural knowledge, we can face many misunderstandings. (C3P1, 15 May 2022, classroom observation, translation)

> I was watching a video about different Chinese festivals on YouTube and was fascinated by reading the story behind Mid-autumn festival, the connection between full moon and reunion. I also shared the link with my friends. It was fun to watch the video and gain some new knowledge about Chinese culture. I was not familiar with the idea of mooncakes that Chinese people eat on mid-autumn festival. The mooncake seemed very interesting; I would love to try it! In our culture, we also are fascinated by the full moon, which reminded me about Bengali literature. (C3P6, February 2022, translation)

Data from Cycle 3 also showed participants engaging with topics such as regional food cultures, lifestyle practices, and everyday customs. Through these activities, learners gained insights into how people live and behave in different Chinese contexts, which suggested that social media provided opportunities for cultural learning. For example, C3P5 mentioned that reading short articles and posts on WeChat groups exposed the learner to everyday aspects of Chinese society and lifestyle, including regional food practices. C3P7 also watched a video that showed how to use chopsticks. The multimodal format of WeChat appeared to reduce linguistic difficulty by making unknown words become less of a barrier through the availability of parallel English translation. This shows how platform design (bilingual posts, short texts) can lower entry barriers and enable gradual vocabulary growth alongside cultural understanding.

[6] The literal translation of '哪里，哪里' (*nǎ lǐ, nǎ lǐ*) is 'where, where'. It is an indirect and polite oral expression that used figuratively to deny a complement or praise.

Excerpt 4.34. Interview:

Reading small articles and posts on WeChat helped a lot to know about Chinese culture. I follow some WeChat groups for learning Chinese; this group shares small articles about Chinese society and their lifestyle. Social media makes our life easier to learn and engage with the community who share the same interest. I read about the food variation in different parts of China. There were many unknown words in the article, but an English version of the text was also added. Now I have a good idea of different eating habits between north and south regions. (C3P5, May 2022)

I watched a video on WeChat that showed how to use chopsticks. (C3P7, May 2022)

By following WeChat groups for learning Chinese, the learner actively selected their own learning environment and found communities that shared similar interests. The statement of the learners showed how various social media provided an environment to gain knowledge about Chinese culture.

4.4.3. Independent learning through entertainment media

Entertainment was another important part of independent learning. Watching movies and dramas, playing games, listening to music, and following social media content offered some learners engaging and context-rich exposure to Chinese language. In cycle 2, when asked about their week, three students stated self-initiated learning with different entertainment media, such as cinema, drama and music. In Cycle 2, two students C2P2 and C2P3 went to the Dhaka International Film Festival together and found it culturally enriching even though they only understood basic words. Another student (C2P1) was watching Chinese dramas on YouTube after a friend (C2P4) suggested it.

Excerpt 4.35. Observation (17.1.22):

Teacher-researcher in class: How was your week?

C2P2: Watched a Chinese movie with my friend C2P3 at the film festival[7]. We only understood some basic words but enjoyed the movie and the environment. It is a culturally enriching experience for us!

C2P1: I am watching a Chinese drama on YouTube recommended by C2P4. Even though I don't understand many words.

[7] The Dhaka International Film Festival has taken place every year since 1992. This festival introduces a diverse range of global films to Bangladeshi audiences.

In Cycle 3, C3P1 tried to memorise and sing a song in Chinese. Also, the conversation between C3P4 and C3P7 showed that while playing online games, they learned some common expressions and slangs. The expressions and slang acquired through gaming were important because they represented a register of informal, colloquial, context-specific use of Chinese, which was largely absent from formal textbooks. C3P7's reporting of replying via text in Chinese despite the microphone being muted suggests a degree of confidence. The conversation shows that students were using entertainment media, getting help from their peers, and finding fun ways to learn a language while also being exposed to real cultural content.

> **Excerpt 4.36.** Classroom observation:
> Teacher -researcher in class: What did you do for fun?
> C3P1: Listening to music is one of my favourite activities of the day, which I consider a source of enjoyment. Every day I listen to Chinese songs; I am trying to memorise lyrics.
> C3P4: Playing online games helps me to relax. I have found that there are many Chinese people in the group, and they frequently use Chinese language to send messages or instructions. C3P7 also played games with me in the same group, we learnt some common expressions and slang by translating those messages.
> C3P7: Oh, playing the games was a lot of fun! Though our microphone was muted, we replied in Chinese. It makes us feel confident, but they speak very fast, it's difficult to follow them.
> sing a song but it's difficult to remember the lyrics, so I took a printout of the lyrics to memorise.

The findings from both cycles showed that independent learning beyond the classroom was not an occasional occurrence but a consistent and purposeful dimension of learner engagement throughout this study.

4.5. Reflection

Students' reflections highlighted the key areas of learning and personal growth that were experienced throughout the course. Reflecting on their own work played a key role in students' learning journey, which involved reviewing class work, solving peer group works, identifying their own strengths and weaknesses. At the same time, observing and working with others and acting as peer teachers and peer learners also proved to be beneficial. Another important factor was embracing using only Chinese language in class.

4.5.1. Self-reflection on one's own learning

The self-reflection data collected from reflective journals in Cycles 2 and 3 showed a consistent pattern of learners monitoring their language development, identifying limitations and taking independent actions to address them.

Table 4.12 presents the key themes identified from learners' reflective journal entries, organised by frequency and supported by illustrative examples. It shows that learners were frequently engaged in a wide range of self-regulated learning behaviours, spanning planning, strategy use, monitoring, and seeking additional resources. The two most frequently occurring topics were self-monitoring of progress and reviewing materials, each recorded 20 times, which suggests that learners consistently engaged in evaluative and consolidatory practices as part of their independent study routines. As student C2P1's described, this was not a passive process but an active and comparative one, in which reflecting on peers' work prompted critical evaluation of one's own performance and motivated further study. Finding one's own limitations was the next most commonly reported theme that appeared 18 times. The examples revealed that learners were able to identify specific skill gaps, such as speaking, listening, and word recognition, and respond to them independently. As seen in C3P6's statement of beginning to read short stories after struggling to recognise words in class. Independent decision-making and participation in social media groups were recorded 17 times each, which suggested the active and self-directed nature of learners' engagement outside the classroom. These two categories were closely related and involved joining Chinese learning communities on WeChat or Facebook. As described by C2P1, it was itself an independently made decision that expanded learners' access to authentic resources and peer interaction simultaneously. Searching for materials and goal setting were both mentioned 15 times, which indicated that learners were not only reactive in their practice but also forward-looking, actively seeking resources and orienting themselves toward future learning targets. Time management was the least reported theme with 10 entries.

Topic	Total number of topic relevant reflective journal entries	Relevant examples
Searching materials	15	I use YouTube for listening to Chinese songs. (C2P2, 2022) Use Goggle for more authentic materials. (C3P4, 2022)
Reviewing materials	20	My main issue was with remembering vocabulary. Since the class started, I have been reviewing words daily. (C3P6, 2022)
Taking own decisions	17	I am learning all the vocabulary from previous lessons. (C3P7, 2022) After learning the words, I will solve peer group works. (C3P8, 2022)
Finding own limitations	18	Speaking in Chinese was the biggest challenge. (common for all participants) Without practice listening to Chinese, won't be possible to communicate with others (C3P6, 2022) During class, I cannot recognise all the words, so I started to read short stories. (C3p6, 2022)
Setting goals	15	There were always so many things to do (C1P1, 2022)
Managing time	10	Time management was essential to follow the course and complete activities. (C3P3, 2022)
Monitoring own progress	20	I have reflected on the activities done by others every week. It made me critically reflect on my performance. While I was solving the activities made by others, it gave me a check on myself. I am very surprised how every group comes with many new learning items. Reflecting on their activities motivated me to study more. (C2P1, 2022)
Join in social media group	17	I joined a Facebook group that recommended Chinese movies. I started following Chinese learning groups on WeChat and watching YouTube videos. (C2P1, 2022)

Table 4.12. Key points of self-reflection

In their reflective journal, several students wrote their reflection in Chinese and English as presented in **Table 4.13**. The content of the entries reveals a range of self-directed activities, which suggest learners might be using the journal not merely as a reporting tool but as an additional space for language practice and self-expression. Several learners documented structured study practices such as reviewing lesson texts, writing Chinese characters, learning HSK vocabulary, and completing mini examinations. This can indicate that independent study was organised and goal oriented. In addition to this, learners also engaged with authentic and self-chosen resources. C2P4 watched a YouTube drama and listened to Chinese music, C3P3 followed educational content from LTL Chinese School on Instagram, and C3P2 combined character writing with music listening. This data shows a broader pattern with the previous section (See details in Section 4.3) in which formal study tasks and informal engagement with the language coexisted within the same independent learning routine. C3P1 and C3P4 both described creating videos about their Eid

celebrations in Chinese. This represents how the learner was able to share a personally meaningful cultural event in Chinese.

Documenting own learning journey	
Original text	**Translation**
C2P1, 22.2.22: **星期二下**课后我做很多作业。 **做**汉语水平考试 。**写**课文。 C2P4, 25.2.22: I have reviewed what teacher had taught me last week. Learned Vocabulary. I completed the mini exam. I wrote text, watched a YouTube Drama, and listened to Chinese song. C2P3, 15.3.22: 这个周末我 学习我的课文。我聊天儿我的 女儿 还有我的同学。这周末我每做视频 因为我很忙了。我 来我老家 过 开斋节。所以我不练习 我的周课文。 C3P5, 15.5.22: 在每个课程中我学到了很多东西。询问方向与中国朋友交谈， 商场交谈， 商务会谈，旅行时进行交谈。 C3P3, 19.5.22: 写完了课文八的对话。在 Instagram 看了 LTL Chinese School 的课 C3P2, 19.5.22: 写汉字 学 HSK 3 生词. 听音乐. Mini exams solve করছি। C3P4, 20.5.22: **上个星期我学习很多生词**,**写**课文, **我可**练习我的 **同学**,**我做一个**视频怎么过开斋节。我对遵 话我的同学,**我回学怎么快巧**课文,**四** 还是五分钟写一个课 C3P1, 23.5.22: **上个星期我学了很多生**词和一些语法。我听了中国音乐,**我做了一个**视频怎么过了开斋节。我写了课文生词,看电影,我的同学们一起跟聊天,我去了图书馆看书·我复习了很多语法也很多生词。	**C2P1, 22.2.22:** After class on Tuesday, I did a lot of homework. I did a Chinese proficiency test. Wrote the text. **C2P3, 15.3.22:** This weekend I studied my lesson and chatted with my daughter and my classmates. I didn't make any videos because I was very busy. I came to my hometown to celebrate Eid, so I wasn't able to practice my weekly lesson. **C3P5, 15.5.22:** I learned many things in each lesson. Asking for directions and talking with Chinese friends, shopping conversations, business talks, conversations during travel. **C3P3, 19.5.22:** Finished writing the dialogue from Text 8. Watched LTL Chinese School's lessons on Instagram. **C3P2, 19.5.22:** Wrote Chinese characters. I learned HSK 4 vocabulary. Listened to music. I solved the mini exam. **C3P4, 20.5.22:** Last week I learned many vocabulary words, wrote texts, I could practice with my classmates, I made a video about how to celebrate Eid. I talked with my classmates, I learned how to quickly write texts, writing one lesson in four or five minutes. **C3P1, 23.5.22:** Last week I learned many new vocabulary words and some grammar. I listened to Chinese music and made a video about how I celebrated Eid. I wrote down the lesson text and vocabulary, watched films, and chatted with my classmates. I also went to the library to read books. In addition, I reviewed a lot of grammar and vocabulary.

Table 4.13. Learners documented own learning journey (Students' reflective journals, original)

Similarly, C3P5's reflection showed how the learner applied language across communicative contexts, such as asking for directions, shopping, conducting business conversations, and talking during travel. It denoted how the learner had moved from practising the language to actively using it in social situations. C2P3's entry offers a further dimension of reflective honesty. The learner acknowledged that family commitments during the Eid period had prevented him from completing video

practice. This kind of candid self-accounting indicates that learners were engaging with the journal as a genuine reflective space rather than simply recording achievements. These entries illustrate that self-reflection in this study encompassed not only what learners studied but also how they made decisions, adapted to real-life constraints, and increasingly connected language usage to their own cultural and social lives.

The interview data were also consistent with the reflective journal, which reflected on students' decision-making, willingness to try new things, reviewing their mistakes, and monitoring progress. For example, C3P5 admitted that he was not reviewing listening materials before, but after attending this class he tried to intentionally listen to the texts. Simultaneously, he started following the appropriate stroke order for writing Chinese characters. This was linked to the pedagogical design of the course that offered students exposure to listening and stroke order practice in class, which helped learners to review previously neglected skills.

Excerpt 4.37. Interview:

আগে আমি খুব একটা অডিও শুনতাম না, কিন্তু এখন নিজে থেকে শোনার অনুশীলন করি, আর এতে আমার উন্নতি হয়েছে বলে মনে করি। লেখার ক্ষেত্রেও আগে শুধু শব্দ লিখতাম, প্রতিটি অক্ষরের স্ট্রোক অর্ডার নিয়ে তেমন ভাবতাম না। এখন বিভিন্ন জায়গা থেকে লেখা সংগ্রহ করে শব্দের সঙ্গে সেগুলোও লিখে রাখি। তারপর ওই শব্দগুলো দিয়ে বাক্য বানানোর চেষ্টা করি।

Previously, I did not listen to audio materials much, but now I actively try to practice listening, and this has certainly led to improvement. As for writing, earlier I used to write only vocabulary, not giving much importance on the stroke order of each character. Now I practice writing text and try to maintain the stroke order. (C3P5, 2022)

Similarly, sending voice messages on WeChat represented a significant step forward for the student C3P3. Although initially he was shy and lacked prior experience of speaking Chinese on an online platform, he pushed himself to participate in interactions with others. He attempted to correct himself immediately when he made any mistake.

Excerpt 4.38. Interview:

> উইচ্যাটে ভয়েস ম্যাসেজ পাঠানো আমার জন্য অনেক বড় ব্যাপার। আমার খুবই লজ্জা লাগে চাইনিজে ভয়েস মযসেজ পাঠাইতে, কিন্তু নিজেকে পুস করছি অন্যদের সাথে অংশগ্রহণ করার জন্য। কয়েকবার ম্যাসেজ পাঠানোর পরে, খুবই স্বতস্ফুর্ত ভাবেই পাঠাইতে পারছি। যখন কোন ভুল করছি, সাথে সাথে সংশোধন করার চেষ্টা করছি।

> Sending voice messages in WeChat is huge progress for me. Though I was shy and never had experienced sending voice messages in Chinese, I pushed myself to participate with others. The speaking happened spontaneously, but I tried to immediately correct myself when I made mistakes (C3P3, 2022)

Section 4.5.1 shows that learners expressed a growing awareness of their own strength and weakness across Cycle 2 and Cycle 3. This awareness led them to independently address gaps in specific areas, including listening, writing characters, and speaking. It shows learners made their own decisions about what to study, how to study and when to seek additional resources.

4.5.2. Peer observations and interactions

Many students mentioned that self-reflection was interconnected with reflecting on others' learning process and engagement. In other words, students' self-awareness and understanding of their learning process and performance were frequently enhanced by comparisons with their peers. Unlike the individual reflection discussed in Section 4.5.1, this form of reflection was triggered externally by what learners noticed in others, and it directly influenced how they approached their own learning. For example, C2P1 described how her observation of another student C2P3's participation led to self-evaluation (**Excerpt 4.39**). As it was her third course with C2P3, she was surprised by C2P3's performance in the course. Having found him disengaged in previous courses, she noticed that C2P3 was asking questions and making activities, which inspired her to study more before making the group works. Similarly, C3P6 described how engaging with peer teachers' activities functioned as a form of self-evaluation, which led her to reflect on her role as peer teacher and peer learner (**Excerpt 4.40**). The diversity of ideas presented by different groups not only offered alternative approaches but also motivated further study.

Excerpt 4.39. Interview:

> যখন আমি অন্যদের জন্য টাস্ক প্রশ্ন প্রস্তুত করছিলাম, তখন আমার মনে হচ্ছিল আমি যেন কিছুই জানি না! আমার সহপাঠীরা কীভাবে তাদের গ্রুপ কাজের মধ্যে পাঠের বিষয়বস্তু সংযুক্ত করেছে, তা দেখে আমি মুগ্ধ হয়েছিলাম। বিভিন্ন ধরনের সমস্যা সমাধান করাটা ছিল খুবই আকর্ষণীয়। একই মান বজায় রাখতে আমাকে অনেক পড়াশোনা করতে হয়েছে। এটি ছিল C2P3-এর সঙ্গে আমার তৃতীয় কোর্স, এবং আমি কখনোই তাকে ক্লাসে খুব সক্রিয় বা সম্পৃক্ত বলে মনে করিনি। কিন্তু এই কোর্সে তার পারফরম্যান্স আমাকে সত্যিই বিস্মিত করেছে। তাকে প্রশ্ন করতে, কার্যক্রম তৈরি করতে এবং বিভিন্নভাবে অংশগ্রহণ করতে দেখে আমি নিজের পারফরম্যান্স নিয়েও ভাবতে শুরু করি। (C2P1, ২০২২)

> While I was preparing questions for others, I felt like I knew nothing! I was impressed by my classmates' work on how they connect the lesson in their group work. It was interesting to solve different types of problems. I had to study a lot to maintain the same standard. This is my third course with C2P3, and I never found him very engaging in class. His performance in this course really surprised me. Watching him asking questions, making activities…all this made me reflect on my own performance. (C2P1, 2022, translation)

Excerpt 4.40. Interview:

> অন্যদের দলগত কাজ আমাকে একজন শিক্ষক এবং একজন শিক্ষার্থী হিসেবে আমার নিজস্ব পারফরম্যান্স সম্পর্কে সমালোচনামূলকভাবে ভাবতে সাহায্য করেছে। যখন আমি অন্যদের তৈরি করা কার্যক্রমগুলো সমাধান করছিলাম, তখন সেটি আমার নিজের সক্ষমতা যাচাই করার একটি সুযোগ হয়ে উঠেছিল। আমি সত্যিই বিস্মিত হয়েছিলাম যে প্রতিটি দল কত নতুন নতুন শেখার উপকরণ ও ধারণা নিয়ে এসেছে। তাদের কার্যক্রম নিয়ে চিন্তা-ভাবনা করা আমাকে আরও বেশি পড়াশোনা করতে অনুপ্রাণিত করেছে। (C3P6, ২০২২)

> Group work by others made me critically reflect on my performance as a teacher and as a learner. While I was solving the activities made by others, it gave me a check on myself. I am very surprised how every group comes with many new learning items. Reflecting on their activities motivated me to study more. (C3P6, 2022, translation)

Three students indicated that comparison with peers, while initially associated with frustration, could also function as a source of motivation for improvement (**Excerpt 4.41**). In timed writing activities, learners noticed the difference between their own writing speed and that of others. For instance, C3P2 reported difficulty adapting to the imposed time constraint, which contrasted with his usual writing practices, but also recognised its relevance for exam preparations. Similarly, C3P5 described an explicit comparison with a peer, where initial discouragement gave way to a sense of achievement upon improving her writing speed. However, comparison did not always take a purely competitive form. As C3P7 noted, observing peers' strategies such as

tracking writing time motivated him to adopt similar approaches. It suggests that peer comparison can also facilitate strategy development and self-improvement.

> **Excerpt 4.41.** Interview:
> When we practised five minutes of timed writing in class, I realised I couldn't write first like my peers, which made me feel disappointed. Normally, when writing at home or in the library, I take more time to write slowly, aiming for neatness and clarity. But in the timed activity, the imposed time constraint compelled me to write faster, which is beneficial as exam situations typically come with strict time limits. (C3P2, 2022)
> I tend to compare my writing speed with C3P1. C3P1 has always completed first; her writing is good, and she can also write quickly. My inability to write fast felt discouraging initially, but I enjoyed beating C3P1's writing speed finally! (C3P5, 2022)
> My Chinese writing is very slow. When we started writing a text in 5 minutes in class, I realised everyone is trying to beat the time. Some classmates even kept notes of their time and tried to beat their own records! I think comparing myself with them influenced me a lot, so I tried to do the same thing. (C3P7, 2022)

Observing how peer teachers in other groups approached their roles motivated learners to strengthen communication within their own teams. As the course progressed, this engagement extended beyond intra-group discussion, with learners actively seeking input and assistance from other groups. C3P1 illustrated this shift clearly, explaining that after comparing their work with Group 3's output, their group increased internal communication and subsequently collaborated with Group 3 during the design of their second activity. Significantly, C3P1 identified cross-group idea-sharing as an entirely new experience, suggesting that the peer teaching context created collaborative opportunities that were not limited to own group but extended communication to other groups too.

> **Excerpt 4.42.** Interview:
> Group 3's students were studying together after class and made very impressive group work with a lot of variations. They took the peer teachers' work very seriously! After comparing them, we increased communication in our group. Group 3's members also helped us when we designed the second activity. Discussing our ideas with them was a very new experience for us. (Group 1: Cycle 1, C3P1, 2022)

During Cycle 3, some students proactively transcribed the voice messages that had been exchanged between them in the WeChat group into text messages. This practice was neither required by the teacher-researcher nor included in the lesson plan. The

students engaged in this task to assess their understanding of spoken Chinese and to contemplate their own and their peers' application of pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. For example, as illustrated in **Table 4.14**, C3P4 transcribed previously exchanged voice messages, which needed the learner to be attentive, engage in repeated listening, and maintain prolonged involvement with the material. Following C3P4's example, other students began transcribing audio messages. This suggests a peer influenced adaptation, an instance of learners trying new things and engaging in comparative reflection as a direct result of observing what others were doing.

Voice to text conversion by student in WeChat	
Original	**Translation**
C3P1: 为什么，怎么样?	C3P1: Why? How come?
C3P2: 我回家很晚所以我走了很晚。	C3P2: I got home very late, so I left very late.
C3P1: 你去哪儿?	C3P1: Where did you go?
C3P2: 我家附近有一家 Sopno，我去在。	C3P2: There's a Sopno near my home. I went there.
C3P1: 你去买了东西。	C3P1: You went to buy things.
C3P1: 你买了什么东西?	C3P1: What did you buy?
C3P2: 是啊，我去买一些东西。	C3P2: Yes, I went to buy some things.
C3P1: 好。	C3P1: Good.
C3P2: 我买了鱼。	C3P2: I bought fish.
C3P1: 今天你做什么菜?	C3P1: What dish are you cooking today?
C3P2: 今天我做鱼和土杂菜。	C3P2: Today I'm making fish and mixed vegetables.
C3P10: C3P1 和 C3P2 的话非常好。	C3P10: The conversation between C3P1 and C3P2 was very good.
C3P1: 谢谢 C3P10。	C3P1: Thank you, C3P10.
C3P2: 感谢您 C3P10 哥。	C3P2: Thank you, Brother C3P10.
C3P3: 好的，好的，好的，你们的说话非常好非常好谢谢谢谢。	C3P3: Okay, okay, okay. Your speaking was very good, very good. Thank you, thank you.
C3P2: C3P3 姐姐我觉得你说的汉语非常好。	C3P2: Sister C3P3, I think your Chinese is very good.
C3P10: 谢谢大家，谢谢。	C3P10: Thank you all, thank you.
C3P3: 哪里哪里妹妹?	C3P3: Not at all, little sister.
C3P3: 你们的说话非常好。	C3P3: Your speaking is very good.
C3P4: 你们很多说话很多学习，但是我一直睡觉，一点儿也不学习。	C3P4: You all spoke a lot and studied a lot, but I was sleeping the whole time and didn't study at all.
C3P4: 今天我下午睡觉两个小时，所以今天晚上我迟到睡觉。	C3P4: This afternoon I slept for two hours, so tonight I'll go to bed late.

Table 4.14. Sample voice to text conversion by student in WeChat (original & translation)

The WeChat group provided a supportive peer-learning environment that encouraged participation and communication among learners. C3P6 observed that students actively responded to messages through both text and voice formats, even when they made mistakes. Seeing peers participate in this way made the participant feel positive and contributed to improved communication within the group. The participant also appreciated receiving responses from peers to questions posted in WeChat after the class, suggesting that peer interaction and support extended beyond formal classroom activities.

Excerpt 4.43. Interview:

> উইচ্যাট গ্রুপে অনেক মানুষই আছে, ওইখানে মেসেজে টেক্সট দেখে সবাই রিপ্লে দেওয়ার চেষ্টা করে মানে না পারলেও হোক ভুল সেটা ভুল হলেও সবাই দেখলাম ঐখানে রিপ্লে দেওয়ার চেষ্টা করে সেটা ভয়েসে হোক বা টেক্সট হোক সবাই মোটামুটি রেসপন্স করে সেজন্য আরও বেশি ওইটা ভালো লেগেছে। আমরা যখন গ্রুপটা খুললাম তখন দেখি যে মানে মেসেজ দেয়ার পরে আমরা রেসপন্স পাচ্ছি তখন নিজেদের কাছে ভালো লাগতেছে তো রেসপন্স পাওয়ার পরে আমি একটা ভয়েস দিচ্ছি অন্যেরা সেটার আনসার দিচ্ছে মানে আসলে কমিউনিকেশনটা ভালো হচ্ছে মানে ক্লাসের বাইরেও এখন আমি উইচ্যাটে একটা মেসেজ দিলে সেটার রিপ্লে পাই এটা আমার কাছে ভালো লাগে।
>
> All the students were members of our WeChat group. I noticed that people try to reply as much as they can either in text or voice messages, even when they are making mistakes. It made me feel good when I saw other students replying, and it improved our communication. Even after my class, I got responses from my peers on my questions in WeChat, I enjoyed it. (C3P6, 2022)

Figure 4.13 provides two examples of learners correcting their own errors during interactions with peers on WeChat. In the first image, C2P1 immediately corrected her mistake while asking a question. In the second image, C3P3 corrected a grammatical error during another conversation. These examples show that learners engaged in self-correction while communicating with peers in real time through WeChat. The fact that the corrections occur in ongoing conversations with peers may suggest that the WeChat environment had provided a relatively low-anxiety space where learners felt free to take risks, notice errors, and take steps to correct their own mistakes.

Sample 1
C3P1 (14:47): Sent a voice message in Chinese and asked, '你去哪儿?' (Where did you go?)
C3P2 (14:47): Replied, '我家附近有一家超市，我去那边。' (There is a supermarket near my home; I went there.)
C3P1 (14:48): Asked, '你去买了东西' (What did you buy?). *This sentence was not grammatically correct because the question word '什么' was missing.
C3P1 (14:48): Self-corrected and asked again, '你去买了什么东西?' (What did you buy?).
Sample 2:
C3P3 (21:32): Sent a voice message in Chinese, '明天的学习我不准备了。' (I am not ready for tomorrow's study). The sentence contained a grammatical error.
C3P3 (21:33): Self-corrected and said, '对不起，明天的学习我没准备。' (Sorry, I have not prepared for tomorrow's study).

Figure 4.13. Sample of correcting own mistakes in WeChat group

This section shows that peer comparison and observation functioned as a consistent and productive form of reflection throughout the course. Whether through noticing a peer's improved engagement, competing in timed writing tasks, or being inspired by another group's approach, learners used what they observed in others as a reference point for evaluating and adjusting their own learning.

4.5.3. Reflection from working with others

The third form of reflection emerged when learners moved beyond individual study and peer observation and took on active roles within the group as peer teachers. This is distinct from the peer comparison discussed in Section 4.4.2 because the reflection here was not triggered by watching others from a distance. Instead, it arose from being directly accountable to others to prepare something accurate, explain something clearly, and respond meaningfully to what peers produced.

All students from Cycles 2 and 3 reported that taking on the role of peer teacher made them more responsible and more engaged than in previous learning experiences, both within this course and more generally. After preparing group activities, all groups shared their reflections on this role. The common reflection as a peer teacher was associated with multiple factors: responsibility, patience, and communication. For example, In Cycle 2, C2P3 reflected on his sense of responsibility and patience while working with others (**Excerpt 4.44**). The participant also noted that group work encouraged wider participation, where members made efforts to contribute and

managed time to participate, which he did not experience in previous courses. C2P4 from the same cycle stated that the role of a peer teacher shifted the participant from completing teacher-prepared tasks to actively preparing materials for others. This led to increased effort in studying and a greater sense of responsibility. This contrast is analytically significant: it suggests that the peer teaching role did not simply add new tasks but fundamentally repositioned the learner within the learning process, requiring them to think and act from a perspective they had not previously occupied.

Excerpt 4.44. Interview:

গ্রুপ এক্টিভিটি তৈরি করা আমাদের জন্য একেবারেই নতুন অভিজ্ঞতা। আশাকরি এগুলো করে সবাই উপকৃত হয়েছেন। কাজগুলো করতে গিয়ে নিজেদের অনেক রেসপনসিবল মনে হয়েছে,ধৈর্যও বাড়ছে। নিজেদের গ্রুপের সবার সাথে যোগাযোগ হইছে অনেকবার, যেইটা আসলে ক্লাসে কখনো হয় নাই। সবাই উত্তর দেওয়ার চেষ্টা করছেন দেখে খুব ভালো লাগছে আমাদের।

Making group activities was a completely new experience for us. We hope everyone has benefited by solving those activities. While working on them, we experienced a greater sense of responsibility and learned to develop more patience. We had numerous interactions with all the members of our group, which was not the case during our regular class sessions. It was inspiring to observe everyone trying to contribute their responses and participate. (C2P3, Cycle 2, translation)

Engaging in the role of peer teacher was a transformative experience. Usually, I am used to completing the activities prepared by the teacher. I never prepared anything or any study material for anyone as a teacher. So, the whole experience made me study more and become more responsible while preparing materials and dealing with others. This opportunity allowed me to strengthen my own language skills while simultaneously assisting my peers. (C2P4, Group 2: Cycle 2, original)

The cohort from Cycle 3 stated that the peer-teaching experience, shared through WeChat supported both organisational and learning processes. Some participants (n=6) reported that working with group members as peer teachers facilitated timely task completion and distribution of work among group members, indicating coordinated collaboration. It also reflected perceived improvement in the pace of learning Chinese and increased interaction with classmates.

Excerpt 4.45. WeChat log:

১. নিদিষ্ট টাইমে কাজ করা এবং অন্যদের কাজ দেয়া।
২. চাইনিজ শিখার গতিকে আপ করা।
৩. বাকি ক্লাসমেইটদের সাথে কানেক্ট করা।
৪. ক্লাসের টাইমের বাহিরেও চাইনিজ চর্চা করার ওয়ে শিখা.
৫. পরবর্তী ওয়ার্কে কি কি নতুনত্ব আনা যাই সেই বিষয়ে চিন্তা করার ওয়ে তৈরি হওয়া।

The group shared peer teacher experience in Bengali in WeChat. They mentioned: 1) it helped to finish work on time and distribute work with other group members; 2) improved the pace of learning Chinese; 3) Encouraged interaction with other classmates; 4) it offered an opportunity to practise Chinese out of limited class time in classroom, 5) this helped to think about new activities for the next group work. (C3P1, Group 1: Cycle 3, 2022, translation)

C3P6 reflected on the importance of patience and communication skills in peer teaching. She stated that the continuous interaction with group members particularly via WeChat was helping her become a better communicator. It also indicates sustained engagement, as the participant remained actively connected with peers throughout the process. In the same line, another student C2P1 stated the role of peer teacher made her more responsible and shifted her focus from individually completing tasks to being accountable for peers' outcomes. Recognising the importance of accuracy of the tasks due to its impact on classmates encouraged deeper engagement with the task, while working within the set timeframes strengthened organisational skills and a sense of responsibility. This new responsibility also strengthened social connections with peers.

Excerpt 4.46. WeChat log:

To be successful as a teacher, one must possess patience, and good communication skills. The whole process made me a good communicator. I was continuously in touch with my group members and active in our WeChat group. (C3P6, Group 3: Cycle 3, 2022)

I realised that the task I was preparing had to be correct otherwise my classmates will get the wrong information. From this point of view, it was a great experience to learn. The method we followed to learn before was not as engaging. Assigning work to others and completing the task within a designated time frame made me more responsible. It increases the efficiency of learning Chinese and establishes a bond with classmates. (C2P1, interview, 2022, translation)

Peer teachers from different groups reflected that the tasks were based on previously completed chapters and aimed to identify gaps and difficulties in prior learning. Their reflections indicated that task design was experienced as a meaningful extension of

classroom learning. C3P6 also identified that the communication fostered within the group was carried over positively into the regular classroom environment.

Excerpt 4.47. WeChat log:

এই বাড়ির কাজ যে অধ্যায় গুলো শেষ করা হয়েছে সেগুলোর উপর দেওয়া হচ্ছে। এর উদ্দেশ্য ছিলো তাতে করে আমরা সেই অধ্যায় গুলোতে খুটিনাটি কোনো সমস্যা থাকলে সেগুলো বুঝতে পারছি। আমরা অনেক শব্দ শিখছি কিন্তু, সেগুলোর অর্থ বুঝে কিভাবে একটা বাক্য ব্যবহার করা যায় তা বুঝতে পারছি। এই কাজগুলো করতে গিয়ে নিজেদের মধ্যে যোগাযোগ বৃদ্ধি পাচ্ছে, যার প্রভাব আমরা ক্লাসেও দেখতে পারছি।আমরা চাইনিজ ভাষার জ্ঞান বৃদ্ধির সাথেসাথে অনেকগুলো স্কিল বাড়াতে পারছি।

The activities are based on the chapters and lessons already completed. The focus was to identify any difficulties or gaps from the previous chapters while solving these activities. We are learning many new words, and these activities helped us understand their meanings while providing insight on how to construct sentences using them. Engaging in these tasks enhanced communication among us, and this positive impact is also evident in the classroom. Alongside improving our knowledge of the Chinese language, we are also developing a range of additional skills. (C3P6, Group 3: Cycle 3, 2022)

Peer observation was also visible at the intra-group level, where learners drew motivation from witnessing the dedication of their own group members. C3P4 reflected on how a teammate's careful attention to scripting, searching appropriate vocabulary and rehearsing with the group influenced his own preparation. C3P4 reframed it as a productive motivational experience, which shows that observing peers and comparing oneself with others can drive improvement. This signals an effective dimension of peer teaching that close observation of peers fosters not only skill development but also motivation.

Excerpt 4.48. Interview:

I was not satisfied with the video I made. The video would be much better if I drafted a script before as one of our group members did. She was very focused on finding the appropriate words that needed to make dumpling in Chinese and practised the script with us! Her dedication surprised and inspired me. I think comparing myself with others is not a bad thing, sometimes it motivates me to do better. (C3P4, 2022, translation)

Reflection as peer learners

Taking on the position of peer learner offered a distinct reflection on both learners' own performance and the quality of what their peers had prepared for them. Three students reported that collaborating with classmates increased their sense of responsibility, as they were accountable not only for their own learning but also for

contributing meaningfully to the group's success. For example, while peer learners were solving other groups' tasks, not only were they improving language skills but also making a deeper connection with peers. The reciprocal peer learning experience on WeChat also offered them a community as mentioned by C3P3. The student C3P6, added her classroom experience as a peer learner. While acting as a peer learner, she wrote Chinese characters on the blackboard. When other peers corrected her mistakes, she was encouraged to review them after class. The student's observation showed how peers' involvement encouraged the learner. In addition, student C3P4 stated his experience of working with others while solving exam questions. The student considered it a huge responsibility to grade peers' papers.

Excerpt 4.49. Interview:

সহপাঠীদের সঙ্গে ঘনিষ্ঠভাবে কাজ করার ফলে শুধু আমার ভাষা শেখার দক্ষতাই উন্নত হয়নি, তাদের সঙ্গে আমার সম্পর্কও আরও গভীর হয়েছে। সবচেয়ে ভালো অভিজ্ঞতা ছিল আমাদের উইচ্যাট গ্রুপে সবার সঙ্গে যোগাযোগ করা। এটি আমাদের জন্য একটি কমিউনিটির মতো।

আমার একটা অভ্যাস ছিল ক্লাসে করা ভুলগুলো পরে আর না দেখার। কিন্তু যখন ব্ল্যাকবোর্ডে লিখতাম আর সহপাঠীরা ভুলগুলো ধরিয়ে দিত, তখন ক্লাসের পরে সেগুলো আবার দেখে নেওয়ার আগ্রহ হতো।

এইচএসকের স্যাম্পল পরীক্ষা দেওয়ার পর আমি নিজে আরও কয়েকটি প্রশ্নপত্র ডাউনলোড করছিলাম। আমি এবং C2P3 একসঙ্গে সেগুলো অনুশীলন করতাম; সাধারণত আমরা লাইব্রেরিতে বসে কাজ করতাম। দুজনের কাজ শেষ হলে আমরা খাতা বিনিময় করে একে অপরের উত্তর যাচাই করতাম। এটি আমার জন্য একটি বড় দায়িত্ব ছিল।

Close collaboration with classmates not only improved my language learning skills but also cultivated a deeper connection with my classmates. The best experience I had was communicating with others in our WeChat group. It is like a community for us. (C3P3, 2022, translation)

I had a tendency not to check the mistakes I made in the classroom. When I was writing on blackboard and my classmates corrected my mistakes, it made me review it after the class. (C3P6, 2022, translation)

After taking the HSK sample exam, I personally downloaded several more question papers. I work on these with C2P3; we usually sit together in the library to practise. Once we've both completed the tasks, we exchange our papers and check each other's answers, it is a huge responsibility. (C3P4, 2022, translation)

The experience of working with others both as peer teachers and as peer learners produced a form of reflection that was different from individual self-reflection or peer observation alone. Being accountable to others, preparing accurate materials, and participating in a shared learning community required learners to engage more

critically and more consistently with their own performance. This sense of mutual responsibility helped to create a collaborative learning community that benefitted them in many ways.

4.6. Challenges

The challenges faced by the learners during this action research did not remain constant from one cycle to the next. As the cohorts changed and the learning context shifted from online to in-person, each cycle presented distinct difficulties. In Cycle 1, the main obstacles were infrastructural and connectivity issues, alongside limited knowledge of how to navigate online classes. In Cycle 2, the primary challenge was time constraints combined with limited technological competence. In Cycle 3, time pressure again emerged as the dominant difficulty for this cohort. Across these cycles, I continuously monitored emerging challenges and made targeted adjustments to the pedagogical design. For example, in Cycle 2, learners found the weekly reflective journals tedious and time-consuming, which was replaced with brief, five-minute verbal or written reflections at the start of class in Cycle 3. However, some challenges, such as infrastructural constraints, were unavoidable and beyond my control to mitigate.

4.6.1. Challenges with reciprocal peer learning

The data revealed two layers of challenge within the reciprocal peer learning structure: one experienced by students in the peer teacher role, and another by students in the peer learner role, which emerged from different sources of pressure. Peer teachers struggled with the unfamiliarity of preparing course materials and coordinating group efforts. While peer learners were overwhelmed by the volume and variety of tasks, they were expected to complete all tasks within a short-time period.

For students in the peer teacher role, the challenge was related to the responsibilities in their new role. As C2P2 noted, without proper cooperation within the group, preparing activities was difficult. It presented two challenges: role unfamiliarity, as students had no prior experience designing learning tasks for peers; and group coordination, which needed additional time and effort beyond regular coursework.

C2P2's group eventually resolved this by meeting after class, which demonstrated students' capability of adaptation and adjustment to resolve the problem. C3P8 mentioned his own struggle to act as peer teacher, as his Chinese was not good, it took him a long time to prepare activities.

Excerpt 4.50. Interview:

কোর্সের শুরুর দিকে অনেক কাজের চাপ মনে হইছে। কোর্স খুব দ্রুত গতিতে আগাইছে, অনেক নতুন জিনিস শিখতে ছইছে। Peer teacher হিসেবে কাজ করতে ভালো লাগছে, কিন্তু অন্যদের কোপারেশন ছাড়া এক্টিভিটি তৈরি করা একটু কঠিন ছিল শুরুর দিকে। সেইজনা ক্লাসের পরে আমরা একসাথে গ্রুপ ওয়ার্ক করা শুরু করি।

At the beginning I was frustrated and felt the workload was too much for this course. The course moves too fast with so many new things. Although I liked the idea of taking on peer teacher responsibilities, without proper cooperation with others it was difficult to prepare activities. So, we started to work together after our class. (C2P2, March 2022, translation)

peer teacher হিসেবে কাজ করা শুরুর দিকে আমার কাছে খুব কঠিন ছিল। যেহেতু আমার নিজের চাইনিজ এত ভালো ছিলো না, অনেক সময় দিতে হয়েছে টাস্ক বানাতে।

At the beginning, working as a peer teacher was quite difficult for me. As my own Chinese was not very good, I had to spend a lot of time creating the tasks. (C3P8, May 2022, translation)

Time constraints were a common challenge in both Cycle 2 and Cycle 3. In Cycle 2, working professionals such as C2P1 faced limited availability after work hours, which made it difficult to engage in peer designed tasks outside of class time. In Cycle 3, students had other academic commitments from their major subjects, and engaging in this course took a lot of time. As C3P8 observed, other peers were similarly overwhelmed by the pressure, it became evident that peer teachers had designed various tasks that demanded a considerable amount of time to complete, while the allocated submission time remained insufficient. In response, they requested an additional three to four days when Group 3 assigned their tasks. This suggested that the difficulty did not arise from individual learner limitations but from the structure of task design itself. Addressing this issue requires learners to negotiate timelines in accordance with their needs.

Excerpt 4.51. Observation

আমার সহপাঠীরা যে কাজগুলো তৈরি করেছিল, সেগুলো সমাধান করতে আমার ভালো লাগত। তবে আমি একজন চাকরিজীবী হওয়ায় কাজ শেষে সেগুলো দেখার ও করার জন্য পর্যাপ্ত সময় বের করা আমার জন্য কঠিন ছিল।

I enjoyed solving the tasks prepared by my classmates. I am a working professional, and my problem was not having enough time after work to go through those. (C2P1, March 2022, translation)

একটা কমন সমস্যা আমি লক্ষ্য করেছি যে অতিরিক্ত কাজের চাপ মাঝে মাঝে অনেকের জন্য অত্যন্ত নিরুৎসাহজনক ছিলো, চাপেরও মনে হত। আসলে গ্রুপ এক্টিভিটিগুলি সলভ করার জন্য আরো বেশি সময়ের দরকার ছিলো। আমি সত্যি চেয়েছিলাম সবগুলো সময়মত শেষ করবো, কিন্তু আমার মেজরের ক্লাসের অনেক চাপ ছিলো। সেজন্য গ্রুপ ৩ এক্টিভিটি জমা দেয়ার আগে ওদের বলেছিলাম ৩-৪ দিন সময় দিতে জমা দেয়ার।

A common problem I found was that the overload of tasks sometimes was very overwhelming and demotivating for some of us. There were new variations of exercises incorporated by different groups that required a good amount of time to solve those problems. I really wanted to solve all of those problems but had a lot of classes in my department. As a result, when our group (Group 3) submitted the work, we emphasised on offering three-four days for the peer learners to submit their completed exercises. (C3P8, April 2022, translation)

A further challenge emerged from the cognitive load produced by the variety of peer-designed tasks. C2P3 found that the different formats and types of activities created by each group were confusing, particularly because he had no prior experience with this mode of learning. However, asking questions during the group collaboration after class was the solution.

Excerpt 4.52. Interview:

আমার জন্য মাঝে মাঝে বড় সমস্যা ছিলো peer teacher দের এক্টিভিটি গুলার সমাধান করা। সবাই নতুন নতুন কাজ নিয়ে আসতো, এত ভ্যারিয়েশনের কাজ করায় অভ্যস্ত ছিলাম না আমি , খুব কনফিউজড লাগতো। তবে আমার গ্রুপ মেম্বারদের সাথে মিলে সলিউশন করার পর থেকে সহজ লাগতো, কিছু না বুঝলে জিজ্ঞেস করা যেত, ওরা ব্যাখ্যা দিয়ে বুঝিয়ে দিত।

One of the challenges for me was to solve some activities designed by peer teachers. Sometimes I could not finish solving all, and too many variations in activities confused me. Then I started to solve those with my group members, their explanations helped to clarify the task and made it easier to work on them. (C2P3, 2022, translation)

Students across Cycle 2 and Cycle 3 experienced pressure from unfamiliar roles, limited time, and variable task design, yet sought solutions to overcome those challenges. Participants adapted, negotiated deadlines, and collaborated beyond scheduled class time to address their challenges.

4.6.2. Infrastructural and technological challenges

The infrastructural challenges were most visible in Cycle 1. During this cycle, 98% of students had to leave university because of the government declaration of closing university for COVID-19 spread, which had a significant impact on their participation in this course. Internet instability, power cuts, and access to devices were frequent factors mentioned by students that caused three students to withdraw from the course. For example, C1P2 shared that he did not have a stable internet connection at home. To participate in online classes, he had to walk to a nearby *bazaar* (market) where a mobile network tower provided a relatively stronger signal. This arrangement, however, was far from ideal, the network issue, and limited access to electricity further complicated his ability to attend and engage in online classes effectively. Similar difficulties were experienced by C1P3, who often had to seek alternative locations, such as going to rooftops to have stable internet connections. Additionally, C1P3 had to use his parents' mobile to join the class. These disruptions posed a direct challenge to attending classes in real time.

Excerpt 4.53. Observation notes:

> আমার বাড়িতে নেটওয়ার্ক পাওয়া যায় না, ক্লাসের সময় বাজারে টাওয়ারের কাছাকাছি যাইতে হয়। (C1P2, 20 August 2021, observation note, translation)
>
> ক্লাসের সময় ছাদে থাকতে হয়, ঘরের ভেতর ইন্টারনেট আসে না। আরো ঝামেলা হইলো আমার মোবাইল কাজ করতেছেনা, ক্লাসের সময় আব্বুর মোবাইল ব্যবহার করতে হয়। (C1P3, 20 August 2021, observation note)
>
> There is no mobile network coverage at my home, so during class I have to go to the bazar (market area) near a mobile phone tower to get a signal. (C1P2, 20 August 2021, observation note, translation)
>
> During class time, I have to stay on the roof because the internet connection does not work inside the house. Another problem is that my mobile phone is not working, so I have to use my father's phone to attend classes. (C1P3, 20 August 2021, observation note, translation)

The slow internet connection was another challenge for students in participating in virtual classrooms, checking materials after class, and completing assignments. It was worsened by inconsistent network issues and power disruptions. For example, C1P3 articulated the infrastructural challenges students faced during COVID-19's closure of universities. He specifically indicated that the poor internet connection was a key challenge for joining online classes. It reveals that structural barriers influenced participants' drop-out. The sudden disruption made him want to drop out of the semester and resume his studies when the university offered in-person classes. At the same time, the learner was aware of the consequences he might face for the long study gap. Encouraging peers to attend classes and not drop out indicates that the learner tried to transform adversity through collective effort.

Excerpt 4.54. Observation:

আমরা বর্তমানে দুর্বল ইন্টারনেট সংযোগের কারণে অনলাইন ক্লাসে অংশগ্রহণ করতে সমস্যার সম্মুখীন হচ্ছি। মাঝেমধ্যে ভাবছি এই সেমিস্টার ড্রপআউট করে আবার ক্লাস শুরু হলে পড়ালেখা শুরু করব। কিন্তু তা করলে আমাদের পড়াশোনায় দীর্ঘ বিরতি সৃষ্টি হবে, আমরা আগে যা যা শিখেছি চাইনিজে তা ভুলে যাব, যা আসলে আমাদের জন্যই লস হবে! তাই আমরা সর্বাত্মক চেষ্টা করছি ক্লাসগুলোতে নিয়মিত অংশগ্রহণ করার এবং এই সেমিস্টার ড্রপআউট না করার।

We are all facing difficulties participating in online classes because of the poor internet connectivity. Sometimes we consider dropping out for this semester and resuming our studies when the university reopens. However, doing so would create a long gap in our education, and we might forget what we have already learned, which would be a significant loss for us. Therefore, we are all trying our best to continue attending classes and avoid dropping out. (C1P2, 5.8.21, observation)

Specifically in Cycle 2, some students stated that the process of acquiring digital skills as a mature learner could be daunting, which needed patience, practice and help from others to interact with technologies. For example, C2P1, wittily recalled how the teacher-researcher converted them from 'analogue to digital'. Prior to enrolling in this course, her primary exposure to technology was using Facebook for calls, but she took help from her daughter to navigate different technologies. Even though it was a challenge for the learner, she started exploring WeChat and Google classroom. The learner also joined Chinese learning groups on Facebook and WeChat. C2P4 expressed his initial struggle to use WeChat, because it was difficult for him to upload the task. C2P2's concluding remarks, 'I am learning more about using WeChat and Google Classroom,' mirrored the learner's progress directly. Thus, it seems that in comparison

to their struggles of navigating technologies before enrolling in the course, they made progress using platforms such as WeChat and Google Classroom since enrolment.

Excerpt 4.55. Interview:

শিক্ষক-গবেষক: এই কোর্স চলাকালীন আপনি কি কোনো চ্যালেঞ্জের সম্মুখীন হয়েছেন?

C2P1: আপনার মনে আছে, প্রথম ক্লাসে আপনি আমাদের কিছু অ্যাপ ডাউনলোড করতে বলেছিলেন। তখন আমরা মজা করে বলেছিলাম, আপনি আমাদের অ্যানালগ থেকে ডিজিটাল বানিয়ে ছাড়বেন! আমি শুধু ফেসবুক ব্যবহার করতে জানতাম, আর সেটাও মূলত মানুষকে ফোন বা যোগাযোগ করার জন্য। প্রযুক্তি ব্যবহারে আমি তেমন পারদর্শী নই, তাই প্রায়ই মেয়ের সাহায্য নিতে হয়। কিন্তু আগের তুলনায় এখন অনেক উন্নতি করেছি। গুগল ক্লাসরুম ও উইচ্যাট ব্যবহার করতে শিখেছি। এখন ফেসবুকে চীনা ভাষা শেখার কয়েকটি গ্রুপে যুক্ত আছি এবং উইচ্যাটে চীনা ভাষা শেখার পেজগুলো অনুসরণ করি। আমি শিখতেছি শুধু যোগাযোগ করার জন্য না, পড়ালেখার জন্যও সোশাল মিডিয়া ব্যবহার করা যায়।

C2P4: উইচ্যাট গ্রুপে কাজ করাটা আমার জন্য কঠিন ছিল। আমি জানতাম না কীভাবে আমাদের গ্রুপের কাজ সেখানে আপলোড করতে হয়। আমাদের এক সহপাঠী (C2P3) আমাকে দেখিয়েও দিয়েছিল, কিন্তু আমি বারবার ভুলে যেতাম। এই বয়সে নতুন কিছু শিখতে একটু বেশি সময় লাগে।

Teacher-researcher: Did you face any challenges during this course? (March 2022, translation)

C2P1: You may remember that in our first class you suggested us to download some apps; we all laughed and said that you would make us digital from analogue! I am only familiar with Facebook, and the only purpose it has served to call people. I am not good at using technology and often I seek help from my daughter. Compared to my previous situation, I have made significant progress in using technology by joining google classroom and using WeChat. Now I have joined some Chinese learning groups on Facebook and have followed Chinese learning pages on WeChat. I am learning that social media can be used not just for communication, but also for studying. (March 2022, translation)

C2P4: Working in the WeChat group was a challenge. I did not know how to upload our group work in WeChat, even one of our classmates (C2P3) showed me how to do that, I kept forgetting. At this age, learning about new things takes time. (March 2022, translation)

Another challenge of Cycle 2 was the frustration of the repetitive phone malfunctions that happened after the installation of WeChat. The malfunctions were caused by a full phone memory, but C2P3 could not identify that. The issue was resolved by deleting unnecessary mobile apps with the help of a peer C2P2.

Excerpt 4.56. Interview:

> উইচ্যাট অ্যাপ ইনস্টল করার পর আমার মোবাইল অনেকবার হ্যাং হইছিল। অ্যাপটা ব্যবহার করতে গিয়ে খুব বিরক্ত লাগত, আর কীভাবে এই সমস্যা ঠিক করতে হয় তাও জানতাম না। আমার বন্ধু C2P2 মোবাইলের সেটিংস দেখে বুঝতে পারল যে মেমোরি ভরে গেছে। সে কিছু অ্যাপ ডিলিট করে দিল, যেগুলো আমি ব্যবহার করতাম না। তারপর সমস্যাটা ঠিক হয়ে গেল। আমি এখন উইচ্যাট আর গুগল ক্লাসরুম ব্যবহার সম্পর্কে আরও শিখতেছি।
>
> C2P3: After installing the WeChat app, my mobile hanged many times. It was frustrating to use the app, and I did not know how to resolve it! My friend C2P2 checked the phone setting and found that the memory was full. He deleted some app that I do not use, and the problem got solved. I am learning more about using WeChat and Google classroom. (March 2022)

Technological challenges were a prominent feature of both Cycle 1 and Cycle 2, where learners struggled with navigating unfamiliar platforms, uploading tasks, and managing basic device functionality. However, this pattern was not found in Cycle 3. A plausible explanation lies in the learners' prior digital exposure before enrolling in the course. Unlike their previous cohorts in the earlier cycles, Cycle 3 participants had already engaged with online learning environments through their other degree programmes. Also, seven students had experience using WeChat to communicate with their Chinese teacher, which meant the primary communication and task-sharing tool was already familiar to them. This prior familiarisation appeared to help them to engage with course content and collaborative tasks more readily as compared to their previous cohorts.

4.7. Summary and conclusions

This chapter has presented findings from interconnected themes examining how RPL on WeChat took place in practice across three-cycles based on data from WeChat interaction logs, classroom observation notes, interview, and reflective journals. It was acknowledged that Cycle 1 data was more limited than subsequent cycles due to COVID-19 challenges faced by learners.

This chapter has connected and presented the data from different cycles under common themes. These themes illustrate how students' participation and responsibilities developed throughout the process. In particular, the findings show students' development as independent learners, peer learners, and peer teachers.

The data demonstrates how students gradually took responsibility for their own learning journeys, actively engaged with one another, and contributed to an environment that encouraged reciprocal peer learning. The findings also indicate increased use of Chinese, greater confidence in communication, and broader engagement with learning resources. These developments were supported by classroom activities, peer interaction, and access to a range of learning materials. Students drew on authentic materials, self-initiated learning activities, and collaborative exchanges with peers to support their learning throughout the process. This was accomplished through a combination of these three methods: by engaging with authentic information, engaging in self-initiated learning activities, and engaging in collaborative exchanges. However, the findings also reveal that this progression was accompanied by some challenges, including role unfamiliarity, competing time demands, structural limitations in course design, and cognitive overload produced by the diversity of peer-designed tasks. The findings establish that learner agency in the context was not simply expressed through individual initiative but was negotiated, tested, and sustained through the peer structure itself. The next chapter will provide an in-depth discussion and connect the themes to represent how students exercise their learner agency.

Chapter 5
LEARNER AGENCY THROUGH RPL AND WECHAT: DISCUSSION

Chapter 4 presented the findings under interconnected themes across three-cycles, which showed participants' dual roles as peer teachers and peer learners and their interaction on WeChat. This discussion chapter argues that learner agency in this study's context is a socioculturally mediated capacity to act, which developed through designed peer interaction, purposeful use of the WeChat-mediated learning environment, learners' changes in mindset, and their individual and collective ownership over the learning process.

Section 5.1 examines how learner agency developed in this context, by tracing the emergence of ownership, growth mindset, and relational responsibility. Section 5.2 explores the relationship between reciprocal peer learning and learner agency, focusing on how role alternation, shared responsibility, and peer evaluation created opportunities for learners to take active responsibility for their own and each other's learning. Section 5.3 considers WeChat and other social media as platforms for fostering agency, which examines how the multimodal features and flexibility of the digital environment extended learners' opportunities to engage beyond the classroom. Section 5.4 addresses the challenges and contextual considerations that shaped implementation, including technological competence and the influence of Bangladeshi classroom culture. Section 5.5 derives practical guidelines for teachers to implement RPL on social media to develop learner agency in Bangladesh and in similar contexts.

5.1. Enacting learner agency: ownership, mindset, and responsibility

This section discusses how learner agency emerged and was exercised, focusing on how students were taking ownership, taking responsibilities, and changing relationships to

their personal and group learning. In the Bangladeshi educational context, where responsibility is often framed as relying on teacher-assigned tasks and achieving grades, the RPL design in the WeChat-mediated environment invites learners to take ownership of their learning processes and outcomes. The following sub-sections examine three interrelated dimensions of this shift: learners' ability to exercise ownership, learners' cultivation of a growth mindset, and learners' development of responsibility for their own and peers' learning.

5.1.1. Learners' ability to exercise ownership

The findings from this study showed that ownership manifested in two intertwined ways, individually and collectively. The individual aspect concerned learners' control over their learning, and the collective aspect concerned learners' accountability to their peer community.

Individual dimensions of exercising ownership

Ownership was demonstrated not simply through participation but through learners' capacity to define learning priorities independently of teacher direction. Learners' independent learning initiatives stemmed from their own interests and self-initiated pursuits, including language practice, exploring content, setting personally meaningful learning goals, and handling their learning gaps. A feature of the current study's Chinese course in this thesis was that neither the curriculum nor the instructor mandated this action, so learners did not do it to achieve a grade. This absence of assessment matters, because it removes external institutional pressure as the main reason for participation. As a result, learners' engagement was more likely to reflect their own learning goals, interests, or social motivations. Also, learners' participation was more likely to be self-initiated and socially negotiated. In this sense, a degree of freedom to decide whether and how to participate can be understood not as a response to institutional demands, but as learners exercising agency through their own goals, peer dynamics, and the affordances of the learning environment.

As the findings from Cycle 2 and Cycle 3 show, learners' interest in and passion for learning Chinese were underpinned by their intentional decision to invest personal

time in independent study. They self-initiated language practice, for example, by narrating their own cultural events (such as Eid celebrations) in Chinese. This shows that learners took the initiative to use the language to express their own lived experiences. In doing so, Chinese not only was a subject to practise but also became a tool for self-expression. This suggests that learners' ownership extended beyond completing learning activities to include ownership of meaning-making, as learners used the language to represent experiences that were personally meaningful to them. This aligns with Chan et al.'s (2014) view that learners' ownership involves actively participating in intended learning. However, the findings here suggest that such participation is closely linked to learners' will and skills to engage (Cleary & Zimmerman, 2012; D'warte, 2021), as well as their ability to redefine how and why the language is used.

The findings also show that in Cycle 1 and Cycle 2, ten learners, driven by individual interest, started following different Chinese learning groups on WeChat and other social media platforms, such as Facebook and YouTube. This suggests that learners' ownership extended beyond the formal course boundaries, as they actively expanded their learning opportunities through self-selected digital platforms. While some learners engaged in more passive forms of practice, such as using TikTok or playing online games with their microphones muted to practise reading fast-paced Chinese, others took more active approaches. This variation indicates that ownership was not a single, uniform construct but was enacted in different ways depending on learners' interests and engagement. For example, C3P4 became a content creator by setting up a Facebook page to share Chinese vocabulary and grammar, including short stories written in Chinese. This reflects a shift from consumption to production, where ownership became visible through contributing content and positioning oneself as a knowledge contributor. In this case, learning was not limited to personal practice but extended to sharing and creating meaning for others.

These examples show that taking ownership influenced learners to make independent choices and to engage in self-initiated actions (Campbell, 2012). While Benson's (2013) dimensions help to explain how learners manage and direct their learning, the current findings point to further forms of ownership in digitally mediated contexts, where learners also take up roles as content producers and distributors. Instead of waiting for

the class teacher to assign materials, these learners intentionally repurposed non-educational platforms to fit their immediate language needs. This suggests that in digital spaces, learner ownership is defined by how creatively a student can modify ordinary social media into a personalised learning tool. In this sense, ownership in digital learning environments may depend not only on learners' control over their learning but also on their ability to use everyday technologies to support and extend that learning.

Exercising ownership here was not just about learners having a feeling of control; it was a systematic process of self-assessment and targeted tool selection. Beyond choosing social media platforms, exercising ownership also meant that learners made intentional decisions about selecting their content, learning modes, and digital tools. This form of ownership showed learners' ability to make strategic decisions about how, when, and through which resources learning would occur, which can be considered an active exercise of agency in digitally mediated environments. Instead of following a one-size-fits-all approach, half of the participants (n=12) identified their own linguistic gaps and targeted them with specific applications. This suggests that ownership involved ongoing reflection on learning needs and the intentional matching of learning resources with those needs, as learners actively selected tools to address areas they themselves had identified as important. For example, learners used TrainChinese for character stroke order, the Chinese Wiki website for grammar, and Du Chinese for integrated reading and listening practice.

This behaviour was further supported by the reflective journals, which documented how students regularly set their own goals, identified their weaknesses, and prioritised seeking solutions. These patterns are consistent with literature linking ownership to learners' willingness to accept responsibility for their learning, set their own goals, and actively engage in learning tasks (Code, 2020; Tsai et al., 2020). At the same time, the present findings add that, in digitally mediated environments, ownership also involves learners recognising their own needs, selecting and repurposing everyday technologies, and, in some cases, positioning themselves as content creators rather than solely as recipients of instruction. This suggests that individual ownership can be understood as relying not only on learners' ability to self-reflect and make their own

decisions, but also on their capacity to construct and manage personalised digital learning experiences.

Collective dimensions of exercising ownership

The findings suggest that ownership was both individual as well as related to learners' accountability to the peer community. In the WeChat groups, ownership was relational in the sense that learners took responsibility not only for what they themselves used or produced, but also for how their contributions might affect classmates' learning. This was visible when students checked the accuracy of materials before posting, corrected misleading information, and sometimes withdrew content they felt might confuse peers. For example, some learners explained in an interview that they 'didn't want others to learn the wrong thing', and another noted in their reflection that they only shared links 'after checking from two or three sources' to be sure it was reliable for the group. In these cases, checking content accuracy and selectively sharing resources were not just good study habits but agentic decisions about protecting the quality of shared learning. Their actions reflected a sense of responsibility, collaboration, adaptation, and engagement with both human and non-human factors in the learning environment (Edwards, 2005; Code, 2025).

Learners' awareness about what to post, what to correct, and what to withhold was guided by concerns about classmates' progress and maintaining the social bond in the WeChat group. In this way, ownership extended to the collective learning process, as learners monitored and managed their own contributions with an awareness of their impact on others. While the literature often presents ownership as an internal, personal trait located within the individual learner (Larsen-Freeman et al., 2021; Fouché, 2025), these findings suggest a different emphasis. In this study, ownership was also visible in how learners monitored the quality of shared resources, corrected peers, and adjusted their own posts with classmates in mind.

This challenges views of ownership that focus only on inner feelings or private personal choices by showing that, in social media–mediated learning environments, ownership can take the form of a collective practice. In this sense, students' sense of control over learning was closely tied to their sociocultural surroundings and their responsibility to

the peer community (Schoon & Heckhausen, 2019), as they saw themselves as partly responsible for the learning environment. Therefore, in a social media–mediated environment, exercising ownership is not only about managing one's own goals but about co-constructing an encouraging learning culture in which individual initiative and community responsibility can influence one another. These findings suggest that ownership can be understood as a relational process through which learners attend to their own learning while also shaping the learning opportunities available to others.

5.1.2. The cultivation of a growth mindset

Developing a growth mindset is a key part of how learners exercise agency. The findings show that across three action research cycles, learners' responses to challenges noticeably changed from initial avoidance to proactive problem-solving, seeking help, and persistent practice. This behavioural change indicated that learners stopped viewing their linguistic and technical difficulties as fixed problems and began treating them as manageable obstacles that could be overcome through effort and peer support. Thus, having a growth mindset was not an abstract, pre-existing psychological trait; it was observable through specific changes in participants' actions.

Changing behaviours and actions

This growth-oriented behaviour was apparent in how learners considered peer success and navigated self-comparison with those peers. Initially, three students felt discouraged when comparing their own performance to that of faster peers during a timed writing-speed task in class. However, by observing their classmates' strategies, these students realised they could improve their own performance through practical changes, such as better time management and practising Chinese writing at home. Although initial performance gaps led to early discouragement, persistence enabled learners to reframe peer success as a source of motivation for self-improvement. The change in learners' behaviour demonstrates that, rather than withdrawing or treating peer comparison negatively, learners actively altered their learning outcomes by strategically adjusting their methods (Mercer & Dörnyei, 2021).

A similar pattern of behavioural transformation emerged in Cycles 2 and 3, where learners transitioned from avoiding spoken Chinese to actively engaging in conversation. In both cycles, anxiety about speaking was a common challenge for all participants because of several factors: fear of making mistakes, feeling shy, and limited experience of speaking practice before enrolling in this Chinese course. The findings show that changes in learners' speaking practice were directly associated with observing peers' engagement in class and in their WeChat group. One possible explanation for this pattern is that witnessing peers send voice messages without fear of judgement and demonstrating their limited knowledge of vocabulary could encourage anxious learners to step out of their comfort zones and act. These results extend earlier work emphasising that a language learner's mindset directly shapes their attitude, motivation, and L2 behaviour (Cacali, 2019; Leis et al., 2025). This study's findings broaden this literature by demonstrating how a growth mindset can be mediated by a specific instructional design that integrates RPL with social media. The data showed that learners' mindsets were influenced by their engagements with peers in class and in the WeChat group.

This supportive peer dynamic was further facilitated by the learning context, including the teacher-researcher's immersive use of Chinese as a medium of instruction, which encouraged learners to speak in Chinese in class. Using Chinese in class helped learners become familiar with the spoken language and reduced their affective barrier. These findings indicate that the pedagogical design can contribute to changing learners' mindsets by normalising errors as a shared part of the community learning process.

Age and mindset

The findings of this thesis offer a different narrative regarding the relationship between age and mindset, demonstrating that a growth mindset can help mature adult learners dismantle self-limiting beliefs about their age and technical competence. In Cycle 2, mature adult learners showed a strong tendency to adopt growth mindsets, which was mediated by witnessing progress among peers of a similar age. For example, C2P1 expressed intense surprise at the high engagement by C2P3, a peer she had previously perceived as disengaged. Observing a classmate of a similar age successfully designing activities, asking questions, and navigating the WeChat group motivated C2P1 to

increase her own efforts to maintain that standard. In contrast to the research by Haimovitz and Dweck (2017), which suggests that older learners are more inclined to adopt a fixed mindset due to perceived difficulty in age-related language acquisition, my findings present a different picture. Within this study's synchronous and asynchronous WeChat-mediated environments, peer modelling and communal support proved more powerful in changing learner beliefs than age or prior technological unfamiliarity. This highlights that while a growth mindset enhances individual agency, both its development and its expression are deeply mediated by environmental structures.

The environmental mediation was particularly evident in how the cohort overcame technological anxiety. At the beginning of the course, five learners out of seven in Cycle 2 expressed a fixed self-belief regarding their lack of technical expertise, referring to themselves as exclusively 'analogue' learners who found digital tools daunting and unmanageable. However, this cohort exercised problem-solving by actively seeking help with technical troubleshooting from their classmates. They collaboratively navigated the platform, resolved device memory issues, uploaded tasks, and attended targeted IT sessions. This behavioural shift aligns with work on the influence of supportive learning environments and access to peer and teacher support (Lou & Noels, 2020). These patterns point to learners' changes in beliefs and actions as closely tied to their desire to remain connected with their peer community and to continue contributing to RPL activities. Therefore, a growth mindset for mature adult learners can be understood as a socially motivated adaptation that supports ongoing participation and belonging and makes them responsible learners.

5.1.3. Becoming a responsible learner

The findings indicate that, in this study, becoming a responsible learner involved learners interpreting emerging needs, responding to challenges, and taking purposeful action in the course. This process was visible in how students redefined their educational roles: they moved from primarily receiving instructor-led content to taking responsibility for both their own learning and that of their peers. In the Bangladeshi educational context, responsibility is typically linked to completing homework and achieving good grades, with the teacher retaining primary control over learning goals

and processes. In contrast, the design of this RPL course positioned students as both peer teachers and learners who were expected to design and facilitate learning activities; it thereby redistributed responsibility and authority within the classroom. As learners engaged with these new expectations over time, responsibility shifted from compliance with teacher-set tasks to a shared commitment to supporting peers and sustaining the learning environment, though not all students took up this commitment to the same degree.

This development was most evident when students took on the role of peer teachers. Interview and WeChat log data indicate that this role extended beyond additional tasks and required a reorientation towards learning itself. Eighty per cent of learners (n=16) reported that preparing materials prompted them to evaluate their own understanding and anticipate the cognitive and linguistic difficulties their peers might encounter. This suggests that responsibility was not simply assigned but enacted in response to the need to make learning accessible to others. In this sense, responsibility emerged through accountability to peers, where learners became answerable for content accuracy as well as for the clarity and usefulness of their explanations. While this is consistent with Kuwabara et al. (2020) in positioning responsibility within social interaction, the findings further indicate that such responsibility is mediated by role expectations and visibility within the group. Becoming a responsible learner, therefore, extends beyond participation; it involves the capacity to act, influence, and direct learning situations (Biesta & Tedder, 2007) through ongoing engagement with tools, resources, and other participants (Mercer, 2012). However, this also raises questions about whether all learners were equally able to take up this role, particularly those less confident in their linguistic abilities.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings indicate that responsibility in this study operated as an expression of learner agency. When students were given some authority over the learning space, such as planning activities, selecting resources, and coordinating interaction, they had opportunities to act intentionally, make well-informed choices, and pursue their personal linguistic interests within the limits of the course design. By becoming answerable to one another for how activities unfolded, students showed that learner agency was most visible when it served a collective, communicative purpose within the peer group. While Storey et al. (2021) argue that

peer-to-peer teaching creates meaningful opportunities for intentional action and the pursuit of personal interests, the findings here suggest that taking responsibility also involves making and justifying decisions, reflecting on those decisions, and negotiating learning processes in interaction with others. In this sense, responsibility is not only about completing shared tasks but also about shaping and steering the social and interactional conditions in which learning takes place.

5.2. Reciprocal peer learning and learner agency

This study positions reciprocal peer learning (RPL) not as a collaborative tool but as a pedagogical mechanism that changes learners' roles, responsibilities, and engagement. The structural design of RPL, specifically its focus on reciprocity and role-alternation, provided the necessary conditions for learners to exercise their agency. The findings presented in Section 4.2 suggest that RPL provided opportunities for learners to participate in ways that extended beyond their usual role. Through alternating roles as peer teachers and peer learners, students became involved in planning activities, supporting classmates, providing feedback, and making decisions about learning tasks. These experiences encouraged learners to take greater responsibility for both their own learning and the learning of others.

Evidence of these developments emerged gradually across the three-cycles. The findings showed that the implementation of RPL in Cycle 1 happened only twice because of the sudden move from face-to-face to online teaching. The gradual developments of RPL were evident in Cycle 2 and Cycle 3, where learners increasingly negotiated roles, selected content for peer teaching, designed learning activities, and shared responsibility for supporting their peers (Section 4.2.1). One possible explanation is that the return to face-to-face classes restored opportunities for direct interaction and collaboration that had been constrained during online learning. The pattern therefore suggests that the development of peer-led interaction was influenced not only by continued participation over time but also by the learning environment, physical proximity, and the opportunity for spontaneous interaction.

5.2.1. Positioning learners at the centre of reciprocal peer learning

In Chapter 2, Section 2.2.1 described the conceptual foundations of RPL, and Section 2.2.2 presented the core features of RPL. Existing literature from both sections shows that a core feature of RPL is the alternation of roles between peer learners and peer teachers that distinguishes RPL from other traditional peer learning models (Boud et al., 2001; Damon & Phelps, 1989). Section 2.4 established this argument by designing role structures in which peer teachers take instructional responsibility and peer learners exercise critical engagement, with WeChat providing the environment in which these roles are enacted.

In the design of this study, RPL shifted the focus of control from the teacher-researcher to the students. Positioning learners at the centre of instructional decision-making generated forms of agency that offer more opportunities for the learners to engage in their own learning and peers' learning simultaneously (Bradford-Watts, 2011; Tang et al., 2022). The pedagogical design intentionally moved away from a teacher-centred paradigm, where the instructor makes all critical decisions regarding content and timing. Using Dillenbourg's (1999) principles, scripting allowed setting the roles of peer teachers, peer learners, and the teacher-researcher. The orchestration addressed the real-time management of these roles across different settings. The teacher-researcher's role was orchestrated to shift from an authority figure to a technical facilitator and collaborative partner, which was more evident in the later cycles. The redistribution of roles established a democratic learning environment, in which students actively participated in and took responsibilities for their own and their peers' learning. This peer-centred approach established what Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner define as a *community of practice* (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2020), where agency emerged as a collaborative process, formed through reciprocal relationships between individuals and shaped by sociocultural surroundings.

By placing learners at the centre, the design affirmed the diversity of students' experiences and transformed them into opportunities for mutual learning. It is in line with Boud et al. 's (2001) conception of RPL as a mutually beneficial process that is grounded in the sharing experience between participants. For example, in Cycle 2, learners independently proposed the 'Five Minutes in Chinese Every day' initiative (Section 4.2.2). Such spontaneous initiative showed that learners were drawing on

their shared experiences to shape their own learning in ways that were meaningful to them. Similarly, the mid-term evaluation in Cycle 3 served as another illustration of this mutual process, where learners collectively reflected on their learning needs and influenced the course direction, such as requesting more focus on character writing (Section 3.3.3). These findings also validate that RPL creates a 'collaborative, multi-party, symmetrical participation structure' (Blum-Kulka & Snow, 2004, p. 291). Also, by identifying their own gaps and designing solutions, learners transitioned into what Lehtonen (2015) describes as responsible human participants defined by intentionality and empowerment.

Positioning learners at the centre also involved fostering their capacity for strategic pedagogical choices. In Cycle 2, learners' central role in RPL became visible in the way peer teachers deliberately structured opportunities for their classmates to learn. Group 2 (C2P3) chose 'fill in the gap' exercises twice because they mirrored the HSK exam format (Excerpt 4.20). Their decision demonstrated peer teachers' awareness of their peers' needs whilst simultaneously drawing on and reinforcing their own knowledge of examination requirements. Similarly, Group 1 peer teachers (C2P1) provided a sample dialogue before asking peers to construct their own (Excerpt 4.20). Both findings confirm Bailey et al.'s (2018) observation that RPL encourages learners to deepen their knowledge by revising previously studied topics and engaging in reflective knowledge-building. In Cycle 3, the design matured into a collaborative classroom structure, which led to more consistent attendance and higher engagement in both classroom and WeChat interactions than in previous cycles. Students independently designed multi-resource study routines integrating apps, videos, and social media, effectively extending their language practice beyond the formal classroom. This could suggest that adopting an RPL approach encouraged learners to identify their linguistic gaps, look for solutions, and instruct each other through purposeful interactions. Also, the interactive process offered students more opportunities to articulate their understanding, provide feedback, and raise questions.

5.2.2. Learners' role alternation and ownership development

The alternation of roles is central to RPL because it enables learners to move between explaining and questioning, and between supporting and being supported. The

findings showed that when students took on the peer teacher role (Section 4.2.1), they were not only sharing information; they were reorganising their own understanding so that their explanations would make sense to classmates. Topping (2005) notes that when learners move between teaching and learning positions, they deepen their understanding and build knowledge together. In this context, the findings suggest that this movement also supported a stronger sense of ownership, because students began to see themselves as responsible for what and how their peers learned.

Figure 5.1 gives an overview of how RPL developed in my course. As peer teachers, students designed learning activities, responded to questions, and provided feedback. They also commented on why they chose particular activities and formats. As peer learners, they took part in these activities and offered reflections on their experience. This ongoing change of roles changed how they related to knowledge: they were involved in planning, delivering, and responding to learning, rather than just completing tasks provided by the teacher. The findings illustrated that when students took on teaching responsibilities, they prepared more carefully and aimed for deeper understanding than when they were only receiving instruction. This echoes Liu and Devitt's (2014) description of peer teaching as a 'catalyst for students' activities' (p. 5), and in this study that catalyst was closely linked to students taking ownership of both the process and outcomes of learning.

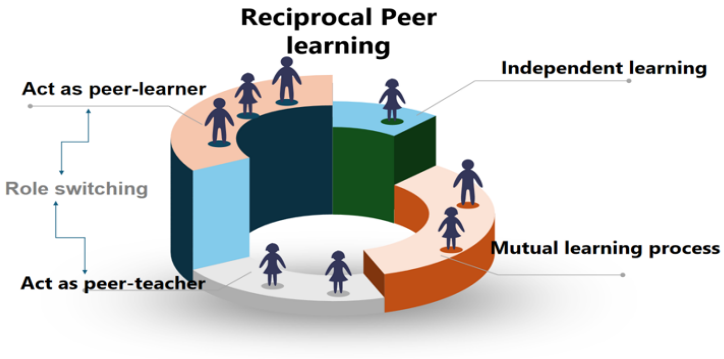


Figure 5.1. Formation of reciprocal peer learning

Role as peer teacher

The findings indicate that taking on the role of peer teacher was a new experience for all students, which increased their engagement and prompted reflection. This alternation of roles supported a gradual change in how students saw themselves as learners. At first, many felt anxious and unsure about acting as peer teachers, especially those who viewed themselves as less proficient compared to their peers. As they gained more experience in organising activities and responding to questions, they began to describe a stronger sense of purpose in the role. One student (C2P4), who was used to simply finishing activities prepared by the teacher, reflected that preparing materials for peers encouraged him to study more carefully (Excerpt 4.55). Another student (C3P10), who identified as the least proficient member of his group, reported that his early fear of mistakes gave way to growing confidence as he continued in the peer teacher role. These findings show that ownership developed over time through repeated engagement with the responsibilities attached to teaching.

The findings also show that taking on the role of peer teacher prompted learners to reflect on responsibility, teamwork, communication, and participation (Section 4.2; Section 4.4.3). For example, C3P6 explained in the WeChat group that engaging in peer teaching increased her awareness of the need to communicate clearly and remain patient when working with others. Through ongoing interaction with group members, particularly on WeChat, this student felt they were gradually becoming a more effective communicator (Excerpt 4.49). This suggests that acting as a peer teacher offered learners opportunities to develop interpersonal communication skills that they did not usually associate with language learning.

The peer teacher role also influenced how some learners perceived themselves within the classroom community. This was particularly evident in the interview data from three students. For example, C3P10, who described himself as the least proficient member of his group, initially experienced anxiety about teaching others. However, as he participated in peer teaching, this anxiety gradually gave way to a stronger sense of purpose and increased confidence. His account suggests that peer teaching created opportunities for learners who might otherwise occupy more peripheral positions in the classroom to contribute meaningfully to group learning. In this respect, the benefits

of peer teaching extended beyond communication and teamwork skills. The experience of designing activities, supporting classmates, and taking responsibility for shared learning appeared to foster a greater sense of ownership and agency. While previous studies have highlighted the role of peer teaching in developing transferable skills (Aliano & Chang, 2024; Lim, 2014), the current study indicates that, in this RPL setting, peer teaching also contributed to changes in how learners understood their role in the classroom, and it encouraged some less-confident students to participate more actively.

Role as peer learner

The findings suggest that participating as peer learners increased students' linguistic awareness and self-reflection. Through evaluating peer-generated activities and reviewing classmates' responses, learners engaged in reflective processes that made gaps in their understanding more visible. This finding resonates with research on noticing and peer assessment, which argues that evaluating others' work can increase awareness of one's own learning needs. In the RPL setting, students also reported learning new vocabulary through exposure to peers' answers. This suggests that peer-generated content functioned as an additional source of meaningful input. These findings extend common understandings of peer learning and highlight the value of RPL, showing that gains were not limited to peer teachers; peer learners also reported learning benefits through observation, evaluation, and collaborative engagement. The increasingly positive perceptions documented in Cycle 3 further indicate that alternating roles and sustained participation can help build a supportive learning community in which learners recognise and value peer contributions.

As peer learners, students became critical evaluators of their peers' work by offering feedback, asking questions, and reflecting on their experiences of solving activities designed by peer teachers in both the classroom and the WeChat group. Solving peer-designed activities created opportunities for learners to identify specific difficulties in grammar and vocabulary (Excerpt 4.8). For example, C2P7 noted that, although they knew the meanings of individual words, attempting a sentence rearrangement task made them 'more aware of my own comprehension difficulties' (Excerpt 4.23). Three learners also mentioned that they could gain knowledge simply

by reading and reviewing their peers' answers, which they experienced as a new way to practise Chinese. By Cycle 3, peer learners consistently described positive experiences of group work and emphasised how peer teachers were adding value to their learning (Section 4.2.2). Previous studies, such as Osborne and Zhang (2023) and Wu and Chen (2018), have shown that peer-teaching activities linked to formal instruction and supported by digital tools can enhance beginners' Chinese learning. The present study adds detail to this work by showing how, in a WeChat-mediated RPL course, the peer learner role involved not only receiving support but also actively noticing language, using peer contributions as input, and taking responsibility for monitoring one's own learning needs.

5.2.3. Shared responsibilities in group work

Shared responsibility emerged as key in group learning, as attention moved from individual performance to the collective progress of the group. A sense of collective responsibility emerged in both Cycle 2 and Cycle 3 (see Section 4.2). Students commented that learning no longer felt like an individual effort; they felt answerable for supporting each other's development (C2P2, Group 1, Cycle 2). This move from personal to group responsibility was an important aspect of learner agency, as students began to recognise their capacity to influence their own learning and that of their peers. This sense of responsibility also led to increased effort. Peer teachers reported that they needed to understand the material thoroughly before preparing activities or answering questions, and several commented that they were conscious of the consequences of providing incorrect information for their classmates' learning (e.g. Excerpt 4.56). Some tasks, such as dialogue creation, sentence rearrangement, and measure words identification, were particularly demanding to design. Peer teachers described revisiting complex grammatical structures, thinking carefully about how to support their classmates, and providing sample answers or guided examples to make tasks more accessible for others.

In designing learning activities, group members engaged in negotiation, discussion, and workload distribution (Section 4.2). Groups collaboratively decided what to include and how to present it. For example, Group 2 in Cycle 2 noted that the COVID-19 campus closure had created a shared gap in Hanzi writing, so they designed

character-writing tasks to help the whole class address this gap. Group 3 in Cycle 3 brainstormed ideas together, selected tasks they considered most suitable, and divided the work according to members' preferences and interests (Excerpt 4.47). These processes suggest that the RPL format gave students space to discuss and test ideas for tasks together and to articulate their own and others' learning needs; this is consistent with Boud et al.'s (2001) account of peer learning as a context for joint decision-making and interdependence.

Working in groups also fostered a culture of mutual support. In Cycle 2 and Cycle 3, more-proficient students helped peers who were struggling with Hanzi or sentence construction while activities were being prepared. This finding contrasts with Adams and Oliver's (2023) and Philp et al.'s (2013) observations that some students resist peer learning when they feel that classmates lack sufficient language proficiency. Although students differed in language proficiency, none mentioned that these differences created challenges for doing group work. More-proficient students frequently supported peers who experienced difficulties with Hanzi or sentence construction, and this support was viewed as a normal part of working together. Observing these changes among learners was a valuable experience for me. This is because in Bangladesh, classroom practices are often characterised by teacher-led instruction and an emphasis on individual academic performance.

In this study, participants described supporting one another during the preparation of learning activities and working together to address shared learning difficulties. The absence of reported concerns about differences in language proficiency suggests that learners generally viewed group members as resources for learning rather than as obstacles to participation. RPL therefore appeared to encourage a sense of shared responsibility in which students worked towards common learning goals and recognised that their learning was closely connected to that of their peers.

5.2.4. Peer evaluation

The findings showed that peer evaluation in this RPL course supported learners' reflection on their participation and language use and provided additional opportunities for input and feedback beyond teacher evaluation. The peer evaluation

took several forms, including comparing levels of engagement with peers, commenting on peer-designed activities, and reviewing or correcting each other's work.

One important pattern was peer evaluation through observation and comparison. Learners often considered their own engagement in relation to the behaviour and progress of their peers (Section 4.2.2). Around 40% of learners described how seeing classmates contribute more actively to classroom discussions and in the WeChat group prompted them to increase their own participation. These accounts suggest that peer evaluation was not limited to judging others' performance; observing peers prompted learners to reconsider their own learning practices and identify areas for improvement. Although some students initially felt frustrated when comparing themselves with faster or more active peers, several described this comparison as a source of motivation to improve. This is consistent with Teng's (2019) view that evaluating peers can support learners' development by encouraging reflection on their learning experiences and participation.

Another form of peer evaluation was also evident in feedback on peer-designed activities. As peer learners, students commented on tasks created by their classmates and offered suggestions for improvement. In Cycle 2, this feedback took place mainly in classroom discussions, while in Cycle 3, learners also provided immediate written feedback to peer teachers through WeChat after completing activities. In these comments, students explained how particular tasks helped them apply grammatical rules, review lesson content, and participate more actively in learning. For example, C3P2 noted that activities designed by Group 1 allowed her to apply grammatical rules, offered a different type of practice, and increased the pace of her learning. Similarly, C3P4 observed that although a sentence-rearrangement task was challenging, it highlighted areas needing further attention and encouraged a systematic review of the lesson. This pattern supports Topping and Ehly's (1998) argument that peer interaction can provide feedback that promotes learning and reflection, and shows how, in this RPL context, learners used feedback to link task design directly to their own learning needs.

Peer evaluation also took place when learners reviewed peers' answers and used them as a resource for learning. Students frequently read each other's responses to check

their own understanding or explore alternative ways of using Chinese. C3P7, for instance, reported learning new vocabulary and expressions from classmates' answers to a vocabulary-mapping activity, while C3P8 described how reviewing peers' work helped him see how the same word could be used in different sentence contexts. C3P3 explained that comparing responses was a way to check and confirm previously learned knowledge. These examples suggest that peer evaluation in this setting was not restricted to giving feedback on performance. Reading and comparing peers' work gave learners additional input and opportunities to reflect on their own language use, indicating that peer evaluation was closely integrated into the learning process.

Finally, the data show that peer evaluation extended into everyday interactions on WeChat. Learners occasionally corrected each other's mistakes during informal exchanges. For example, when C3P10 mistakenly used the character 马 (mǎ, horse) instead of the question particle 吗 (ma), C3P6 quickly pointed out the error and provided the correct form, and this correction was accepted positively by the group. Although this was a small incident, it illustrates that students became comfortable commenting on and responding to each other's language use beyond planned tasks, and that WeChat created opportunities for immediate peer feedback outside formal classroom activities. By observing peers, commenting on tasks, learning from peers' answers, and offering corrections in everyday interaction, learners used peer activity as a reference point for their own participation and understanding. In this way, peer evaluation contributed to a more active and responsible stance towards learning, as students drew on each other's contributions to monitor their progress and to engage with Chinese from multiple perspectives.

5.3. WeChat and other social media as platforms for fostering learner agency

The findings showed that adding a WeChat-mediated environment to the course gave learners more ways to connect with peers, share collaborative group work, and engage in casual dialogue, which supported the development of learner agency. The communicative features of the platform also created opportunities to exchange resources and to participate in collaborative knowledge construction in ways that are more limited in traditional, physical classroom contexts alone. In this study, the

WeChat group was intentionally integrated into the course design as an additional space for conducting RPL, and this integration may help to explain why these benefits were so apparent in learners' experiences. Across the two cycles, this pattern suggests that when a social media–mediated environment is intentionally designed and promoted as part of a regular programme, it can create more flexibility and more opportunities for learners to stay connected and to decide when and how to participate in learning on their own terms.

Although WeChat was used as the main learning environment in this study, students also used other social media platforms, such as Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok, for exploring and learning about Chinese language and culture. As individuals, 20% learners watched TikTok videos to understand cultural humour, 30% used YouTube, and 40% used Facebook to explore poems, songs, and information about Chinese traditional events. These findings resonate with research showing that social media platforms can provide flexible access to learning opportunities beyond the classroom (Reinders & Benson, 2017; Xue & Churchill, 2019). Use of various social media networks revealed a pattern that connected with the idea of edutainment, which indicated that learners used social media both for entertainment and for educational purposes (Labus et al., 2015).

The reason could be connected to the opportunities of having easy exposure to Chinese language through engaging content, and learners' intention to interact in communicative contexts (Ruijie et al., 2025). In addition, instead of relying only on one platform or formal textbook materials, students actively looked for various platforms that suited their personal preferences and learning needs. This may suggest that individual differences and preferences for learning language relate to personal curiosity. The findings suggest that social media itself did not automatically foster learner agency as a pre-designed instructional outcome. Instead, agency appeared to develop as an emergent property of the learners' own self-initiated, interest-driven engagement. Learners needed to become active agents through their willingness to explore and to engage in this process.

5.3.1. Multimodal communication features in WeChat

The findings revealed that learners actively leveraged WeChat's multimodal features, such as text, audio, memes, stickers and visuals to create a flexible digital space for practising Chinese outside of regular class hours. Learners did not just send text: they combined voice messages, screenshots, and images to communicate. For example, voice messaging was the most popular feature among Cycle 3's cohort for spontaneous, unscripted listening and speaking practice. This may be because observing peers with a similar level of Chinese using voice messages fostered a sense of psychologically safe community belonging, which normalised participation and making mistakes, and contributed to reduced performance anxiety.

As discussed in Section 2.3.3, existing WeChat-mediated CFL studies have used voice messaging as a channel either to deliver mobile-assisted corrective feedback from teachers and native-speaker assistants (Xu & Peng, 2017) or to connect novice learners with native speakers for task-based question-and-answer exchanges (Jiang & Li, 2018). In both designs, the interactional partner is a more proficient other, and speaking tasks, pairings, and feedback remain under the teacher's control. Also, in both studies, learners were positioned either as recipients of feedback or as gaining access to native speakers in the WeChat group.

By contrast, in the present study, learners engaged with the same-level peers in a teacher-absent space and used the voice messaging feature for spontaneous, unscripted exchanges that were not limited to receiving feedback or completing pre-set tasks. This shift from expert-mediated to peer-only interaction indicates that learners can take responsibility for creating their own speaking opportunities in a WeChat group, and that the benefits of using this platform for learning Chinese do not depend fully on teacher-led or native-speaker-led activities but also on students' willingness to initiate, respond, and support each other. In addition, learners' spontaneous exchange of voice messaging can be linked to the concept of affordances, which views learning opportunities not as inputs that automatically cause learning but as possibilities that only arise when learners notice them and choose to engage with them (van Lier, 2004).

The flexibility of using WeChat anywhere and at any time helped all participants to reduce logistical and scheduling barriers. In Cycle 2, two learners emphasised that it was challenging to arrange study sessions or connect with peers after class, because 95% of learners in this group were busy balancing study with work, business, and family commitments. By contrast, the WeChat group allowed them to connect 'at any time and place', which made them feel much closer to their classmates. Participants from Cycle 3 shared similar experiences and mentioned that the flexibility of the platform increased their motivation to stay connected with others, something they had never considered doing before. Studies focusing specifically on WeChat as a learning environment show that learners value the convenience, mobility, and extended communication that the platform affords (Luo & Yang, 2016).

5.3.2. Exposure to authentic language and cultural context

A unique finding was related to WeChat's built-in translation tool. The result showed that the instant Chinese-to-English translation feature helped learners to actively follow other Chinese learning groups that shared short articles and posts about everyday life in Chinese society. When participants encountered unknown words, they could quickly view the translated version (Section 4.3.1), which helped them to manage linguistic difficulties and keep reading. Over time, this immediate support appeared to create opportunities for incidental vocabulary learning. By reading about everyday topics such as regional food variations, they also tried to connect textbook vocabulary to real-world contexts. For example, student C3P5 noted that through these posts they gained a clearer understanding of differences in eating habits between northern and southern China. This suggests that learners actively sought out and followed specific WeChat learning groups and made strategic use of the translation feature to extend their Chinese learning. While studies on WeChat have focused on developing linguistic skills (Shi et al., 2017; Tong et al., 2024), they have paid less attention to the role of built-in translation tools. Future research could therefore examine in more detail the benefits and challenges of using WeChat's translation feature for Chinese language learners.

A recurring pattern across Cycle 2 and Cycle 3 was that participants shared a range of Chinese cultural content in the WeChat group, including songs, poems, articles, and

videos. In this space, students did not only consume materials; they shared and discussed classical Chinese literature, such as a poem by Su Shi, and integrated Chinese music into their daily routines, with one student even printing out song lyrics to memorise and sing along to. C3P6, for instance, watched and then shared a YouTube video about the Mid-Autumn Festival with her peers; moved by the symbolism of the full moon as a time of reunion, she linked this imagery to Bengali literary traditions and discussed the connection in the group.

These behaviours show a similar pattern to Kim and Kim's (2021) finding that YouTube broadens learners' cultural awareness. At the same time, in the present study, the learner not only developed knowledge of Chinese culture but also actively re-contextualised it through her own cultural frame of reference and connected it with her local culture. Similarly, three students actively engaged in making their own videos in Chinese. For example, C3P6 created a video demonstrating how to make jiǎozi (饺子, dumplings). These practices indicate that learners might consider their WeChat group as a space for co-constructing and personalising Chinese cultural knowledge through their own creative contributions (Nejadghanbar & Shaahdadi, 2025).

5.3.3. Learners' engagement in WeChat group

Real-time interaction in the WeChat group supported learners' engagement. In Cycle 3, students used the group to share opinions, ideas, and learning challenges with their classmates (Wang et al., 2016). A 44-minute multilingual exchange in Bengali, English, and Chinese showed how they stayed with a discussion for a long period and worked together on a problem (Section 4.2.3; Figure 4.14). The interaction involved questioning, clarifying, and reflecting on language-related issues. These patterns suggest that the WeChat group worked as an interactive space where learners could participate over time, ask for help, and find solutions together.

Findings from Cycle 3 particularly indicated that engagement in the WeChat group extended beyond academic participation and involved emotional and practical peer support. When a learner explained that she was unable to study because of a headache, classmates responded spontaneously in Chinese with empathetic advice, encouraging her to take medicine and rest. Students stated that they gained considerable knowledge

by reading the collective responses of their peers in the chat. The group functioned as a space where support and knowledge were constructed through everyday exchanges, and where learners drew on peers as both emotional and academic resources. This pattern aligns with work on social media–supported learning communities, which describes a move from individual use of technology to more socially grounded practices (Ansari & Khan, 2020; Barrot, 2021).

Peers' engagement and the supportive nature of the group appeared to ease anxiety among less-confident learners. The results showed that feedback from peers encouraged them to participate more actively. For instance, when a student used the character 马 (mǎ, horse) instead of the question particle 吗 (ma), a peer identified and corrected the error within ten seconds, and the correction was received positively. This example suggests a climate of mutual attentiveness, acceptance of mistakes, and psychological safety, which helped maintain engagement. Previous WeChat studies emphasise the value of teacher engagement and feedback in sustaining motivation and participation (Huang, 2019; Tong et al., 2024). The present findings show that in this context, learner-to-learner engagement and feedback also played a central role, whereby students monitored each other's messages, offered prompt help and encouragement, and used the group as a first point of contact when difficulties arose.

5.4. Challenges of developing learner agency

5.4.1. Level of technological competence

Findings from Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 showed that learners' technological competence was a challenge for developing learner agency, but the nature of that challenge differed between the two cycles. In Cycle 1, which ran fully online due to COVID-19 restrictions, participants had to attend via online platforms without prior training, and they also faced infrastructure issues such as unstable networks, power cuts, and limited access to devices. In Cycle 2, classes alternated between in-person and online, depending on restrictions. In this cycle, infrastructure barriers were not prominent, but 98% of participants were mature adult learners with very limited prior experience of using digital tools. In Cycle 1, the challenge was therefore partly structural and partly institutional, whereas in Cycle 2 it was mainly related to digital literacy and confidence.

In both cycles, learners moved from feeling overwhelmed by using the technology to becoming more able and willing to use it for course participation. In Cycle 1, IT sessions and individual effort were the main ways they tried to cope, but structural barriers still limited what they could do, as seen when learners walked to local bazaars or climbed rooftops to find a signal. In Cycle 2, improvement was slower and more social. Learners showed each other how to upload files, helped fix phone problems, and learned to use the platforms together; some also asked family members for support outside class. By the end of Cycle 2, participants who had started the course with limited digital skills were managing online tasks with reasonable confidence. This process was uneven, but overall, their ability to use the technology improved. These examples of collaborative problem-solving in Cycle 2 suggest that learners were taking initiative and responsibility for their own and each other's progress (Charteris & Smardon, 2018; Matusov et al., 2016), and that building basic technological confidence was part of how learner agency developed in this context.

The results from the two cycles revealed a distinction between two types of barriers to technological competence in this context: structural barriers, which were largely outside learners' control; and competence-related barriers, which can be addressed through support and practice. Much of the literature on second language acquisition tends to emphasise the second type, focusing on skills, confidence, or attitudes towards technology. The present study suggests that, in under-resourced settings, structural barriers can be just as significant as competence-related ones, and that treating all difficulties as individual skill-related problems risks placing responsibility on learners for conditions they cannot change. In this sense, developing learner agency in technology or social media–mediated courses is a matter not only of supporting motivation and strategy use, but also of addressing the material and institutional conditions that make agentic participation possible.

5.4.2. Influence of culture and context

The findings showed that the development of the learner agency in Bangladesh's language learning context faced multifaceted challenges which were rooted in cultural expectations, teacher–student relationship dynamics, and assessment practices. As discussed in Section 3.3, learners were used to teacher-centred classrooms where the

teacher was treated as the main authority to make all decisions, prepare learning activities, and provide feedback. At the beginning of the course in all cycles, these expectations were clearly visible. Students hesitated to ask questions or give opinions in front of the teacher. Even when I invited feedback, 50% of learners said that commenting on the teacher's practice felt disrespectful. One explained, 'In my experience, teachers are the authority figures, and they know best', and another noted that expressing her opinion felt like 'disrespecting my teacher and her expertise'. The psychological impact of these dynamics indicated that students might experience internal conflict between their desire to participate and their understanding of appropriate academic conduct. This indicated that speaking up or offering critique was actually interpreted as challenging the teacher's status.

Students' unfamiliarity with reflective practices presented another layer of difficulty. The common pattern of all cycles was that students had no previous experience of giving feedback to teachers or commenting on peers' work, actions they perceived as uncomfortable or impolite. 90% of participants mentioned that the idea of giving feedback to a teacher after class was completely new to them. These responses suggested that the existing classroom dynamics could offer them few opportunities for learner participation that involved reflection, evaluation, or open discussion. Also, learners' reluctance at the start of the course may not only depend on individual attitude but also was influenced by long-standing expectations about what students were allowed to do in class and the perception of their role. These experiences of participants share a pattern with Begum's (2019) findings that Bangladeshi classrooms are mostly teacher-centred, where students play passive roles.

Learners' reluctant behaviour was not fixed. Over time, 60% of students felt more comfortable participating when they saw their classmates doing the same thing. This pattern indicates that peer modelling and encouragement could play an important role. In Cycle 3, C3P2 commented that 'when I noticed that my classmates were sharing their opinions, it made me more comfortable'. A similar comment came from Cycle 2: 'The class discussion was stressful for me at the beginning, but my teammate C2P4 encouraged me a lot to become more active in class.' These examples suggest that learner agency emerged gradually through interaction with peers: as students watched others ask questions and express views, they began to interpret active participation as

something acceptable for them. This could suggest that in similar hierarchical, teacher-centred settings, designing space for visible peer participation and peer-to-peer support may complement teacher invitations in supporting learners' feeling that they can participate more actively.

5.5. Guidelines for teachers implementing RPL in social media

The challenges and opportunities discussed from Sections 5.1 to Section 5.4 together indicated the need for practical guidance for teachers who would like to facilitate reciprocal peer learning and use social media as a learning environment to promote learner agency in Bangladesh. The findings showed that learner agency is not an individual property but a socioculturally mediated capacity that develops through interaction with peers, tools, and the educational context. The design principles in this study drew on scripting that specified who does what, when, and with whom, as well as on orchestration, which addressed how to manage different challenges in real time.

Based on the findings of the three-cycles of action research (AR), this section presents a small set of guidelines that may help teachers introduce and support reciprocal peer learning effectively. These guidelines are not intended as a fixed model but as practical suggestions grounded in the productive design elements, benefits, and constraints identified in this study. Table 5.1, near the end of this section, presents the five-step guideline that offers teachers a practical roadmap for fostering learner agency through reciprocal peer learning on social media in Chinese language classrooms in Bangladesh and other similar contexts.

Step 1: Design

In the Design step, the teacher sets clear learning objectives that address both language development and opportunities for exercising learner agency. For example, the teacher can encourage learners to take control by choosing vocabulary or grammar points from the lesson and making their own decisions about how to use these in real-life contexts through their preferred activities. As the findings in Section 5.4.2 presented, learners in this study came from hierarchical classroom contexts where participating, giving

opinions, and assuming instructional roles felt unfamiliar or even disrespectful. This means that in the Design step, intentionally introducing and normalising learner voice and dual roles from the very beginning of the course could be considered an important condition for RPL to work in this context. The teacher therefore needs to explain the role of RPL clearly and describe students' dual role as peer teachers and peer learners, and their individual role as learners', so that all students can understand what will be expected of them before the course begins.

The teacher also selects and introduces WeChat or another preferred social media platform and plans digital support sessions at the beginning of the course. As Section 5.4.1 showed, even a willingness to participate was not enough in Cycle 2 when learners lacked technological competence. Therefore, scheduling IT support sessions at the Design stage directly responds to this finding. The teacher also needs to instruct students on how to use the chosen platform as a learning environment and to open a group with all students. The idea of reflection is also introduced at this stage, so that learners are aware from the beginning that documenting their learning journey is a part of the course. Students in the Design step join the online learning group on the chosen platform, attend IT support sessions, and practise basic operations. They also form their own RPL groups, or negotiate group membership, and become familiar with the idea of reflection.

Step 2: Preparation

The Preparation step focuses on building confidence with both the pedagogical approach and the technological tools. As the Cycle 2 findings in Section 5.4.1 showed, learners who began the course with limited digital skills needed time and peer support before they could manage online tasks with reasonable confidence. The Preparation step therefore creates space for this before learners are expected to design or lead peer activities.

The teacher provides clear, practical instructions on how the chosen platform will be used for learning and designs a sample RPL activity that is carried out in class, so that students can rehearse acting as both peer learner and peer teacher before designing their own activity. While doing this RPL exercise in class, the teacher can use the

'Shopping Cart' technique as a conceptual tool (Chapter 3). This is an activity that was developed during the AR cycles of this study in which the class teacher shared some ideas (e.g., fill in the gaps) and learners also suggested some ideas (e.g., completing a sentence). This technique gave learners an opportunity to exercise agency in content selection before moving into full peer-teaching responsibilities. Also, through participating in this activity, learners understood what could happen when they would prepare their own activities.

During this stage, the teacher offers ongoing support and clarification. Students take part in the sample RPL exercise prepared by the teacher, practise acting in both roles, and are encouraged to ask questions and seek help when they are unsure about roles, tasks, or the platform. In addition, the teacher introduces the practice of reflection by providing a reflective journal or making reflection a classroom activity, in which students share their reflections in written or spoken form at the beginning of class.

Step 3: Implementation

The Implementation step focuses on engagement with peer-led activities. In class, when working on lesson tasks, the teacher can ask learners to divide into small groups and choose classmates who are not members of their own RPL group. The findings in Section 5.2.3 showed that shared responsibility and cross-group collaboration supported the development of learner agency in Cycle 2 and Cycle 3. Creating mixed groupings in class could give students opportunities to get to know other classmates and to build a wider learning community beyond their immediate RPL group.

On platforms such as a WeChat-mediated learning environment, the teacher can monitor students' interactions without direct intervention. This encourages learners to communicate by their own choice, engage in the group, and correct each other's mistakes spontaneously, as documented in Section 5.3.3. The findings suggest that peer-to-peer correction and support in the WeChat group took place without teacher involvement and were received positively by learners. In this stage, students research, plan, and create learning activities as peer teachers. Other students take part as peer learners by completing tasks designed by other groups. They switch between roles over

time and interact with one another in the online space to complete tasks and ask questions.

Step 4: Feedback

In the Feedback step, the teacher reviews the RPL activities prepared by peer teachers before they are shared with peer learners, to ensure the activities are appropriate and manageable. This review step is important because, as Section 5.2.4 showed, the quality of peer-generated content varied across cycles, and learners themselves were sometimes conscious of the consequences of sharing inaccurate information with classmates. The class teacher's review at this stage therefore acts as a quality checkpoint without removing learners' ownership of the design process.

The teacher can also create opportunities for mid-term evaluations or brief weekly reflections to identify emerging needs in real time. For example, if students indicate they are finding character writing difficult, the teacher can adjust the orchestration to include character-writing games or timed writing sessions. Students, acting as peer learners, give feedback to their peer teachers on the clarity, usefulness, and interest of the activities they have completed. Students acting as peer teachers also share their experience of making the activities.

Step 5: Reflection

The Reflection step is an ongoing process throughout the course and aims to develop self-reflection as a core part of learner agency. As Section 5.1.2 showed, a growth mindset in this study did not emerge as an individual psychological trait but grew through reflective practices and through working with and observing peers. Having reflection structured into the course design can therefore contribute to learners' personal development.

The teacher encourages students to keep a reflective journal or log, in Bangla, English, or Chinese as appropriate, which may begin at the start of each class or take place as a separate activity throughout the course. The teacher can provide sample questions about what students have done, what they plan to do, and what challenges they have encountered. These reflections inform the teacher's decisions about future tasks and

support. Throughout the course, students document their learning journey through regular reflections on activities, learning gains, and difficulties; set short-term goals; and review them over time.

No.	*Step*	*What the teacher does*	*What students do*
1	Design	• Set clear learning objectives for language learning and exercising learner agency. • Introduce RPL and explain students' dual role as peer teachers and peer learners. • Select and introduce WeChat or other preferred social media. • Plan digital support sessions.	• Join the online learning group on the chosen platform. • Attend IT support sessions and practise basic operations. • Form their own RPL groups or negotiate group membership. • Exercise choice and decision-making over specific learning tasks. • Introduce the idea of reflection.
2	Preparation	• Provide clear instructions on how to use the chosen social media platform for learning. • Design a sample RPL exercise and use it in class to train students in peer teacher and peer learner roles. • Use 'Shopping Cart' idea to generate ideas with students. • Offer support and clarification when needed.	• Take part in the sample RPL exercise prepared by the teacher. • Practise acting in both roles (peer teacher and peer learner). • Ask questions and seek help when they are unsure about roles, tasks, or the platform.
3	Implementation of RPL	• In class, create small group tasks that offer active engagement. • Observe students' interactions in online groups and intervene only when necessary.	• Research, plan, and create teaching materials as peer teachers. • Participate fully as peer learners. • Interact with peers in online groups to complete tasks and support each other.
4	Feedback	• Review peer teachers designed RPL activities. • Conduct mid-term evaluations.	• As peer learners, give constructive feedback, and ask questions if they have any. • As peer teachers, share their experience of designing activities.
5	Reflection	• Begin each class by asking brief reflective questions (e.g. 'What did you do this week?', 'What is your plan?', 'What challenges did you face?'). • Use learners' reflections to adjust future tasks and support.	• Document their learning journey through weekly reflections or as part of class activity. • Set short-term goals; identify areas for further development.

Table 5.1. Guideline for Chinese language teachers

These guidelines are presented as a sequence for clarity, but in practice the steps might not be linear and can overlap that need ongoing adjustment as the three AR cycles showed. Teachers should also be aware of conditions that may affect implementation. The guidelines assume a degree of institutional support, reliable access to devices, and stable internet connectivity. These structural barriers need to be considered carefully, as Cycle 1 identified distinct barriers to implementation. Moreover, in hierarchical classroom cultures similar to those in Bangladesh, learners may initially feel uncomfortable giving teacher feedback or commenting on peers, even when the Design and Preparation steps have been followed carefully. As Section 5.4.2 showed, this resistance eased gradually in the current study through peer modelling and support and through encouragement from the class teacher. Also, the peer-generated content would not always be accurate, and the teacher's review can reduce but not eliminate this risk. These are practical considerations that teachers need to anticipate and respond to as the course develops.

5.6. Summary and conclusions

This chapter has offered analysis of the emergence and development of learner agency through reciprocal peer learning in the setting of WeChat. It also provides guidelines for practice and highlights avenues for future research in this area. Throughout different cycles, learners displayed a growing sense of ownership and responsibility by engaging in independent learning initiatives and group learning activities. In that regard, WeChat played a vital role to engage and support learners in their learning process. By engaging in WeChat, participants exercised agency over their own learning path by sharing resources, asking questions, and responding to their peers' inquiries. Participants' active interactions and engagement in the WeChat group also suggested the development of a growth mindset, as they confronted problems, asked questions, identified mistakes, and took the initiative to overcome challenges.

This positive outlook on learning challenges strengthened learners' confidence in their capacity for improvement through effort and teamwork. The dynamics of reciprocal peer learning were particularly evident in the collaborative development of knowledge, problem-solving, and exchange of feedback. Therefore, the notion of learner agency is

understood not as a fixed attribute but as a socially and technologically mediated process that is influenced by intentional practice, reflection, interaction, and the learning environment. This integrated approach to fostering learner agency offers promising directions for Chinese language education and language pedagogy more broadly. By recognising the multidimensional nature of agency and creating learning environments that support its development across these dimensions, educators can help students become more responsible, motivated, and effective language learners.

Chapter 6
CONCLUSION

The conclusion chapter brings together the findings and discussion from the previous chapters to present the overall conclusions of this study. This thesis investigates how learner agency developed among learners of Chinese as a foreign language in a reciprocal peer learning (RPL) setting that was supported by a WeChat-mediated learning environment. The chapter revisits the three research questions and summarises what the study has found in response to each. It also presents the contributions and limitations of the study.

6.1. Summaries of chapters

Chapter 1 provided a detailed background of the research context, including the education system in Bangladesh. Since this study took place during the COVID-19 pandemic, the chapter examined the sudden changes in education and the measures taken by the government to address the challenges that resulted. This chapter also provided an overview of the foreign-language-learning situation in Bangladesh and focused especially on the surge in Chinese-language learning. This helped me grasp the research context. Chapter 1 also presented the rationale for this research, identified the main questions of this thesis, and offered a basic idea of the key concepts: learner agency, social media, reciprocal peer learning, and WeChat.

Chapter 2 reviewed the literature related to learner agency and social media, and the common social media platforms used for Chinese language learning, with a particular focus on the use of WeChat. This chapter also introduced reciprocal peer learning, which helped to examine how these three concepts could be interconnected.

The three-cycles of this research, and the demographics of the participants in each cycle, were illustrated in Chapter 3, along with an in-depth description of the research context and methods. This chapter included the details of the data collection through interviews, reflective journals, and WeChat logs. It also presented the pedagogical

design of this thesis, the data coding process, and the reasons for presenting data thematically.

Chapter 4 presented the findings under different themes. Students' perceptions of linguistic growth in different language skills during interactions with peers and participation in peers' activities emerged as one of the main themes in the data discussed in Chapter 4. Learners supporting each other focused on the student's role as a peer teacher and peer learner, with a separate section on the individual as a member of the community in the mutual learning process. The theme 'independent learning' focused on students' own initiation of taking control of their learning. In contrast, the theme 'challenges with reciprocal peer learning' focused on the different challenges faced by students.

Chapter 5 presented a discussion of how students develop learner agency through RPL and the use of WeChat. This discussion chapter helped interpret and analyse the research findings in relation to the existing literature. This chapter served to bridge empirical observations with theoretical understanding and demonstrated how social media facilitated peer interactions that enhanced learner agency.

6.2. Revisiting the research questions

6.2.1. Question 1

RQ1: What factors may promote or challenge the development of learner agency in Chinese language learning environments supported by technology?

The distinctive feature of this research context was the integration of multiple factors: learner agency, WeChat integration, and reciprocal peer learning, which together formed a complex system where these elements interacted dynamically. Learner agency in language learning is multifaceted and develops across multiple dimensions simultaneously. There exists a dialectical relationship between structure and agency, in which the structures of RPL and WeChat both constrained and enabled agentic behaviour. The findings of this study suggested that learner agency was not solely an

individual trait but was influenced by social and contextual factors, which were related to interactions with peers, taking ownership, learners' involvement, and mindset. The combination of WeChat and RPL created a community of practice in which learners contributed, took initiative, and supported one another in ways that teacher-centred approaches in this context had not previously generated.

The inclusion of RPL in my pedagogical design was a crucial component of fostering learner agency. Allowing learners to shift between teaching and learning roles encouraged a sense of responsibility and ownership (Chapter 3; Chapter 5). This transition to shared responsibility enabled learners to exercise agency within a supportive framework, which was significantly different from their prior educational experiences. Participants mentioned feeling more responsible and more confident in using the target language when preparing and solving their group work (Chapter 4). By changing the classroom dynamic from teacher-centred to learner-centred, it enabled students to take responsibility not only for their own learning but also for helping their peers. These findings implied that the RPL model provided chances for students to exercise agency through collaboration with peers and the learning environment (Section 5.2).

Moreover, a significant factor was the use of WeChat as a learning environment for facilitating RPL. The integration of social media increased learners' engagement in informal, real-time conversations, which strengthened their bonds with peers outside the classroom (Chapter 2; Chapter 5). The WeChat platform also offered a collaborative environment for students to engage with their peers and others. Using WeChat offered learners a new learning experience that encouraged them to make enquiries, share resources, engage in discussions about academic activities, and offer feedback, thereby enhancing their active involvement in the learning process (Chapter 2; Chapter 4). Participants also cultivated a sense of responsibility for their learning through interactions with peers and educators beyond conventional classroom settings. The findings also suggested that students gradually shifted their mindset. They began to see challenges not as setbacks but as opportunities for advancement. This change in mindset enabled students to embrace risks, establish personal learning objectives, and persevere through difficulties. This growth mindset was a fundamental factor in their becoming agentic and reflective learners (Chapter 5).

This study's findings revealed various challenges that hindered the development of learner agency (Chapter 4). The challenges are related to technological constraints, infrastructural disparities, cultural resistance, psychological factors, and prior educational experiences that may have fostered dependency. Understanding these obstacles is crucial for developing strategies to overcome them and create more conducive learning environments that support learner agency. Technological barriers were very prominent in the execution of Cycle 1. The sudden shift from in-person to online classes during that period, due to the spread of COVID-19 in Bangladesh, presented multiple obstacles for students. As the university closed, students needed to go back home, many of which were mostly in rural areas, where internet accessibility and network reliability were critical issues. Infrastructural differences became very prominent, limiting students' full participation in online learning. In the absence of reliable technical infrastructure, even the most driven learners experienced limitations to their participation due to uncontrollable events. This digital divide also created disparities in the development of agency, with geographically disadvantaged students facing greater obstacles to accessing learning materials and peer communities. Additionally, technological proficiency emerged as a significant challenge in Cycle 2, particularly for most participants who were mature adults (Chapters 3 and 4). Some participants experienced cognitive overload from the dual demands of mastering new technologies and engaging with language-learning content.

6.2.2. Question 2

RQ2: What is the impact of reciprocal peer learning on the development of learner agency? What role does social media, such as WeChat, play in supporting reciprocal peer learning and the development of learner agency?

In this research, reciprocal peer learning played a crucial role in promoting independent learning among students, who actively participated in mutual teaching and learning processes, exchanging knowledge, skills, and feedback with peers at similar levels. This peer-to-peer learning environment not only promoted active involvement but also fostered a sense of self-reliance and resourcefulness. By creating collaborative frameworks where students alternate between teaching and learning

roles, the approach encouraged students to take responsibility for their own and their peers' learning (Chapter 3; Chapter 4). This way, RPL transformed the traditional classroom experience, allowing knowledge to flow in different directions and changing how students engage in learning.

The mutual learning process encouraged students to engage more actively and to take responsibility for their own learning and contribute to the learning process of their peers (Chapter 4, Section 4.2). They developed a sense of accountability and responsibility for both their own learning and their peers' progress. When they played the role of teachers, they were able to question, discuss, and reflect on the materials. Moreover, while students had the chance to prepare learning activities for their peers, it helped them to identify their strengths and weaknesses, enhancing their self-awareness and promoting independent learning. This process supported learners in engaging in reflective thinking about the material and the learning process, taking responsibility for their learning, and seeking additional learning opportunities independently (Chapter 4). While teaching and learning from others, students needed to adjust to various pedagogical approaches and derive insights from one another's feedback. This adaptability and problem-solving skill enhanced learner agency, which supported students in addressing learning challenges and ultimately contributed to cultivating a growth mindset (Section 5.1.2).

WeChat was more than simply a messaging tool; it also served as a space for cultural understanding and language development. WeChat's Chinese-language-oriented interface provided an authentic learning environment (Chapters 2, 3, and 4). Like other social media platforms, WeChat offered various communication options, such as text, audio, and video chat, allowing students to communicate with their peers and teachers outside the traditional classroom setting (Chapter 4). Its group chat feature promoted student engagement, resulting in a non-hierarchical, informal learning environment (Chapter 4). This, in turn, encouraged learners to take responsibility and participate in WeChat group discussions. WeChat's multimodal communication features made it easier to master a range of skills. While students exchanged texts, this activity contributed to their practice of reading and writing skills. The voice message feature enhanced both listening and speaking skills. What distinguishes WeChat is its integrated Chinese-language tools, such as Chinese-to-English translation of written

or spoken messages, which provide immediate assistance to learners in overcoming comprehension difficulties without disrupting the flow of communication (Chapter 4).

The convenience of this platform helped students to feel more at ease. In a broader sense, learners may unconsciously connect with Chinese texts and symbols in authentic communication contexts (Chapters 4 and 5). Furthermore, this platform enabled students to communicate with Chinese-speaking individuals and communities, offering a unique opportunity to immerse themselves in Chinese culture and language. The combination of this environment and the platform's features creates incidental learning opportunities that extend beyond formal education and help bridge the gap in gaining exposure to real-life contexts.

6.2.3. Question 3

RQ3: What principles and criteria can be derived for the design and implementation of language learning environments aiming to promote the development of learner agency among learners of Chinese in Bangladesh and beyond?

The findings of this study suggest four interconnected principles for designing language learning environments that aim to develop learner agency. The first principle is that agency must be designed for relationally, not individually. The findings across all three-cycles showed that learners developed agency through accountability to peers, shared responsibility in group work, and the social dynamics of the WeChat environment. The second principle is that role distribution is the core pedagogical mechanism. Learner agency developed most visibly when students alternated between peer teacher and peer learner roles. The environment must therefore be designed so that instructional responsibility is genuinely distributed to learners, not simply invited or encouraged while remaining with the teacher. The third principle is that the digital environment must be purposefully integrated, not simply added. WeChat functioned effectively not because it was available but because it was deliberately embedded in the course design as a space for RPL. The criterion here is that any chosen platform must be culturally relevant, accessible to all learners, supported by adequate training, and consistently used as part of regular course activity rather than as an optional

supplement. The fourth principle is that cultural and institutional context must be treated as a design variable, not a background condition. The hierarchical classroom dynamics documented in Section 5.4.2 were not incidental: they directly shaped what learners felt able to do. Any environment aiming to develop learner agency in similar contexts must explicitly address these dynamics from the outset, through deliberate normalisation of learner voice, peer modelling, and gradual transfer of responsibility.

From these principles, three criteria can be derived for evaluating whether a language learning environment is designed to promote learner agency. First, the design must include structured opportunities for learners to take instructional responsibility. Second, the digital tool selected must meet the accessibility, cultural relevance, and training conditions identified above. Third, the design must include built-in mechanisms for reflection and feedback that allow both learners and teachers to monitor and adjust the learning process over time.

6.2.4. Summaries of the research problems

The introduction of a digital, peer-mediated platform like WeChat marked a transition towards more learner-driven engagement in a learning environment where teacher-centred methods had traditionally been more prominent. This transformation was particularly significant in the development of agency, which is the learners' ability to act autonomously, make informed decisions, and assume responsibility for their own learning processes. WeChat, with its multifunctional communication tools, provided a versatile platform for language learners to engage in conversation beyond the classroom. Learners were able to initiate and sustain authentic language exchanges at their own tempo by utilising features such as voice messages, real-time chats, and shared media. This not only increased their exposure to the target language but also fostered confidence and cultural understanding, both of which are essential components of learner agency.

The reciprocal nature of peer learning on WeChat prompted students to both seek and provide support, thereby enhancing their status as active participants rather than passive recipients of knowledge. These interactions fostered a sense of co-construction of knowledge, in which learners collaboratively corrected errors, negotiated meaning,

and navigated language use. This shared responsibility fostered a deeper sense of ownership over their learning, enabling students to make decisions about content, interaction style, and learning objectives. The relatively informal and egalitarian structure of WeChat interactions helped challenge traditional power dynamics and promote greater learner autonomy for Bangladeshi learners, who were often influenced by sociocultural norms that prioritised deference to authority and discouraged overt self-assertion. Students progressively developed self-efficacy through interactions with their peers, particularly those who were native or more proficient in Chinese. This was crucial for the exercise of agency and the sustained development of their language skills.

However, the influence of WeChat on learner agency was not entirely unrestricted. The effectiveness of this approach was influenced by different factors such as unequal access to digital tools, varying levels of digital literacy, and variations in peer commitment. Additionally, some learners initially struggled to adjust to the informal learning environment and constructively navigate peer dynamics. But despite its inherent challenges, WeChat demonstrated potential as a mediating tool for enhancing learner agency when strategically integrated into language learning. It offered not only a platform for linguistic practice but also a space for learners to explore their identities as autonomous language users. As such, its influence on learner agency in the Bangladeshi CFL context necessitated further investigation, particularly through longitudinal studies examining the evolution of agency over time in digitally mediated, peer-supported environments.

6.3. Limitations of this thesis

One key limitation of this study is the inconsistency in participant recruitment across the three research cycles. Each cycle engaged a different cohort of learners, resulting in a lack of continuity that challenged the internal validity typically associated with action research. In this study, participants' educational backgrounds, digital literacy, age, and motivation introduced differences in learner profiles, making direct comparisons across cycles more complex and potentially limiting the identification of consistent patterns in the development of learner agency. This inconsistency was further complicated by the unprecedented impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which

led to the temporary closure of educational institutions across Bangladesh. During Cycle 1, the transition to online learning disproportionately affected students in rural areas, due to infrastructural challenges such as poor internet connectivity, frequent power outages, and limited access to digital devices. These constraints contributed to a high dropout rate and lower engagement, undermining the reliability of data collected during this phase. In response to these challenges, Cycles 2 and 3 were conducted in face-to-face settings, where student participation was more consistent and the learning environment was more controlled.

The researcher's dual role as both practitioner and investigator, a common characteristic of action research, presents a potential limitation. The researcher's involvement in designing and implementing the pedagogical interventions may have blurred the boundary between observation and influence, potentially shaping both participant responses and the direction of the data. In addition, there is a risk that data were interpreted in ways that aligned, consciously or unconsciously, with the researcher's prior assumptions. To mitigate this risk, several strategies were employed to enhance reflexivity and reduce potential bias. A detailed reflexive journal was maintained throughout all three research cycles, documenting observations, decisions, and emotional responses to emerging data. This reflective practice supported critical examination of the researcher's role in shaping the research context and helped to maintain awareness of the potential influence of the researcher's presence on participant behaviour.

In addition, as outlined in Chapter 4, triangulation of data sources was applied to enhance the transparency, trustworthiness, and credibility of the analysis. By collecting data through multiple means, including interviews, reflective journals, classroom observations, and WeChat group interactions, I was able to minimise the influence of any single perspective. This multi-method approach provided a more balanced view of the learning environment and helped to counteract potential researcher bias.

The absence of a second coder during the thematic coding and data analysis phases was another limitation. This may have limited the diversity of perspectives and reduced the potential for critical dialogue during the coding process. To mitigate this limitation,

several measures were put in place to enhance the transparency and trustworthiness of the analysis. First, I engaged in sustained academic activities throughout the research process, including the presentation of preliminary findings at academic conferences and seminars hosted by Dublin City University and the University of Dhaka. These academic forums provided valuable opportunities for scholarly critique and constructive feedback from peers and experts in the field. This ongoing engagement with the academic community acted as an informal yet rigorous peer-review mechanism that helped to challenge assumptions and strengthen the interpretative framework.

6.4. Strengths and implications of this thesis

The strengths and implications of this research demonstrate the need for a holistic approach to educational practice that integrates reciprocal peer learning and social media. This approach has the potential to significantly enhance learner agency and should be considered by educational practitioners, curriculum developers, and teachers.

6.4.1. Implications for pedagogy and practice

Reimagining the learner's role in language education: The findings of this study demonstrated the need to reflect on the pedagogical practices to offer learners better support. Educators should therefore prioritise the design of learning environments that not only promote learner agency but also include structured peer-led practices. Instead of considering learner agency, RPL, and social media as separate components, they can be seen as an integrated organising principle for classroom practice and assessment, in which learners routinely co-design, lead, and review peer learning activities. This integration calls for a systematic re-alignment of curriculum, assessment, and classroom design to recognise and reward such agentic, collaborative engagement.

Redefining the teacher's role as facilitator: The findings signal the need for a pedagogical shift from a teacher-centred approach towards a more facilitative model of instruction. Teachers would thereby shift their role towards that of facilitator and

co-learner and create a supportive environment that encourages independent learning and thinking. This involves implementing collaborative strategies and reflective practices that nurture shared ownership of the learning process.

Strategic integration of social media in language learning: The use of WeChat in this study illustrates the transformative potential of social media when thoughtfully embedded in pedagogical design. Social media can bridge learning spaces, promote authentic communication, and create culturally relevant opportunities for engagement. Language educators should consider leveraging social media tools that align with learners' digital habits, while simultaneously supporting academic language development and intercultural awareness. Guidelines for responsible, purposeful use should accompany this integration to maximise its educational value.

Guideline for teachers on facilitating the study design: A five-step guideline, presented in Section 5.5, offers teachers a practical roadmap for facilitating the study's design and for fostering learner agency through reciprocal peer learning on social media in Chinese language classrooms in Bangladesh and similar contexts. This guideline translates the study's findings into an actionable tool that teachers can adapt to their own classrooms in Bangladesh and in similar contexts.

6.4.2. Implications for institutional policy and curriculum design

Bridging the digital divide through infrastructure and literacy: The differences in digital access, particularly in rural or under-resourced contexts, must be addressed to ensure inclusive and equitable learning opportunities. Institutions should invest in affordable digital infrastructure and provide targeted digital literacy training, especially for those with limited technological exposure. These efforts are critical not only for accessing content but also for enabling learners to participate meaningfully in digital peer networks and online learning communities.

Embedding reflective practices into the curriculum: This study shows that learner agency is closely linked with reflective engagement. Embedding structured reflection tools, such as learner journals, peer feedback loops, and self-assessment frameworks, can help students monitor their progress, evaluate their strategies, and refine their learning goals. These reflective practices should be embedded into the

curriculum so that students routinely set goals, monitor their progress, and adjust their strategies, thereby cultivating intentional and agentic learning habits over time.

6.5. Directions for future work

Future research should investigate three critical areas: how technology can change, how teaching methods can grow, and how different settings can affect learner agency in WeChat-based peer learning.

The findings of this thesis show the effectiveness of conducting reciprocal peer learning in the WeChat environment for examining the development of learner agency. Future research may investigate how this pedagogical approach can be adapted to various technological contexts, specifically by analysing platforms with distinct affordances. Also, future research may explore the learners' engagement with synchronous platforms (e.g., Google Classroom, Zoom) versus asynchronous platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, TikTok) and examine how these platforms offer affordances for learners to take initiative, make decisions, and reflect on their learning. Incorporating chatbots and AI tools such as ChatGPT and Google Labs (i.e., Little Language Lessons) could also be useful for exploring learners' interactions with the target language and observing peer interactions. For example, AI-driven learning-management platforms can generate content tailored to learners' needs and interests. These tools can help learners set learning goals, monitor their progress, and establish a collaborative platform. Also, educators can explore how learner agency can develop through support from human and non-human actors. The customised learning environment can explore how technological mediation influences or limits the development of learner agency. Future work will also need to consider the ethical implications of social media and AI-supported learning (e.g., data privacy, transparency, bias), and how these factors relate to learners' sense of control and voice.

The need for a cooperative paradigm in educational technology beyond the practices of individual researchers is urgent and of utmost importance. This study was conducted as insider-individual action research, and future research should move towards a participatory and collaborative form of action research that involves multiple stakeholders. Such studies could engage teachers, learners, and institutional partners

as co-researchers, working together to design, implement, and evaluate WeChat-based (or other social-media-based) reciprocal peer learning environments. Developing and testing methods for designers and educators to engage learners, solicit their collaboration, and reinforce the significance of this partnership during the design process would help to refine and contextualise the guideline proposed in this thesis.

Research on demographic influence can rigorously analyse the effects of age, gender, socioeconomic background, and digital literacy on peer learning engagement and the development of agency. This study did not focus on the demographic variables, such as age and gender differences among participants. Future research may explore how individuals across age groups and genders perceive and enact learner agency. Moreover, research might investigate variations in RPL practices across age groups, especially in relation to social media integration. The diverse digital literacy levels and social media interests across different generations may lead to the development of more effective pedagogical approaches.

Cross-cultural studies can examine how cultural communication styles, teaching methods, and use of technology influence the effectiveness of social media for peer learning. The cultural setting affects how learners interact with both technology and their peers. Future research that explores how RPL through social media platforms such as WeChat manifests across diverse cultural environments, educational frameworks, and institutional contexts can deepen understanding of context-sensitive pedagogical approaches. This comparative approach may help to identify universal principles while recognising contextual differences in effective implementation, thereby underscoring the relevance and significance of this research.

6.6. Final reflections

This thesis offers a comprehensive investigation of the cultivation of learner agency through reciprocal peer learning in a digitally mediated environment, situated within the distinct context of Chinese language education in Bangladesh. By positioning learners as active participants and co-constructors of meaning, and by drawing on the affordances of WeChat, the study has demonstrated the transformative potential of reimagining language education as a student-centred, interactive, and culturally

responsive process. Beyond presenting a set of pedagogical strategies, the research has advocated for a more fundamental shift in how language learning is conceptualised, with an emphasis on its inherently social, agentic, and collaborative dimensions.

Despite some limitations, learners in this study demonstrated adaptability, self-driven initiative, and a strong sense of ownership over their learning. Their experiences illustrate what can become possible when students are supported to take greater control of their learning through reflective structures, peer collaboration, and purposeful digital engagement. Their voices and actions remind me of the potential within all learners when opportunities for agency are intentionally created and nurtured.

This thesis can contribute not only to the field of language education but also to a broader pedagogical discourse on learner empowerment. By foregrounding agency, reciprocity, and social media, this thesis invites educators, researchers, and institutions to reconceptualise the classroom. The classroom is not only a place for teaching content but also a dynamic, collaborative space where learners actively create their own learning journey and learn by engaging with peers, teachers, and tools.

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Appendix

Appendix A: Ethical issues

Appendix A1: Ethical approval for current study

Ollscoil Chathair Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City University

DCU

Aishowarza Manik
School of Applied Language & Intercultural Studies

Dr. Weiming Liu
School of Applied Language & Intercultural Studies

Prof. Françoise Blin
School of Applied Language & Intercultural Studies

25th January 2021

REC Reference:	**DCUREC/2020/265**
Proposal Title:	**Learning Chinese via WeChat in a reciprocal peer-learning context: A study of the development of learner autonomy in Bangladesh**
Applicant(s):	**Aishowarza Manik, Dr. Weiming Liu, and Prof. Françoise Blin**

Dear Colleagues,

Further to expedited review, the DCU Research Ethics Committee approves this research proposal.

Materials used to recruit participants should note that ethical approval for this project has been obtained from the Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee.

Should substantial modifications to the research protocol be required at a later stage, a further amendment submission should be made to the REC.

Yours sincerely,

Geraldine Scanlon

Dr Geraldine Scanlon
Chairperson
DCU Research Ethics Committee

DCU
Research & Innovation

Taighde & Nuálaíocht Tacaíocht
Ollscoil Chathair Bhaile Átha Cliath,
Baile Átha Cliath, Éire

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Dublin City University,
Dublin 9, Ireland

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www.dcu.ie

Appendix A2: Plain language statement

DUBLIN CITY UNIVERSITY

Plain Language Statement

Research Title: Learning Chinese via WeChat in a reciprocal peer learning context: a study of the development of learner autonomy in Bangladesh

Investigator: Aishowarza Manik

Institution: School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies (SALIS), Dublin City University (DCU), Ireland.

Supervisors: Dr Weiming Liu and Professor Francoise Blin

This study aims to investigate the development of learner autonomy of students of Chinese in a peer learning context through WeChat in Bangladesh. It supports conventional classroom-based teaching and stimulates learners' attitude to engage more in the learning process. Therefore, participants will be divided into groups in WeChat to revise what they have covered in class by completing different tasks with peers outside the classroom. This project will use three types of qualitative instruments for data collection such as observation, reflective journals and interviews. In each cycle, students' enhancement of learner autonomy, Chinese language practice, and students' reflection on peer learning will be observed both in classroom and WeChat platform. Participants will be required to maintain weekly journals to record their own engagement and learning experience, and all participants will be interviewed at the end of each cycle.

Your involvement

In this study, we will ask you to:

- Read this plain language statement and sign an informed consent form;
- Participate in group learning activities with peers in WeChat;
- Attend 1 hour mandatory outside classroom learning in WeChat every week;
- Maintain a weekly reflective journal;
- Have a one-on-one online/ offline interview with the researcher at the end of the semester;
- Give permission to digitally record the interview session.

Benefits to you

Direct benefits to you from participation in this study are to:

- Apply your Chinese language knowledge in real life social contexts;
- Revise classroom learning and learn new knowledge through peer interaction;
- Practice Chinese language skills;
- Receive feedback on your learning activities and reflective journal;
- Improve your ability to autonomous learning.

Appendix

Protecting the confidentiality of your data

The researcher will make every effort to safeguard confidentiality of your provided information. However, confidentiality of information provided is subject to legal limitations. Your normal personal data, such as name, age, and gender will be anonymised and destroyed after the study has been completed and graduation of the researcher has taken place. The data will not be shared beyond the principal investigator and the research supervisors.

Rights of withdrawal from the project

Participant's involvement in the research study is voluntary. Participant has right to withdrawal from the project until the end of their semester. For example, Cycle-1 will start from January 2021 and end in May 2021, Cycle 2 will start from August 2021-December 2021, and Cycle 3 will start from January 2022 and end in May 2022. Participants can withdraw their information until the end of the programme at each cycle.

If a participant has any queries and would like to contact researcher, please contact at *aishowarza.manik2@mail.dcu.ie*

The DCU Data Protection officer, Mr. Martin Ward can be contacted at data.protection@dcu.ie or via phone: 7005118 / 7008257.

If a participant has concerns about this study and wish to contact an independent person, please contact:

The Secretary, Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee, c/o Research and Innovation Support,

Dublin City University, Dublin 9. Tel 01-7008000, e-mail rec@dcu.ie

Appendix A2: Translated plain language statement in Bengali

ডাবলিন সিটি ইউনিভার্সিটি

সরল ভাষার বিবৃতি

গবেষণার শিরোনাম: উইচ্যাট ভিত্তিক পরস্পরিত সহ-শিখন প্রেক্ষাপটে চিনা ভাষা শিখন : বাংলাদেশি শিক্ষার্থীদের সতঃপ্রণোদিত শিখন-বিকাশ বিষয়ক গবেষণা।

গবেষক: ঐশ্বর্য মানিক

প্রতিষ্ঠান: স্কুল অব এ্যাপ্লাইড ল্যাঙ্গুয়েজ এন্ড ইন্টারকালচারাল স্টাডিস (সালিস), ডাবলিন সিটি ইউনিভার্সিটি (ডিসিইউ), অ্যায়ারল্যান্ড

গবেষণা নির্দেশক: ডক্টর ওয়েমিং লিউ এবং প্রফেসর ফ্রান্সওয়াস ব্লিন

এই গবেষণার লক্ষ্য হচ্ছে বাংলাদেশে শ্রেণীকক্ষে চিনা ভাষা শিক্ষার পাশাপাশি শ্রেণীকক্ষের বাইরে উইচ্যাটে পরস্পরিত সহ-শিখনের মাধ্যমে শিক্ষার্থীদের স্বায়ত্তশাসিত শিক্ষাকে উৎসাহিত করা। শিক্ষার্থীদের স্বায়ত্তশাসিত শিক্ষার বিকাশ ঘটানোর লক্ষ্যে এই গবেষণায় অংশগ্রহণকারীরা শ্রেণীকক্ষের বাইরে উইচ্যাটে দলে বিভক্ত হয়ে শ্রেণিকক্ষে পড়ানো বিষয়গুলো পুনঃআলোচনা করবে এবং বিভিন্ন শিক্ষা কার্যক্রমে অংশগ্রহন করবে। এই গবেষণায় তিনটি মাধ্যমে উপাত্ত সংগ্রহ করা হবেঃ শ্রেণীকক্ষ এবং উইচ্যাট পর্যবেক্ষণ, সাপ্তাহিক প্রতিফলনমূলক জার্নাল এবং সাক্ষাৎকার। শিক্ষার্থীদের সহপাঠীদের সাথে ভাষা অনুশীলন, নিজেরদের সিদ্ধান্ত গ্রহনের অগ্রগতি, শ্রেণীকক্ষের বইয়ের জ্ঞানকে বাস্তব জীবনে প্রতিফলন এই বিষয়গুলো লক্ষ্য রাখা হবে। শিক্ষার্থীরা প্রতি সাপ্তাহে নিজস্ব অগ্রগতি এবং শেখার অভিজ্ঞতা এবং যা শেখা হয়েছে তার সারমর্ম সাপ্তাহিক প্রতিফলনমূলক জার্নালে নথিভূক্ত করবে। প্রতি সেমিস্টার শেষে অংশগ্রহণকারীদের সাক্ষাৎকারের মাধ্যমে তাদের মতামত এবং অভিজ্ঞতা জানতে চাওয়া হবে।

শিক্ষার্থীদের অংশগ্রহণ

এই গবেষণায় অংশগ্রহণের জন্য করণীয়:

- সরল ভাষার বিবৃতিটি পড়া এবং সম্পতিজ্ঞাপন পত্রে স্বাক্ষর
- দলীয় সহ শিক্ষণ কার্যক্রমে উইচ্যাটের মাধ্যমে অংশগ্রহণে সম্মতি প্রদান
- সাপ্তাহিক প্রতিফলনমূলক জার্নালে প্রতি সপ্তাহে যা শেখা হচ্ছে তার সারমর্ম লিখিত আকারে জমা দেয়ার সম্মতি প্রদান
- সরাসরি সাক্ষাৎকারের সম্মতি প্রদান
- ডিজিটাল মাধ্যমে সাক্ষাৎকার ধারণের সম্মতি প্রদান

শিক্ষার্থীদের লাভ সমূহ

এই গবেষণায় অংশগ্রহণকারীরারা সরাসরি যে উপকারগুলো পাবেন:

- চীনা ভাষাকে শ্রেণীকক্ষের পাশাপাশি বাস্তব জীবনে প্রয়োগের সুবিধা
- শেণীকক্ষের শিক্ষণের পূণঃমূল্যায়ণ এবং পারস্পারিক সহ শিক্ষণে নতুন জ্ঞান অর্জন
- চীনা ভাষার দক্ষতার অনুশীলন
- শিক্ষা কার্যক্রম সম্পর্কে নিজের মতামত প্রদান
- বিভিন্ন শিখন কার্যক্রম জমা দেয়ার পর শিক্ষকের মতামত গ্রহণের সুবিধা
- ভাষিক দক্ষতার পাশাপাশি যোগাযোগ দক্ষতার উন্নতি

ব্যক্তিগত তথ্যের সুরক্ষা

আপনার দেয়া তথ্যের সুরক্ষা নিশ্চিত করাতে গবেষক সর্বোচ্চ সতর্কতা অবলম্বন করবেন। সরবারহকৃত তথ্য যথাযথ প্রক্রিয়ায় সংরক্ষণ করা হবে। সাধারণ তথ্য যেমন- নাম, বয়স, লিঙ্গ গোপন থাকবে এবং গবেষকের অধ্যয়ণ শেষে তা নষ্ট করা হবে। এই গবেষণায় সংশ্লিষ্টরা ছাড়া সরবাহকৃত তথ্যগুলো অন্য কাউকে জানানো হবে না।

প্রকল্প থেকে অব্যহতির অধিকার

এই গবেষণায় অংশগ্রহণ স্বেচ্ছামূলক এবং অংশগ্রহণকারীরা গবেষণার যেকোন পর্যায়ে প্রকল্প থেকে অব্যহতি নিতে পারবেন।

এই গবেষণার উপাত্ত নিয়ে সংশয় থাকলে ডাবলিন সিটি ইউনিভার্সিটির ডাটা প্রোটেকশন অফিসার মিঃ মার্টিন ওয়ার্ড এর সাথে যোগাযোগ করতে পারবেন ইমেইল data.protection@dcu.ie এবং ফোন নম্বর : 7005118 / 7008257.

এই গবেষণা সম্পর্কিত যেকোন প্রশ্নের জন্য অংশগ্রহণকারীরা গবেষকের সাথে সরাসরি যোগাযোগ করতে পারবেন ইমেইল এর মাধ্যমে aishowarza.manik2@mail.dcu.ie

এছাড়াও এই গবেষণা নিয়ে যেকোন সংশয় থাকলে যোগাযোগ করতে পারবেন:

The Secretary, Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee, c/o Research and Innovation Support,

Dublin City University, Dublin 9. টেলিফোন: 01-7008000, ইমেইল: rec@dcu.ie

Appendix A3: Informed consent form

DUBLIN CITY UNIVERSITY

Informed Consent Form

Research Title: Learning Chinese via WeChat in a reciprocal peer learning context: a study of the development of learner autonomy in Bangladesh

Investigator: Aishowarza Manik

Institution: School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies (SALIS), Dublin City University (DCU), Ireland.

Supervisors: Dr Weiming Liu and Professor Francoise Blin

Please mark Yes or No as appropriate:

I have read and understand the Plain Language Statement ☐Yes No ☐

I understand the provided information and willing to participate in this project ☐Yes No ☐

I am aware that my classroom learning will be video recorded ☐Yes No ☐

I am aware that WeChat group discussion will be recorded ☐Yes No ☐

I am aware that interview will be recorded ☐Yes

No ☐

I understand that all information will be safely stored and anonymised ☐Yes

No ☐

I understand I may withdraw myself, and any information I have provided ☐Yes No ☐

I am aware that I can withdraw myself from this project until the end of the semester ☐Yes No ☐

I understand the results of this research will be included in thesis and publication ☐Yes No ☐

I have read and understood the information in this form. My questions and concerns have been answered by the researchers, and I have a copy of this consent form. Therefore, I consent to take part in this research project.

Participants Signature:_____

_____

Name in Block Capitals:____

_____

Witness: _____

Date: _____

_____

If a participant has any queries and would like to contact researcher, please contact: aishowarza.manik2@mail.dcu.ie

If a participant has concerns about this study and wish to contact an independent person, please contact:

The Secretary, Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee, c/o Research and Innovation Support,

Dublin City University, Dublin 9. Tel 01-7008000, e-mail rec@dcu.ie

Appendix A3: Informed consent form translated in Bengali

ডাবলিন সিটি ইউনিভার্সিটি

সম্পতিজ্ঞাপন পত্র

গবেষণার শিরোনাম: উইচ্যাট ভিত্তিক পরস্পরিত সহ-শিখন প্রেক্ষাপটে চিনা ভাষা শিখন : বাংলাদেশি শিক্ষার্থীদের সতঃপ্রণোদিত শিখন-বিকাশ বিষয়ক গবেষণা।

গবেষক: ঐশ্বর্য মানিক

প্রতিষ্ঠান: স্কুল অব এ্যাপ্লাইড ল্যাঙ্গুয়েজ এন্ড ইন্টারকালচারাল স্টাডিস (সালিস), ডাবলিন সিটি ইউনিভার্সিটি (ডিসিইউ),অ্যায়ারল্যান্ড

গবেষণা নির্দেশক: ডক্টর ওয়েমিং লিউ এবং প্রফেসর ফ্রান্সওয়াস ব্লিন

নিচের তথ্যগুলো পড়ে 'হ্যাঁ' অথবা 'না' নির্দেশ করুনঃ

- আমি সরল ভাষার বিবৃতি পড়েছি এবং বুঝেছি ☐ হ্যাঁ না ☐
- আমি সরবারহকৃত তথ্যগুলো বুঝেছি এবং অংশগ্রহনে আগ্রহী ☐হ্যাঁ না ☐
- আমার শ্রেণীকক্ষের ভিডিও ধারণের বিষয়ে আমি সচেতন ☐হ্যাঁ না ☐
- আমি সহপাঠীদের সাথে বিভিন্ন দলীয় শিখন কার্যক্রমে অংশগ্রহণ করতে ইচ্ছুক ☐হ্যাঁ না ☐
- উইচ্যাটের দলীয় আলোচনা নথিভূক্তে আপত্তি নেই ☐হ্যাঁ না ☐
- সাক্ষাৎকারের অডিও রেকর্ড করা নিয়ে আমি সচেতন ☐হ্যাঁ না ☐
- তথ্যের সুরক্ষা নিয়ে আমি অবগত আছি ☐হ্যাঁ না ☐
- আমার দায়িত্ব, তথ্য প্রদান এবং অব্যহতির প্রক্রিয়া সম্পর্কে অবগত ☐হ্যাঁ না ☐
- গবেষণার তথ্য পিএইচডি থিসিস ও প্রকাশনার কাজে ব্যবহৃত হবে ☐ হ্যাঁ না ☐

উপরের সব তথ্য আমি পড়েছি এবং বুঝতে পেরেছি। আমার তথ্য সচেতনতা, গবেষণায় অংশগ্রহণ কার্যক্রম সম্পর্কে আমি অবগত। আমি এই গবেষণা প্রকল্পে অংশগ্রহণ করার সম্মতি প্রদান করছি এবং আমার কাছে এই সম্মতি পত্রের অনুলিপি রয়েছে।

অংশগ্রহণকারীর স্বাক্ষর:

অংশগ্রহণকারীর নাম:

প্রত্যক্ষদর্শী ব্যক্তি:

তারিখ:

এই গবেষণা সম্পর্কিত যেকোন প্রশ্নের জন্য অংশগ্রহণকারীরা গবেষকের সাথে সরাসরি ইমেইলের মাধ্যমে যোগাযোগ করতে পারবেন: aishowarza.manik2@mail.dcu.ie

এছাড়াও এই গবেষণা নিয়ে যেকোন সংশয় থাকলে যোগাযোগ করতে পারবেন:

The Secretary, Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee, c/o Research and Innovation Support,

Dublin City University, Dublin 9. টেলিফোন: 01-7008000, ইমেইল: rec@dcu.ie

Appendix B

Appendix B1: Observation checklist

Observation checklist

Observation themes	**Students' responses**
1. Interaction (in-class) a) With teacher Asking questions Answering questions b) With peers Asking questions Answering questions Participating in discussions and activities **2. Interaction during the peer-learning process** As a peer teacher As a peer learner **3. Taking responsibility (in-class and WeChat)** Initiating learning tasks Proposing creative ideas Participating in activities **4. General communication with the**	

teacher using communication tools Consultation hours (face-to-face/virtual) WeChat Email **5. Using Chinese** Communicating with the teacher Communicating with peers	

Appendix B2: Questions for reflective journal

Overview of learning Chinese of the ongoing week

Name:	Date:
Week no.:	Lesson name:

1. Comment on any self-study you have done to consolidate or extend your classroom learning: (i.e., revise vocabulary, practice new character, watching video, follow website, recite or memorise text……)

2. Describe the application process of this week's lesson knowledge in real-life conext (i.e., produce connected text on topics, ask a direction, describe experiences and events, and make relevant dialogue…..) ***Must in Chinese**

3. List some segments of the topic that you find difficult to understand from this week's lesson (i.e., new vocabulary/ grammar points)

4. As peer learner, describe your positive and negative experience of participating in peer learning

5. As peer teacher, describe your positive and negative experience of participating in peer learning

Describe your experience of using WeChat (i.e. reading interesting post, chatting with native speaker, technical issues…)

Appendix B3: Questions for interview

Questions for Interview

1) What motivates you to learn Chinese?

2) Tell me about your overall experience in this semester in class and out-of-class? (activity in the class, technology)

- Overall did you like the course? Why or why not?
- What were your main challenges during this project? (classroom, out-of-class, WeChat….)
- What did you like about using WeChat and what did you not like, and Why?
- Did you enjoy creating your own and peer activities? Why, or why not?

3) How did you create activities? (decision making, choice, who decided, do you have negative experience with peers)

4) What is the best activity you created, what is the worst one, and why?

- What did you expect to learn or to improve from this activity?
- Did you achieve your goal? Why or Why not?
- What is your experience of peer learning? (do you think it is a valuable experience)

5) Did you benefit from your interaction with your peer or peers? (language proficiency/ development, learning process, social interaction, self-confidence, motivation, enjoyment, decreased anxiety..)

- Has your approach to learning Chinese changed since the beginning of the course?
- What has changed, or not changed, and why?
- What would you do differently now?

6) Any suggestions for the future development of this course

- What would you advice me to do next time

Appendix C

Appendix C1. Sample interview (C2P1)

1. What motivates you to learn Chinese?

আমার শেখার কারণ ছিলো আমার আব্বুর চীনের সাথে ব্যবসা ছিলো। তখন তো এখনের মত সব এত ইজি ছিলোনা, চাইনিজ ভাষা জানে এমন লোক খুব কম ছিলো। আব্বু আমাকে একদিন জিজ্ঞেস করলো যে ঢাকা ইউনিভার্সিটিতে চাইনিজ শিখছে এখন পরিচিত কেউ আছে কিনা। এখন আমার হাজবেন্ড আমাকে বললো যে তুমি নিজেই ভর্তি হয়ে যাও। আমি ভর্তি হলাম আর এরপর আব্বুর ওই ব্যবসাটাও বন্ধ হয়ে গেল। পরবর্তীতে আমি কন্টিনিউ করতে চাচ্ছিলাম যেন দোভাষী হিসেবে কাজ করতে পারি, কিন্তু সংসারের চাপে আমি বুঝতে পারলাম যে এটা আসলে সম্ভব না। তারপরও আমি ছাড়িনি, এখনের লেভেল পর্যন্ত এসেছি।

আমি যদি টোটাল ডিউরেশান দিই, তাহলে প্রায় ১২ বছর হয়ে গেছে যে আমি চাইনিজ শিখছি। কিন্তু মাঝখানে অনেক গ্যাপ পরে গেছে। ২০০৯ এ শুরু করি, ২০১০ এ সিনিয়র হওয়ার কথা থাকলেও আমি শেষ করি ২০১১ এ। মাঝে অনেকটা গ্যাপ যায়। ২০১৮ তে আবার ভর্তি হই। ২০২০ এর জানুয়ারি বা ফেব্রুয়ারিতে ভর্তি হই, কিন্তু ক্লাস হয়নি।

2. Tell me about your overall experience in this semester in class and out-of-class? (activity in the class, technology)

এই কোর্সের বর্ণনা করতে গেলে আমি মনে করি আগে কীভাবে চাইনিজ শিখেছি সেটা নিয়ে বলা দরকার। আমি প্রথমে তিনমাসের শর্ট কোর্সে জয়েন করি, সেখানে আফজাল স্যার খুব সুন্দর করে বেসিক বুঝিয়ে দিয়েছিলেন। তারপর জুনিয়র কোর্সের টিচার একদম কিভাবে কি স্পেলিং হবে, সেটা খুব ভালোভাবে শিখালেন। কিন্তু সিনিয়র কোর্সে তিনজন টিচার ছিলেন এবং এত দ্রুত পরিবর্তন হলো যে কিছু বুঝেই উঠতে পারলাম না। এরপর ডিপ্লোমা কোর্সের টিচাররা এত বেশি প্রফেশনাল ছিলেন, উনাদের মুখ্য উদ্দেশ্য ছিলো কোর্স কমপ্লিট করা টাইমলি, এত বেশি এক্সপ্লেনেশন পাইনি যেটা একটা অন্য ভাষা শিখতে দরকার হয়। এবার আপনি যেমন প্রত্যেকটা গ্রামার পয়েন্ট বুঝাচ্ছেন, আগের টিচাররা বুঝিয়েছেন কিন্তু এতটা ক্লিয়ারলি না। সেই সাথে, আপনি যে লিসেনিং প্র্যাক্টিস করাচ্ছেন, আগে কেউই এরকম করায় নি আর এটা আসলে খুব ই প্রয়োজনীয় ছিল।

এই কোর্সের একটা অন্যতম এডিশন ছিল ক্লাসমেটদের সাথে মিলে কাজ করার সুবিধা। আমি মনে করি যে কোন ভাষা শেখার জন্য আসলে একজন পার্টনার খুব জরুরি। আগে আমরা চেষ্টা করতাম ক্লাসের আগে যাওয়ার, কিন্তু ক্লাসমেটরা সবাই এত ব্যস্ত, এই যেমন কেউ জব, কেউ ব্যবসা, কেউ সংসার- সব মিলিয়ে এটা আসলে হয়ে উঠে না। তবে জুনিয়র কোর্সে আমি অন্যদের সাথে চাইনিজে কথা

বলার চেস্টা করতাম। বিভিন্ন বয়সের হলেও আমরা বিভিন্ন প্রোগ্রামেও জয়েন করতাম, সবার সাথে ভালো সম্পর্ক হয়ে গেছিল, চাইনিজ এ কথাও বলতে পারতাম আর বাকিদের কথা বুঝেও যেতাম সহজেই। ওই সময়টায় ফ্লুয়েন্সি ছিল বেশ।

আগের টিচাররা বলতেন WeChat ইউজের কথা, কিন্তু বলা অব্দিই। আপনার সাথে ক্লাস করাতে আমরা **Google Classroom** এর ব্যবহার শিখেছি। উনাদের জন্য ইউজ করতে বলতো যেহেতু তারা ইউজ করে। আমরা তো মেসেঞ্জার, ফেসবুকে অভ্যস্ত। কিন্তু তারা চাইনিজ হওয়ায়, তাদের তো সেটা নেই। তাই তাদের সাথে যোগাযোগের জন্য আর কি ইউজ করতে বলো। তবে চাইনিজ শেখার জন্য কখনো ইউজ করতে বলেনি। এখানে তো সহজেই চাইনিজটা শেখা যায়, যেমন একটা স্টিকার দিতে গেলেও সেটা চাইনিজ এ পাওয়া যায়, এরকম করেও যে শেখা যায়, এই ব্যাপারটা কখনো আগে কেউ বলেনি। আমি মাঝে অনেকদিন কোভিড অসুস্থতার জন্য ক্লাসে আসতে না পারলেও, গ্রুপে সবার করা এক্টিভিটি দেখেছি। এটা আমাকে খুব ইন্সপায়ার করেছে। যেকোনো সময়ে আমি গ্রুপে দেখতে পেরেছি বা পোস্ট করেছি, এটা অনেক সুবিধা ছিলো।

আর আমি আসলে খুবই এনালগ, প্রায় ব্যাপারই মেয়েকে জিজ্ঞেস করি। সেই জায়গায়, এপ ইন্সটল করা, গুগল ক্লাসরুমে নিজে জয়েন করা, এইসব নিজে করায় মনে হয় যে আমি অনেকটাই টেকনোলজি ব্যবহারে এগিয়ে গিয়েছি, এখন নিজেকে অনেক এডভান্স লাগে।

Google Classroom কে সবচেয়ে বেশি সমস্যাপূর্ণ মনে হয়েছে। আমি বই প্রেফার করি। পরবর্তীতে আমার মেয়ের সাহায্যে শিখেছি। আপনার দেওয়া ক্লাসে ও ক্লাসের বাইরের অতিরিক্ত অ্যাকটিভিটি গুলো আমার খুব সাহায্য করেছে। মুখের জড়তা অনেকটা কেটে গেছে।

peer activities-এর কারনে আমার Vocabulary বেড়েছে . আমার মনে হয় এটা খুবই ফলপ্রসু। যেমন- এক্টিভিটিস শেয়ার করে ২+২=৪ হয়ে যায়। অন্যদের কাছ থেকে নতুন শব্দ বা বাক্য জানা যায়। অন্যদের সাথে Conversation এর কারনে ভাষাটা মস্তিষ্কে গেঁথে গেছে।

আপনি যে আমাদেরকে কাজ দিয়েছেন, ২-৩ মিনিটের ভিডিও এগুলো ভালো ছিল। জুনিয়র লেভেলে তিনবছর এনগেজইড ছিলাম, মাঝে এতটা ব্রেক, কথা বলার মধ্যে জড়তা চলে আসছিল, অনেক শব্দ ভুলে গিয়েছিলাম। এখন যখন আপনার কাছে শব্দ শুনছি, সেগুলো শুনলে মনে হচ্ছে যে আমি জানি, তারপর সেগুলো খুজে বের করা, আমার জন্য এই বয়সে এসে এগুলো খুবই কার্যকরী, মনে গেঁথে গেছে মনে হচ্ছে। রান্না করার ভিডিও'র ব্যাপারটা, আমি স্ক্রিপ্ট রেডি করেছি, সব কিছুর চাইনিজ নাম শুনেছি।

চাইনিজ শব্দগুলো ঠিকঠাকভাবে ফিক্সড করেছি, ভিডিওটা করলে আমার ধারণা জড়তা আরো কেটে যাবে। এটা আগে থেকে হলে, চাইনিজ শেখাটা খুব ইজি হয়ে যেত এবং এতদিনে ভালোভাবেই শিখে যেতাম।

3. How did you create activities? (decision making, choice, who decided, do you have negative experience with peers)

আমি আসলে অসুস্থ হয়ে যাওয়ার কারনে এতটা এফোর্ট দিতে পারিনি। করোনা হওয়ায় আমি অনেকটা পিছিয়ে পরেছি। কথা বলার সময় পুরোটা চাইনিজে বলার চেষ্টা করেছি, মাঝে মাঝে দুই একটা বাংলা ব্যাবহার করেছি। আরিফা আসলে পুরোটাই চাইনিজ এ বলতো, মাঝে হয়তো আমি ১-২টা শব্দ বাংলায় বলে ফেলতাম। আমরা দুইজন মিলেই সিদ্ধান্ত নিয়েছি কোন এক্টিভিটি তৈরি করবো। অনেকগুলো Idea আমি দিয়েছি , তবে Typing এর কাজ আরিফা করেছে। আমি আসলে বেশিক্ষণ স্ক্রিনে তাকিয়ে থাকতে পারিনা। আরিফা ফ্রি থাকলে, ওর সাথে কথা বলতে পারলে আসলে অনেকটাই সুবিধা হতো, কিন্তু ও এত ব্যস্ত! ও আমাকে খুব ইন্সপায়ার করতো। প্রত্যেকটা লাইন লিখতে বলতো, প্রত্যেকদিন নতুন নতুন বাক্য লিখতে বলতো চাইনিজে। আমার আসলে মনে হয়েছে যে আমি যদি আরেকটু জানতাম তাহলে আমি আরো ভালো করে প্রশ্ন রেডি করেত পারতাম। মনে হয়েছে যে আমি কিছুই জানিনা, আমাকে আরো জানতে হবে অনেক। ও এতো ব্যস্ত, রাত ১০টার পর আগে ওকে পাওয়া যায় না। তবে ওর সাথে টাইম এডযাস্ট করেই কাজ করেছি।

4. What is the best activity you created, what is the worst one, and why?

peer activities আসলে খুবই পজেটিভ আমার কাছে। একা একা তো আর কথা বলা সম্ভব না। কিন্তু দুইজন কথা বললে নতুন শব্দ শেখা যায়, আগেরগুলো প্র্যাক্টিস হয়, ভোকাবুলারি বাড়ে। এভাবে আসলে এই শব্দগুলো মনে রাখতেও ইজি হয়। তবে এই এক্টিভিটিগুলো দিয়ে যে ভালো জানে তার লস হয় আর যে একটু কম জানে, তার অনেকটা লাভ হয়। যে কম জানে সে আরো বেশি শিখছে কিন্তু যে বেশি জানে তার তো কেমন স্টক বাড়ছে না।

আমার খুবই হিংসা হয়েছে যে সবাই এগিয়ে যাচ্ছে। মোস্তফা ভাই তো পুরো মুদ্রার এপিঠ ওপিঠ হয়ে গেছেন, উনার উন্নতি দেখে আমার খুবই ভালো লেগেছে। উনাকে আমি কখনো ক্লাসে রেসপন্স করতে দেখিনি। আর কামাল ভাই! উনি যে হোমওয়ার্ক করতে পারেন, ভিডিও বানিয়ে দিতে পারেন, এটা তো কল্পনার বাইরে ছিল। উনাকে আগে তেমন পড়তেও দেখিনি, উনার ক্লাসের পড়ার চেয়ে কালচারাল এক্টিভিটিতে আগ্রহ বেশি ছিল। আর শরীফ ভাই আগে থেকেই অনেক সিরিয়াস পড়াশুনার ব্যাপারে। সবাইকে দেখে বিশেষ করে মোস্তফা ভাইকে দেখে মনে হলো যে আমিও আরো ভালো পারব।

Weekend নিয়ে যেই ভিডিওটা বানিয়েছিলাম ওটা খুব ভালো লেগেছে। লেগেছে। তারপর ক্লাসে পাহাড়ে চড়ার ভিডিও দেখে সেটা নিয়ে যে আমাদেরকে ১মিনিট করে বলতে বললেন, সেটা খুব ভালো লেগেছে।আপনার ক্লাসে আমি কখনোই bore feel করিনি, কারন প্রত্যেকটা ক্লাসেই আপনি নতুন নতুন কিছু শিখিয়েছেন।

আমরা ভাবছিলাম যে বাঙালি একজন ক্লাস নিবে, আগেরবার যখন একজন বাঙালি ক্লাস নেয়, সেইবার আমার অভিজ্ঞতা আসলে এত ভালো ছিল না। সেজন্য প্রথমদিকে একটু ইতস্তত ছিলাম। কিন্তু যখন শুনলাম আপনি চীন এ ছিলেন, এখন পিএইচডি করছেন, তারপর মনে হলো যে দেখি, কি হয়। এখন বলতে হচ্ছে যে, যতটা ভেবেছিলাম তার থেকে বেটার পেয়েছি। এখনো তিনমাস ক্লাস না হলেও, আমার মনে হয় এই সময়ে এক বছরের জার্নি হয়ে গেছে। আমরা তো সারাজীবন এক্সাম পেপার নিলাম, এক্সাম দিলাম, রেজাল্ট এলো। কিন্তু কখনোই দেখলাম না যে আমি কি ভুল করলাম। কিন্তু আপনি যে পেপারটা এক্সপ্লেইন করে বুঝিয়ে দিলেন সেদিন রিডিং পার্টটার চেঞ্জ, এটা আসলেই খুব দরকার ছিল।

আপনার ক্লাসের শুরুটা আমার খুব ভালো লাগতো। আমি জানি যে টিচার আমাকে জিজ্ঞেস করবে চাইনিজে যে আমি যেদিন ক্লাস ছিলো না কী করলাম, সেজন্য আমাকে প্রিপারেশন নিয়ে যেতে হয়েছে। আমার বলার ভুল হোক তারপরও আমি প্রস্তুতি নিয়েছি যে কি বলবো, এগুলো আমার জন্য খুব পজেটিভ দিক।

আপনি যে ক্লাসে সব চাইনিজে এক্সপ্লেইন করেন এটা খুব উপকারী। একটা হায়ার ডিপ্লোমা ক্লাসে যদি চাইনিজ না বলা হয়, আর কবে! আপনি যে উৎসাহ দিয়েছেন ক্লাসে চাইনিজে কথা বলতে, যেমন- দুটো লাইন লিখে বাকিগুলো আমাদের জিজ্ঞেস করেছেন, শব্দ দিয়ে বাক্য তৈরি করতে সুযোগ দিয়েছে এগুলো আমাদের কনফিডেন্স লেভেল বাড়িয়েছে। যখন আমি কোন হোমওয়ার্ক বা এক্টিভিটি কমপ্লিট করে আপনাকে পাঠিয়েছি, আপনি আবার বললেন এটা এভাবে করলে ভালো হতো, তখন মনে হয়েছে আমার আরো জানতে হবে। এটা আমাকে খুব উৎসাহ দিয়েছে।

5. Has your approach to learning Chinese changed since the beginning of the course? What has changed, or not changed, and why? --- What would you do differently now?

আপনি যখন লিসেনিং আর গ্রামার পয়েন্ট একসাথে শুরু করেছেন, তখন মনে হলো যে এবার আসলেই কিছু শিখতে পারব। আগে ভাবতাম যে চাইনিজ এ কোন গ্রামার ই নেই। গ্রামার কি, যেখানে স্থান, কাল, পাত্রভেদে বুঝা যাবে। এই যেমন লা হলে পাস্ট টেন্স, মেই আর পু, গ্রামার বলতে আমরা শুধু এটুকুই জানতাম। আগে যেভাবে শিখতাম, সেটা তো আসলে ভুল ছিল। আমার Grammar

understanding improve হয়েছে, Listening এর বিষয়টিও improve হয়েছে। যেমনঃ লিসেনিংটা ৪০% হয়েছে যেটা ২০% ছিল। আপনার টেকনিক এ রিডিং পার্টটা ধরতে পারি। রাইটিং টা আরেকটু যদি আমি নিজে প্র্যাক্টিস করি তাহলে ঠিক হয়ে যাবে।

আপনি ক্লাসে জিজ্ঞেস করবেন, ভুল হলেও আমাকে বলতে হবে, এসব চিন্তা করে ক্লাস যাওয়ার আগে আমি কিছু শব্দ হলেও পড়ে গেছি। ভালো ছিল এটা আমার জন্য।

ক্লাসে একদিন যখন আপনার চাইনিজ বন্ধুর সাথে আমাদের কথা বলার ব্যবস্থা করলেন, আমরা কিন্তু রেস্পন্স করেছি, কিন্তু এটা হুট করে হলে কিন্তু আমরা পারতাম না। আপনি ক্লাসের এনভারনমেন্ট এরকম রেখেছিলেন বলেই আমরা উনার বুঝতে পেরেছি এবং কথা বলতে পেরেছি।

আপনি যে আমাদেরকে একটা গুগল ক্লাসরুম দিয়েছেন, ওয়ার্কবুক দিচ্ছেন, এগুলো আসলে আমরা পরীক্ষার আগেই করতাম শুধু।

এই ক্লাসের জন্য আমাকে সবসময় পড়ালেখা করতে হয়েছে, যেমন- আপনি একটা মিনি এক্সাম পেপার দিয়েছিলেন গুগল ক্লাসরুমে, সেটা সল্ভ করতে গিয়ে আমাকে আবার বইটা ভালো করে পড়তে হয়েছে। গ্রামার পয়েন্ট যেগুলো বলে দিয়েছিলেন সেগুলো আবার খুঁজে বের করে পড়ার কারনে মনের মধ্যে রয়ে গিয়েছে। এভাবে যদি শুরু থেকে পড়তাম তাহলে ক্লাসের আমরা সবাই চাইনিজে খুব ভালো করতাম।

6. Any suggestions for the future development of this course?

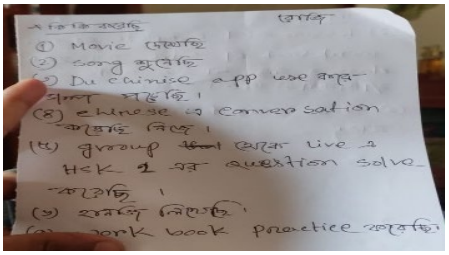
- দেড় ঘন্টা চলে যাওয়ার পর আসলে আমি আর মনোযোগ ধরে রাখতে পারিনা, বুঝিনা কেন। এটা নিয়ে ভাবা যায়।

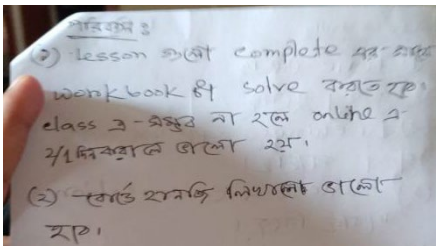
- অলটারনেট ডে তে লিসেনিং পার্টটা প্র্যাক্টিস করাবেন তাহলে এই পয়েন্টটা স্ট্রং হবে, আর দুই সপ্তাহ পর পর Grammar Exam নেওয়া বা এক্সাম পেপার সলভ করাবেন। এগুলো খুব হেল্পফুল হবেই।

- Peer Conversation করা। ফাইনাল এক্সাম এ ৫ মার্ক্স এড করা, তাহলে ক্লাসে স্পিকিং প্র্যাক্টিস করলে মার্ক্স পাবে শুনলে তারাও এটাতে বেশি ইন্টারেস্টেড হবে।

Appendix C2. Sample of student's reflective journals

C3P1-1

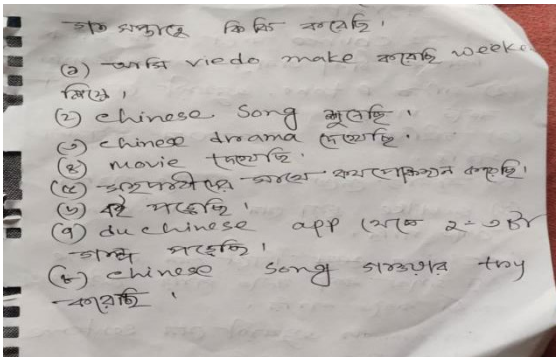


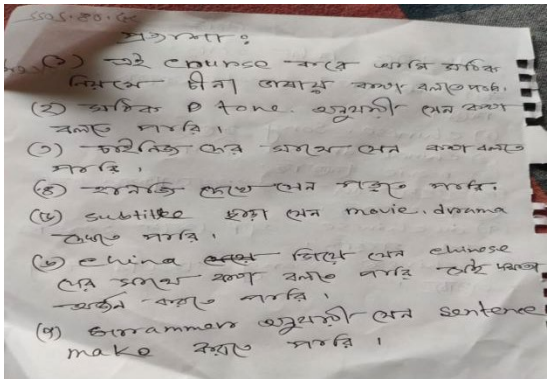


Things I Have Done:

- Watched a movie.
- Listened to songs.
- Read stories using the Du Chinese app.
- Practiced Chinese conversation by myself.
- Solved HSK 2 questions live in the group.
- Wrote Hanzi characters.
- Practiced using the workbook.

C3P1-2 (19.4.22)



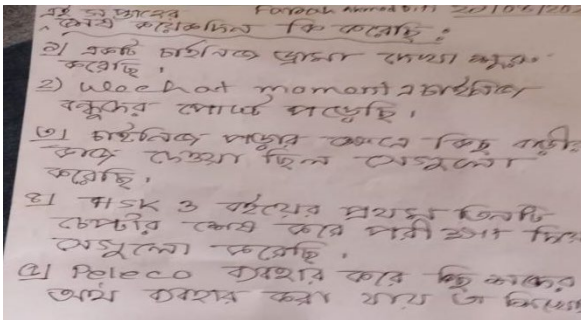


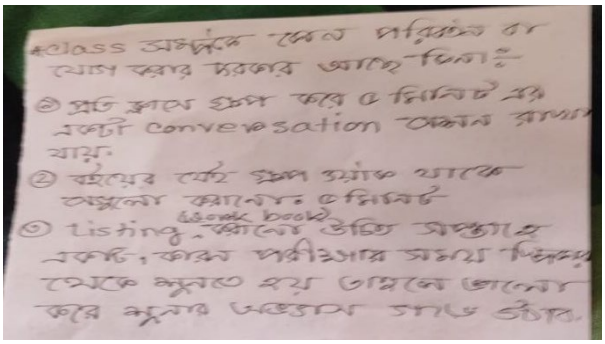
What I Did Last Week:

Appendix

1. I made a video about the weekend.
2. I listened to Chinese songs.
3. I watched a Chinese drama.
4. I watched a movie.
5. I had conversations with my classmates.
6. I read a book.
7. I read 2-3 stories from the Du Chinese app.
8. I tried to sing a Chinese song.

C3P6-1 (21.4.22)



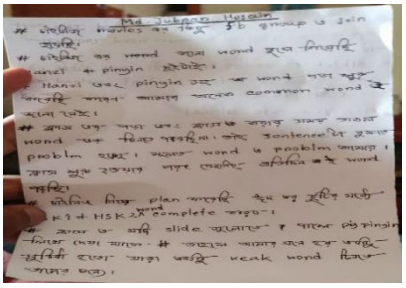


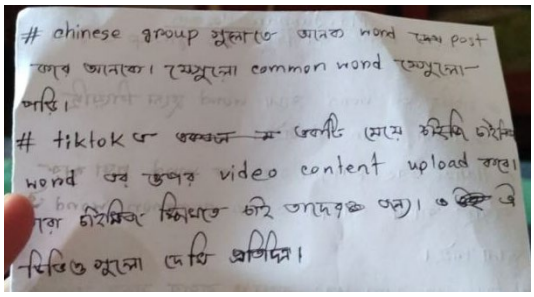
Things I Did in the Last Few Days of This Week:

1. Started watching a Chinese drama.
2. Read posts from Chinese friends on WeChat Moments.
3. Completed the homework assigned for Chinese studies.
4. Reviewed the first three chapters of the HSK-3 book.
5. Used the Pleco app to learn the meanings and usage of some words.

C3P3

Appendix





1. I joined a Facebook group that recommend Chinese movies.

2. I have forgotten many of the Chinese words I previously knew, including both Hanzi and Pinyin.

3. I have started reading words with both Hanzi and Pinyin because I have forgotten many common words.

4. During class, I cannot recognize all the words while studying, which makes it difficult for me to understand sentences. My main issue is with vocabulary. Since the class started, I have been reviewing these words daily.

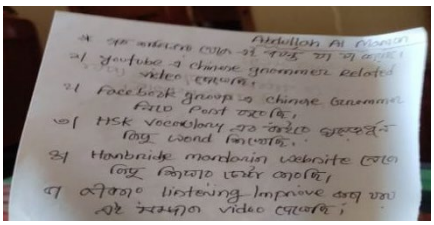
5. I have planned to complete all the words from H2K 1 and H2K 2 during the Eid holiday.

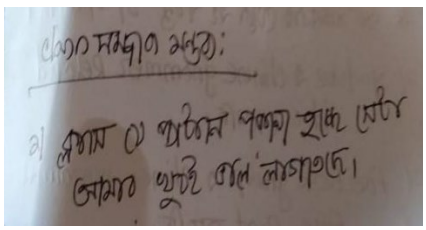
6. If the Pinyin were written alongside the words in class materials, it would be more convenient, especially for those who struggle to recognize words.

7. Many words are posted in different Chinese learning groups. I try to read the common ones.

8. On TikTok, there is a girl who uploads video content about Chinese words for learners. I watch her videos every day.

C3P4





1. Watched YouTube videos related to Chinese grammar.

2. Posted about Chinese grammar in a Facebook group.

3. Learnt some important words beyond the H2K vocabulary.

4. Tried to learn from the Handbridge Mandarin website.

5. Watched videos on how to improve listening skills.

Appendix C3. Sample of group activities created by peer teachers

Group name	**Types of activities**	**Types of activities**	
Group 1	**Make Sentence** 1.周末＝ 我们下个周末去 老家。(weekend) 2.打 算 ＝(plan) 3.游 戏 ＝(game) 4.着 急 ＝(worried) 5.复 习 ＝(review) 6.地 图 ＝(map) 7.腿 ＝(leg) 8.把 ＝(mesureword) 9.其 实 ＝(actually) 10.爬 山 ＝(to climb mountain)	**Rearrange the words to make sentence.** 01. 一个 商店里 没有 也 面 包 。 Ans：商店里一个面包 也 没 有 。 02. 吃 什 么 还 没 我 好 想 。 03. 一 点 儿 需 都 今年 没 下 。 04. 也 一杯 下午 没 喝 今天 我 咖啡。 05. 水果 洗 好 吗 你 了。	
Group 2	**Vocabulary Map** Create a vocabulary map with the related words Example:(Occupation)老 师 1..医 生 2..服 务 员 3..护 士 4..工 程 师 方 向 (Directions) Example: 东 边 1..北 方 2..上 边 3..右 边	**Sentences rearrange** Re-arrange the sentences 1。 下 山 容 易 上 山 难 。 = 上山难下山容易。 2。去 吧 跟 你 一起 我 。 = 我跟你一起去吧。 3。告诉 到 了 办公室 我 就 。 = 我到了办公室告诉 就 。	**Fill in the blanks** Fill in the blanks with the given words. 辆，床，带，或者 ， 课 1。明天要 (带) 作 业 来 。 2。 妈 妈 起 了 (床)就做早饭。 3。你下了 (课) 我们就去书店 。 4。今天晚上吃

	4..左 边 水 果 (Fruits)Example: 苹 果 1..香 蕉 2..芒 果 3..椰 子 4..西瓜 教室(classroom)Example: 黑板 1.书 2.记 号 笔 3.老 师 4.学 生 5.电子东西	4。你我们楼上等在 。 = 我们在等你上楼。 5。一点儿也今天考试不的 。 = 今天的考试也不一点儿。	米 (或者) 面条都可 以 。 5。我想买这 (辆) 汽车。
Group 3	**Matching dialogue** 1.Match the two parts of the same dialogue: Example: 4)你知道怎么去那儿吗？ K.) 当然.。我们先坐公共汽车，然 后 换 地 铁 。 A..我今天不舒服，觉得很累。 B..你还认识我吗？在们在中国见 过 。 C.你喜欢吃红苹果还是绿苹果？ D.妈妈，我下课回来了。 E.上面写着二十元把。 F.今天的题一点儿也不难。 G.我的头怎么这么疼？ H.喂，我到你家楼下了。 I. 那喝了这杯牛奶就睡觉吧。 J.请问，周明在吗？ K.当然.。我们先坐公共汽车，然 后 换 地 铁 。 1.今天你怎么了？一直在睡觉。 2.啊，对，我记得你，你瘦了。	**Measure word** 2.Match the objects with suitable measure words: Example:11.衣服=件 1. 书 2. 茶 3. 地 图 4. 车 5. 人 6. 元 7. 房 间 8. 发 9. 手 机 10. 公 司 11. 衣 服 measure words: 1. 个 2. 杯 3. 家 4.本 5. 快	**Confusing Hanzi** 3.Write down the pinyin and meaning of these Chinese characters: Example： 未 (wei) not yet 末 (mo) end,last 1. ▶ 记 ▶ 已 2. ▶ 者 ◀ 都 3. ▶ 两 ▶ 辆 4. ▶ 下 雨 ▶ 下 雪 5.

	3 .桌子上放着饮料，你先喝点儿吧。 4.你知道怎么去那儿吗？ 5.我喜欢吃红苹果，我觉得红苹果甜。 6.这和雨伞多钱一把。 7.你每天进了办公室就坐在电脑前，身体能好吗？ 8.妈，我今天太累了，不想看书了。 9.他现在出去了，十点回来。 10.好，你等我一下，我现在就下去。 11.因为你准备得好，所以觉得很容易。	6. 道 7. 口 8. 跟 9. 张 10. 辆 11. 件	爱 菜 6. 很 跟 7. 那 哪 8. 为 力 9. 看 春 10. 钱 我

Appendix C4. Sample of group activities solutions by peer learners

Participants name	**Date and time**	**Solution of task 1(make sentence) by peer learners**	**Solution of task 2 (rearrange) by peer learners**
C3pP-2	18.4.22: 14:20	周末 - 这个周末你有时间吗? 打算 - 我打算下个星期去旅游。 游戏- 现在孩子们很喜欢玩电脑游戏。 着急 - 妈妈别着急，我会照顾好自己。 复习 - 明天我有一个考试，我早就复习好了。 地图- 我的手机上有电子地图。 腿- 昨天爸爸很忙，今天他的腿有点儿疼。 把- 我坐在哪儿? 请给我一把椅子。 其实- 这个考试的问题其实很容易。 爬山- 我的女儿要自己去爬山。	1.商店里一个面包也没有。 2.我还没想好吃什么。 3。今年一点儿 雪都没下。 4。今天下午我一杯咖啡也喝。 5。你洗好水果了吗?
C3P- 3	18.4.22: 15:42	1.周末＝下周末我要去游泳。(weekend) 2.打算＝下个月我有很多打算。(plan) 3.游戏＝她喜欢玩视频游戏。(game) 4.着急＝为什么你很着急我？(worried) 5.复习＝请问 老师，你会复习我的考试卷。(review) 6.地图＝打开你的百度地图。(map) 7.腿＝你的腿怎么了？(leg) 8.把＝(measure word) 9.其实＝其实每次想你。(actually) 10.爬山＝我害怕爬山。(to climb mountain)	Ans 1：商店里一个面包也没有。 Ans 2：我还没想好吃什么。 Ans 3：今年一点儿需都没下。 Ans 4：今天下午我也一杯没喝咖啡。 05. 水果洗好吗你了？ Ans：你洗水果好了吗？

Appendix

C3P-1	18.4.22: 19:35	1.周末 = 下个周末我去中国。 2.打算＝今天晚上我没有打算。 3.游戏＝我的女儿非常喜欢电脑游戏。 4.着急＝我的女儿还没来我很着急。 5. 复习＝明天的考试想好复习。 6. 地图＝我们去旅游所以我带 一个地图 。 7.腿 ＝ 我 女 儿 的 腿 很 疼 。 8. 把＝我 们的教室里有三把椅子。 9.其 实 ＝ 他 的 工 作 其 实 重 要 。 10. 爬山＝下个月我和我朋友一起去爬山。	Ans 1：商店里一个面包 也 没 有 。 Ans 2：我还没想好吃什 么 。 Ans 3：今天一点儿需都 没 下 。 Ans 4：今天下午我一杯 咖 啡 没 喝 。 Ans 5：你洗好水果了吗？
C3P-7, Time:	19.4.22: 03:18	1.周末＝这个周末我会去我哥哥的家。(weekend) 2. 打 算 ＝(plan) 3.游 戏 ＝ 你 喜 欢 什 么 游 戏 ？ (game) 4.着 急 ＝ 别 着 急 ， 我 们 有 时 间 。 (worried) 5.复 习 ＝(review) 6.地 图 ＝(map) 7.腿 ＝(leg) 8.把 ＝(measure word) 9.其实＝这个房间里很热，其实我不舒服(actually) 10.爬 山 ＝ 我 我 很 累 ， 我 不 能 爬 山(to climb mountain)	Ans 1：商店里也没有 一 个 面 包 Ans 2：我还没想好吃什么？
C3P7	19.4.22: 03:53	[Images: 57e7eb5786b2a01fb3efa57b4b9e32be.jpg(View in attachment)] [C3P10 solved group-1's exercise and shared the screenshot of his answers here.]	

C3P8	19.4.22 : 03:53	[Images: 57e7eb5786b2a01fb3efa57b4b9e32be.jpg(View in attachment) [C3P10 solved group-1's exercise and shared the screenshot of his answers here.]	

Group 2: work solution by peer learners

Participant name	**Date and time**	**Solution of task 1 (vocabulary map) by peer learners**	**Solution of task 2 (rearrange) by peer learners**	**Solution of task 3 (Fill in the blanks with given words) by peer learners**
C3P3	22.4.22, 15:02	Vocabulary map (related words) 教室（class room) 1.投影仪（projector) 2.桌子（table) 3. 长椅（bench) 4. 椅子（chair) 电子东西（electronic things) 1.手机（mobile)	1. 上山 难下山 容易。 1. 我跟你一起去吧。 3. 我告诉了就到办公室。 4. 我们等你在楼上。 5. 今天的考试也不一点儿。	1. 明天 要 （课） 作业来。 2. 妈妈起了（ 带）就做 早饭。 3. 你下了 （ 床） 我们就 去书店。 4. 今天晚上 吃米（ 或者） 面条都可以。 5. 我想买 这（ 辆） 汽车

		2. 电视（television) 3. 冰箱（ fridge) 4 .电梯（ elevator) 聪业（occupation) 1.医生（doctor) 2. 工程师（engineer) 3. 营业（business) 4. 农民（farmer) 方向（directions) 1. 旁边（beside) 2.西面（west) 3. 对面（opposite) 4. 外边（ outside) 水果（fruits) 1.西瓜(water melon) 2. 香蕉（banana) 3. 芒果（mango) 4.桃子（peach).		

C3P6	22.4.22, 19.30	教室(classroom)Example: 黑板 1..书 2..记号笔 3..老师 4..学生 电子东西 (Electronic Things)Example: 电脑 1..电视 2..投影仪 3..电动自行车 4..电动搅拌机 职业 (Occupation)Example: 老师 1..医生 2..服务员 3..护士 4..工程师 方向 (Directions) Example: 东边	1。下山容易上山难。 = 上山难下山容易。 2。去吧跟你一起我。 = 我跟你一起去吧。 3。告诉到了办公室我就。 = 我到了办公室告诉就。 4。你我们楼上等在。 = 我们在等你上楼。 5。一点儿也今天考试不的。 = 今天的考试也不一点儿。	1。明天要 (带) 作业来。 2。妈妈起了(床)就做早饭。 3。你下了 (课) 我们就去书店。 4。今天晚上吃米 (或者) 面条都可以。 5。我想买这 (辆) 汽车。

		1..北方 2..上边 3..右边 4..左边 水果 (Fruits)Example: 苹果 1..香蕉 2..芒果 3..椰子 4..西瓜		
C3p5	22.4.22, 20:18	教室(classroom)Example: 黑板 1.老师(Teacher) 2. 学生 (Student) 3. 书(Book) 4. 空调 (Air Conditioner) 电子东西 (Electronic Things) Example: 电脑 1. 手机 (Mobile)	1。下山容易上山难。 Ans: 上山容易下山难。 2。去吧跟你一起我。 Ans：我跟你去一走吧。 3。告诉到了办公室我就。 Ans：我告诉办公室就到了。	1。明天要_____(带)作业来。 2。妈妈起了_____(床)就做早饭。 3。你下了_____(课)我们就去书店。 4。今天晚上吃米_____(或者)面条都可以。 5。我想买这_____(辆)汽车。

		2. 冰箱 (Refrigerator) 3. 灯 (Light) 4. 烤箱 (Oven) 职业 (Occupation) Example: 老师 1. 商人 (Business man) 2. 经理 (Manager) 3. 司机 (Driver) 4. 唱歌 (Singer) 方向 (Directions) Example: 东边 1. 旁边 (Beside) 2. 里面 (Inside) 3. 西面 (West Side) 4. 南边 (South Side) 水果 (Fruits) Example: 苹果 1. 西瓜 (Watermelon) 2. 香蕉 (Banana)	4。你 我们 楼上 等 在。 Ans: 我们等你在楼上。 5。一 点 儿 也 今 天 考试 不 的 。 Ans： 今天的考试也不一点儿。	

		3. 芒果 (Mango) 4. 木瓜 (Papaya)		
C3P1	22.4.22, 23:43	1. 卓子 2.椅子 3.书柜 4.掸 电子东西（Electronic things) 1.电视 2.电扇 3.空条 4.电灯 职业（Occupation) 1. 工程师 2.医生 3.律师 4.护士 方向（Direction) 1. 北边	1.下山容易上山男。 Ans：上山容易下山难。 2.去吧跟你一起我 Ans：我跟你一起去吧。 3.告诉到了办公室我就。 Ans：我告诉办公室就到了。 4.你我们楼上等在。 Ans：我们等你在楼上。 5.一点儿也今天考试不的。 Ans：今天的考试也不一点儿。	1.明天要（带）作业。 2.妈妈起了（床）就做早饭。 3.你下了（课）我就去书店。 4.今天晚上吃米后者面条都可以。 5.我想买这（辆）汽车。

		2.南边 3.西边 4.右边 水果（fruits) 1.橙子 2.西瓜 3.葡萄 4.木瓜		
C3P7	23.4.22	教室(classroom):Example: 黑板 1 老师 2 学生 3 桌子 4 空调 电子东西 (Electronic Things): Example: 电脑 1 电脑 2 电视 3 空调	2。你跟我一起去吧。 4。我们等你在楼。 5。今天的考试也不一点儿。	**Did not solve this task

		职业(Occupation):Example: 老师 1 老师 2 医生 3 学生 4 商人 方向(Directions)Example: 东边 1 东边 2 西边 3 北边 4 南边 水果 (Fruits)Example: 苹果 1 西瓜 2 苹果 3 芒果 4 葡萄		

Appendix D

Appendix D1. Sample of codes development in 3 cycles

Main Theme	Sub-code	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3	Evolution Notes
Mutual support	Support as peer teacher	-	✓ Added	✓ Refined	Emerged from peer learning activities
	Support as peer learner	-	✓ Added	✓ Refined	Emerged from peer learning activities
	Support as individual - asking questions	✓ Initial code	✓ Refined	✓ Stable	Well-defined from start
	Response to peers' questions	✓ Initial code	✓ Refined	✓ Stable	Well-defined from start
	Emotional support and encouragement	✓ Initial code	✓ Refined	✓ Stable	Present from beginning
	Resource and knowledge sharing	-	✓ Added	✓ Expanded	Emerged from peer interactions
	Collaborative problem-solving	✓ Initial code	✓ Refined	✓ Stable	Identified in complex interactions
	Providing constructive feedback	-	✓ Added	✓ Refined	Emerged from peer review activities
	Technical assistance and guidance	✓ Initial code	✓ Refined	✓ Stable	Digital platform specific

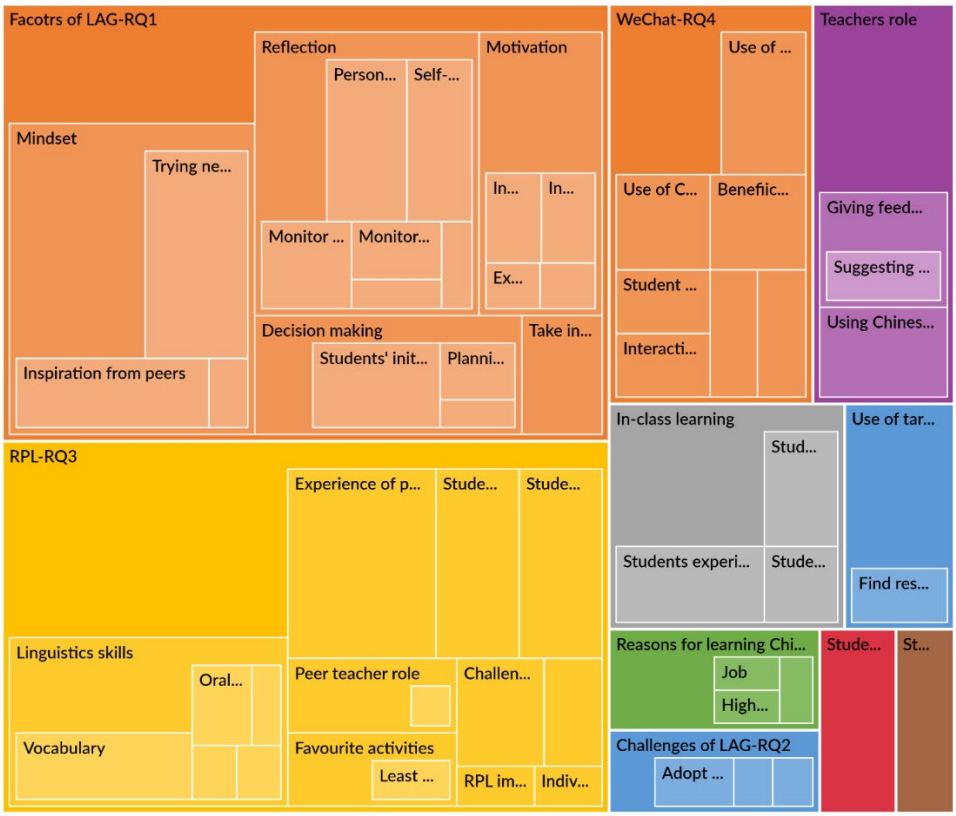
Linguistic growth	Vocabulary	✓ Initial code	✓ Refined	✓ Stable	Core linguistic element
	Grammar	✓ Initial code	✓ Refined	✓ Stable	Core linguistic element
	Post in Chinese	✓ Initial code	✓ Refined	✓ Stable	Platform-specific behaviour
	Sticker in Chinese	✓ Initial code	✓ Refined	✓ Stable	Platform-specific behaviour
	Write in Chinese	✓ Initial code	✓ Refined	✓ Stable	General writing activities
	Voice message in Chinese	✓ Initial code	✓ Refined	✓ Stable	Audio communication
	Reading comprehension in Chinese	-	✓ Added	✓ Refined	Receptive skills recognition
	Character recognition and formation	-	✓ Added	✓ Refined	Script-specific learning
	Tone and pronunciation practice	-	✓ Added	✓ Refined	Chinese-specific features
	Code-switching and translanguaging	-	-	✓ Added	Complex multilingual behaviour
	Cultural and contextual language use	-	-	✓ Added	Pragmatic competence

	Other linguistic features	✓ Initial code	✓ Maintained	✓ Maintained	Catch-all category
Individual learning	Look for resources	✓ Initial code	✓ Refined	✓ Stable	Self-directed behaviour
	Share resources in Chinese	✓ Initial code	✓ Refined	✓ Stable	Community contribution
	Revise lesson	✓ Initial code	✓ Refined	✓ Stable	Study strategy
	Preview lesson	✓ Initial code	✓ Refined	✓ Stable	Study strategy
	Listen to song, poem	✓ Initial code	✓ Refined	✓ Stable	Cultural immersion
	Watch drama/movie	✓ Initial code	✓ Refined	✓ Stable	Visual media engagement
	Follow Chinese learning groups	✓ Initial code	✓ Refined	✓ Stable	Community engagement
	Document learning progress in reflective journal	✓ Initial code	✓ Refined	✓ Stable	Metacognitive practice
	Question teacher	✓ Initial code	✓ Refined	✓ Stable	Seeking guidance
	Active participation in class	✓ Initial code	✓ Refined	✓ Stable	Classroom engagement
Challeng	Technological incompetence	✓ Initial code	✓ Refined	✓ Stable	Digital divide issue

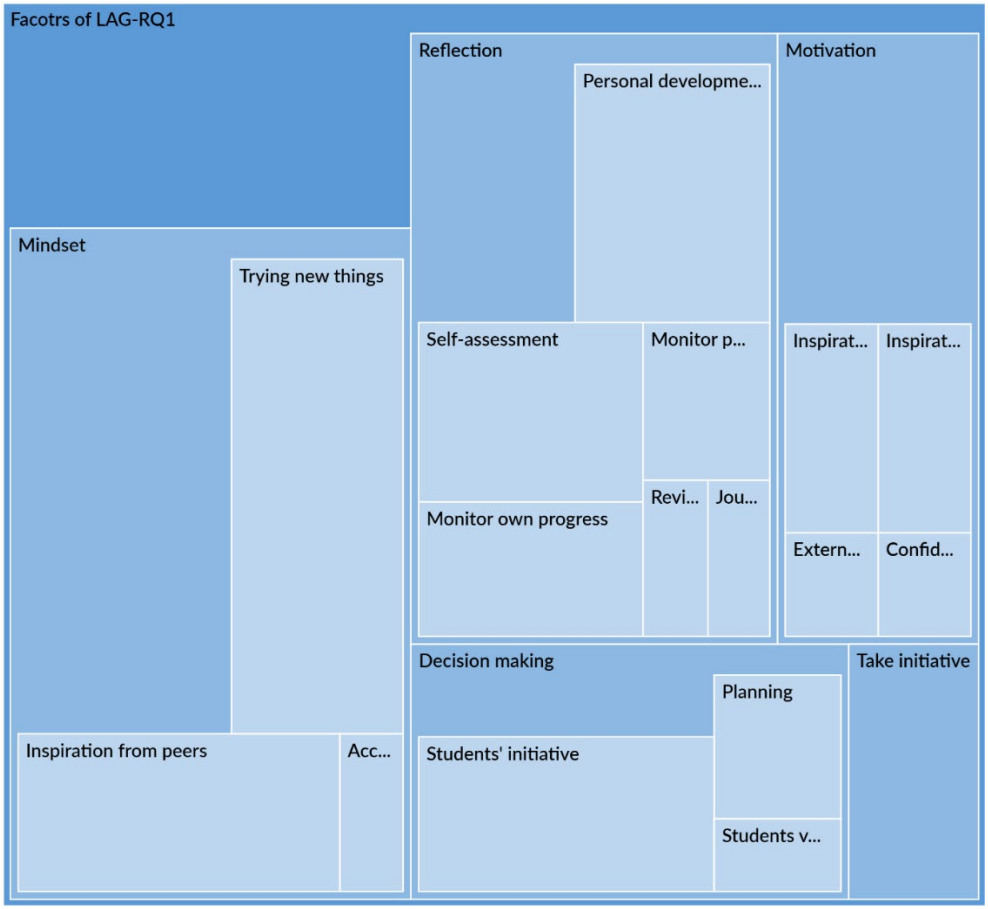
	Not familiar with WeChat or online class	✓ Initial code	✓ Refined	✓ Stable	Platform-specific challenge
	Unstable internet	✓ Initial code	✓ Refined	✓ Stable	Infrastructure challenge
	Power disruption	✓ Initial code	✓ Refined	✓ Stable	Infrastructure challenge
	WeChat is a large file	✓ Initial code	✓ Refined	✓ Stable	Technical constraint
	Anxiety in speaking	✓ Initial code	✓ Refined	✓ Stable	Psychological barrier
	Shyness to communicate	✓ Initial code	✓ Refined	✓ Stable	Social barrier
	Expensive internet package	✓ Initial code	✓ Refined	✓ Stable	Economic barrier
	Time management difficulties	-	✓ Added	✓ Refined	Scheduling challenge
	Lack of immediate feedback	-	✓ Added	✓ Refined	Pedagogical challenge
Reflection	Self-reflection	✓ Initial code	✓ Refined	✓ Stable	Core metacognitive practice
	Monitor own progress	✓ Initial code	✓ Refined	✓ Stable	Self-assessment behaviour
	Personal development	✓ Initial code	✓ Refined	✓ Stable	Holistic growth

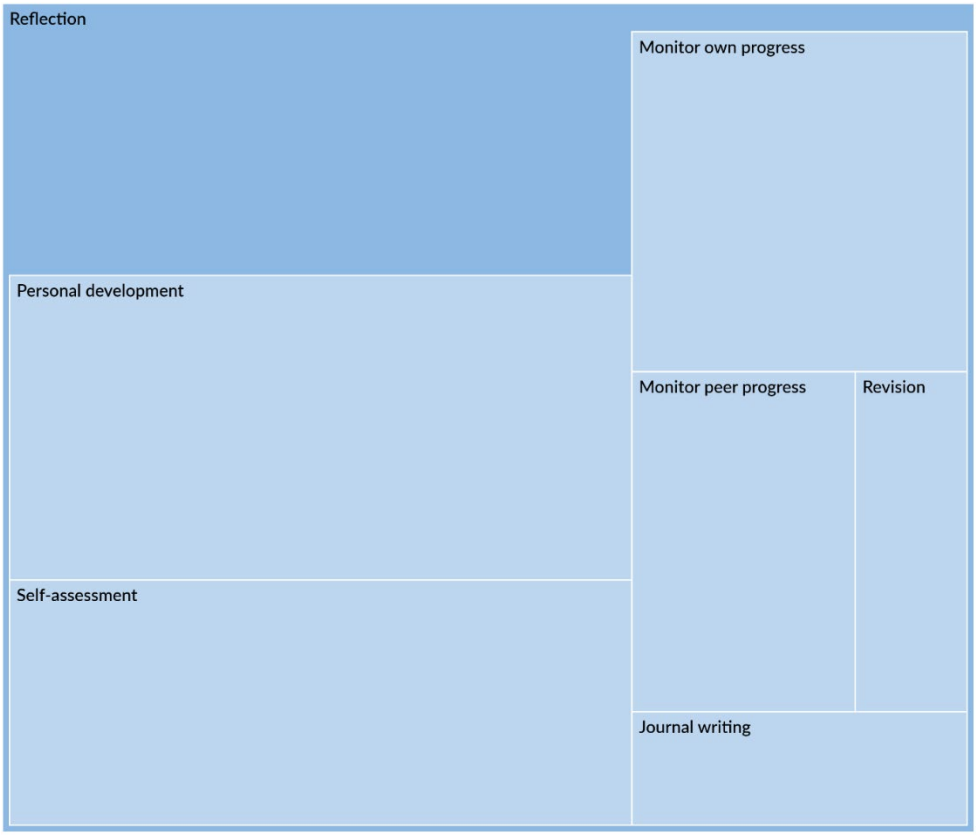
	Self-assessment	✓ Initial code	✓ Refined	✓ Stable	Evaluative practice
	Compare with peers	✓ Initial code	✓ Refined	✓ Stable	Social comparison
	Monitor peer progress	✓ Initial code	✓ Refined	✓ Stable	Peer observation
	Journal writing	✓ Initial code	✓ Refined	✓ Stable	Reflective practice
	Course reflection	✓ Initial code	✓ Refined	✓ Stable	Educational evaluation
	Suggest ideas with teacher	✓ Initial code	✓ Refined	✓ Stable	Collaborative improvement
	Suggest ideas with peers	✓ Initial code	✓ Refined	✓ Stable	Peer collaboration
	Goal setting and revision	-	✓ Added	✓ Refined	Strategic planning
	Critical thinking about learning strategies	-	✓ Added	✓ Refined	Skills development

Appendix D2. Hierarchy of codes (generated from NVivo)

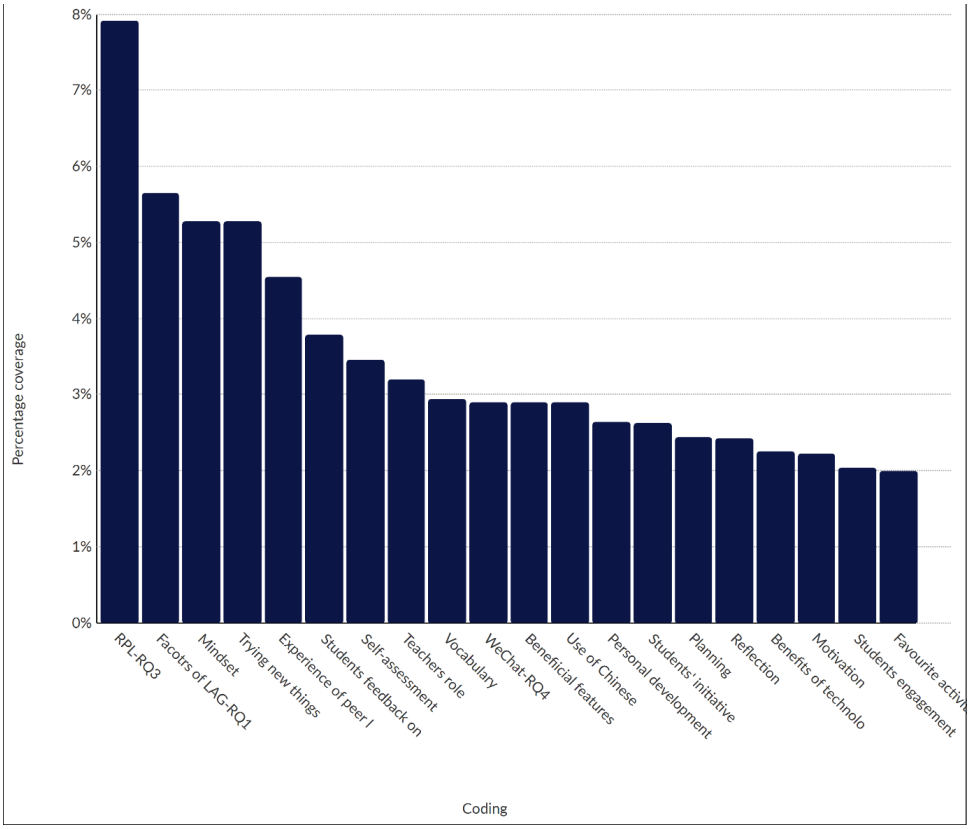


Appendix


Facotrs of LAG-RQ1
Reflection
Personal developme...
Motivation
Mindset
Trying new things
Self-assessment
Monitor p...
Inspirat...
Inspirat...
Revi...
Jou...
Monitor own progress
Extern...
Confid...
Decision making
Take initiative
Planning
Inspiration from peers
Acc...
Students' initiative
Students v...


Reflection
Monitor own progress
Personal development
Monitor peer progress
Revision
Self-assessment
Journal writing

Appendix


8%
7%
6%
5%
4%
3%
2%
1%
0%
Percentage coverage
RPL-RQ3
Facotrs of LAG-RQ1
Mindset
Trying new things
Experience of peer l
Students feedback on
Self-assessment
Teacher's role
Vocabulary
WeChat-RQ4
Beneficial features
Use of Chinese
Personal development
Students' initiative
Planning
Reflection
Benefits of technolo
Motivation
Students engagement
Favourite activi
Coding

Appendix D3. Examples of main theme and sub-codes development

Main Theme: Mutual Support

Sub-code	Description	Example Indicators
Support as peer teacher	Learners taking on teaching roles to help classmates understand concepts	Explaining concepts, demonstrating skills, leading study sessions
Support as peer learner	Learners actively engaging as recipients of peer assistance	Accepting help, following peer guidance, learning from classmates
Support as individual - asking questions	Learners seeking help and clarification from peers	Posting questions, requesting assistance, seeking clarification
Response to peers' questions	Learners providing answers and assistance to classmates' queries	Answering questions, offering solutions, providing explanations
Emotional support and encouragement	Learners offering psychological and motivational support to peers	Providing reassurance, celebrating achievements, offering comfort during difficulties
Resource and knowledge sharing	Learners exchanging materials, information, and expertise	Sharing notes, links, study materials, personal experiences, and insights
Collaborative problem-solving	Learners working together to tackle academic challenges	Group discussions, joint project work, collective brainstorming
Providing feedback	Learners offering helpful critiques and suggestions for improvement	Peer review, commenting on work, suggesting improvements
Technical assistance and guidance	Learners helping peers with digital tools and platform navigation	Troubleshooting tech issues, explaining software features, sharing digital skills

Appendix

Main Theme: Linguistic Growth

Sub-code	Description	Example Indicators
Vocabulary	Development and use of Chinese vocabulary in various contexts	Learning new words, using varied vocabulary, asking about word meanings, expanding lexical range
Grammar	Understanding and application of Chinese grammatical structures	Correct sentence formation, grammar corrections, learning grammar rules, structural improvements
Post in Chinese	Creating written content in Chinese on social media platforms	Writing status updates, creating posts, sharing thoughts in Chinese text
Sticker in Chinese	Using Chinese-language stickers, emojis, and visual elements	Selecting Chinese stickers, using character-based emojis, visual communication in Chinese
Write in Chinese	General Chinese writing activities across different contexts	Composing messages, writing assignments, note-taking, journaling in Chinese
Voice message in Chinese	Oral communication through recorded audio messages	Recording voice notes, speaking practice, pronunciation attempts, oral expression
Reading comprehension in Chinese	Understanding and engaging with Chinese written content	Reading posts, comments, articles; comprehension demonstrations, discussion of texts
Character recognition and formation	Learning to identify and write Chinese characters	Character practice, stroke order, character variations, handwriting development
Tone and pronunciation practice	Working on Chinese tonal patterns and speech sounds	Tone corrections, pronunciation practice, accent improvement, phonetic awareness

Code-switching and translanguaging	Mixing Chinese with other languages in communication	Bilingual posts, translation attempts, language mixing patterns, cross-linguistic references
Cultural and contextual language use	Using Chinese in culturally appropriate contexts	Formal/informal registers, cultural expressions, context-sensitive language choices
Other linguistic features	Additional aspects of Chinese language development not captured above	Idiomatic expressions, slang usage, regional variations, creative language use

Appendix E

Appendix E1. HSK-3 course details

Module: HSK-3

Lesson starts date: 27/03/2022

Lesson ends date: 10/06/2022

Venue: Classroom/ ZOOM, and google classroom (for materials, assignments and instructions)

Class schedule: Sunday- Tuesday- Thursday (10-12, BD time)

Quiz: Mini review exam after completing each five lessons (i.e., 1-5, 6-10, 11-15, 16-20)

Midterm: After completing twelve lessons

Final exam: Date will be announced in advance

Recommended textbook: HSK-3 standard course & HSK-3 standard course Workbook

Appendix

*Other materials will be made available on Google Classroom.

Course descriptions

This course will cover the vocabulary and grammatical constructs to communicate specific and complex ideas in Chinese language. It will introduce HSK-3 exam structure, and the teacher will work through several past exam papers with students. This programme will help learners to take more responsibilities and control over their learning process and promote out-of-class learning. At the end of the course, along with HSK-3 knowledge, students will also learn to use technology for developing Chinese language skills.

Programme outline

Note: This programme is provisional and subject to modify during the semester.

Time	Serial	Learning objectives	Topic	Grammar points
Week-1	Lesson 1	i) Learn vocabulary and grammar of this lesson ii) Listen to the audio files iii) Participate in class activities iv) Open WeChat group	**周末你有什么打算** **课文（Texts）** 1. 谈周末的打算 2. 在家 3. 聊游泳设计 4. 准备去旅游	1. 已经....了 2. V+好 3. 一....也/都+不/没.... 4. use of 那
Week-1	Lesson 2	i) Learn vocabulary and grammar of this lesson	**他什么时候回来** **课文(Texts)**	1. V+来/去 2. Use of 给

		ii) Listen to the audio files iii) Participate in class activities	1. 下山的路上 2. 在打电话 3. 在楼门口送朋友 4. 在家	3. 能...吗?
Week-2	Lesson 3	i) Learn vocabulary and ii) Complete this week's lesson iii) listen to the audio files iv) Participate in class activities v) Make group activities	**桌子上放着很多饮料** **课文(Texts)** 1. 在小丽家 2. 在商场 3. 在水果店 4. 在休息室	1. 还是 vs 或者 （or） 2. Use of 着 (1) 3. Use of ...的时候 4. Use of 会
Week-2	Lesson 4	I) Learn vocabulary and Complete this week's lesson ii) Listen to the audio files iii)Participate in class activities iv) Make group activities	**他总是笑着跟别人说话** **课文（Texts）** 1. 在教室 2. 在教室 3. 在超市门口 4. 在饭馆	1. Use of 是.....的 2. 又+adj1+又+adj2 3. Use of 对

Appendix

Week-2	Lesson 5	i) Learn vocabulary and Complete this week's lesson ii) Listen to the audio files iii)Participate in class activities iv) Make group activities	**我最近越来越胖了** **课文（Texts）** 1. 在小丽家 2. 在打电话 3. 在小刚家 3. 在小刚家	1. Use of 了 2. Use of 越来越 3. Use of 要 4. Use of 可以
	Lecture Review-1			
	Quiz -1			
Week-3	Lesson 6	i) Learn vocabulary and Complete this week's lesson ii) Listen to the audio files iii)Participate in class activities iv) Make group activities v) Start to maintain reflective journal	**怎么突然找不到了** **课文（Texts）** 1. 在客厅 2. 在打电话 3. 在休息室 4. 在客厅	1. V+不 2. Use of 还 3. Use of 呢 4. 刚 vs 刚才

Appendix

Week-3	Lesson 7	i) Learn vocabulary and Complete this week's lesson ii) Listen to the audio files iii)Participate in class activities iv) Make group activities v) Start to write reflective journal	我跟她都认识五年了 课文（**Texts**） 1. 在办公室 2. 在休息室 3. 在休息室 4. 在公司门口	1. Expressing time in Chinese 2. Sub+V+了+duration+obj 3. Sub+V+了+duration+obj+了 4. 对...感兴趣 & 对.....有感兴趣 5. 以前-现在-以后
Week-3	Lesson 8	i) Learn vocabulary and Complete this week's lesson ii) Listen to the audio files iii)Participate in class activities iv) Make group activities v) Start to write reflective journal	你去哪儿我就去哪儿 课文（**Texts**） 1. 在休息室 2. 在学校 3. 在咖啡厅 4. 在周明家	1. 又 vs 在 2.Use of Interrogative Pronouns 3. Use of 一会儿
Week-4	Lesson 9	i) Learn vocabulary and Complete this week's lesson	她的汉语说得跟中国人一样好	1. 越 A 越 B 2. A 跟 B 一样

		ii) Listen to the audio files iii)Participate in class activities iv) Make group activities v) Guide students to reflect on their journal	**课文（Texts）** 1. 在教室 2. 在蛋糕店 3. 在山上 4. 在小明家	3. Review: 的/得/地 4. Review: V+一下 5. Use of 从（从 A 到 B ）
Week-4	Lesson 10	i) Learn vocabulary and Complete this week's lesson ii) Listen to the audio files iii)Participate in class activities iv) Make group activities v) Reflects on students' reflective journal	**数学比历史难多了** **课文（Texts）** 1. 在教室 2. 在教室 3. 在休息室 4. 在看房子	1. Use of 比 2.Expression of approximate numbers 3. Use of 那么
Week-4	**Lecture review -2**			
Week-5	Quiz-2			
Week-5	Lesson 11	i) Learn vocabulary and Complete this week's	**别忘了把空调关了** **课文（Texts）**	1. Use of 把 （1） 2. Use of 左右

		lesson ii) Listen to the audio files iii)Participate in class activities iv) Make group activities v) Reflects on students' reflective journal	1. 在教室 2. 在会议室 3. 在客厅 4. Monologue	3. 去年-今年-明年
Week-5	Lesson 12	i) Learn vocabulary and Complete this week's lesson ii) Listen to the audio files iii)Participate in class activities iv) Make group activities v) Reflects on students' reflective journal	**把重要的东西放在我这儿吧** **课文（Texts）** 1. 在家 2. 在家 3. 在机场 4. Monologue	1. 就 vs 才 2. Use of 把 (2) 3. 每..都... 4. Review: 为什么？因为.. 5. Review: 因为...所以...
Week-5	Midterm Examination			
Week-6	Lesson 13	i) Learn vocabulary and Complete this week's lesson ii) Listen to the audio	**我是走回来的** **课文（Texts）**	1. V+ 来 2 V+ 去

		files iii)Participate in class activities iv) Make group activities v) Reflects on students' reflective journal	1. 在家 2. 在家 3. 在打电话 4. Monologue	3. 一边....一边.... 4. 经常 vs 常常
Week-6	Lesson 14	i) Learn vocabulary and Complete this week's lesson ii) Listen to the audio files iii)Participate in class activities iv) Make group activities v) Reflects on students' reflective journal	**你把水果拿过来** **课文（Texts）** 1. 在家 2. 在打电话 3. 在小明家 4. Monologue	1. Use of 先..在/又...然后 2. Use of 像
Week-6	Lesson 15	i) Learn vocabulary and Complete this week's lesson ii) Listen to the audio files iii)Participate in class activities	**其他都没什么问题** **课文（Texts）** 1. 在办公室 2. 在教室 3. 在休息室 4. Monologue	1. 除了..以外, ..都/还/也.. 2. 一点儿也/都 3. Use of 极了

		iv) Make group activities v) Reflects on students' reflective journal		
Week-6	**Lecture review-3**			
Week-7	Quiz-3			
Week-7	Lesson 16	i) Learn vocabulary and Complete this week's lesson ii) Listen to the audio files iii)Participate in class activities iv) Make group activities v) Reflects on students' reflective journal	**我现在累得下了班就想睡觉** **课文（Texts）** 1. 在公司 2. 在同事家 3. 在公司 4. Monologue	1. 如果....就... 2. 得 to describe a certain state 3. Use of AA 的
Week-7	Lesson 17	i) Learn vocabulary and Complete this week's lesson ii) Listen to the audio files	谁都有办法看好你的病 **课文（Texts）** 1. 在公司 2. 在公司	1. Use of 谁/什么/怎么/哪儿 2.应该 vs 必须 3. 方法 vs 办法 4. Use of 为了

		iii)Participate in class activities iv) Make group activities v) Reflects on students' reflective journal	3. 在家 4. Monologue	
Week-7	Lesson 18	i) Learn vocabulary and Complete this week's lesson ii) Listen to the audio files iii)Participate in class activities iv) Make group activities v) Reflects on students' reflective journal	我相信他们会同意的 **课文（Texts）** 1. 在打电话 2. 在商店 3. 在公司 4. Monologue	1. Use of 向 2. 只要…就…. 3. Use of 关于 4. 不但…而且…
Week-8	Lesson 19	i) Learn vocabulary and Complete this week's lesson ii) Listen to the audio files iii)Participate in class activities iv) Make group activities	你没看出来吗 **课文（Texts）** 1. 在打电话 2. 在看照片 3. 在小丽家 4. Monologue	1. Use of 更 2. Use of V + 起来 3. Comparison of 使，叫，让

		v) Reflects on students' reflective journal		
Week-8	Lesson 20	i) Learn vocabulary and Complete this week's lesson ii) Listen to the audio files iii)Participate in class activities iv) Make group activities v) Reflects on students' reflective journal	我被他影响力 **课文（Texts）** 1. 在休息室 2. 在教室 3. 在饭馆 4. Monologue	1. Use of 被 2. 只有...才.... 3. 虽然...但是...
Week-9	**Lecture review- 4**			
Week-9	Review HSK-3 question paper			
Week-10	Review HSK-3 question paper			
	Final Examination			

Appendix

Student roles

In addition to learning new vocabulary and grammar points in each lesson, students also require to:

- Participate in group discussion in class
- Participate in breakout session (ZOOM class)
- Present their own ideas
- Prepare learning activities
- Participate in group interaction in WeChat.

Intended learning outcomes

Knowledge and Understanding

Having successfully completed this course, the students will be able to:

- Learn more than 300 new words and review previous words from HSK1 & HSK2 through texts
- Write Chinese characters (Hanzi)
- Understand complex grammatical structures and sentence pattern
- Reproduce texts based on their own experience
- Get the benefits of out-of-class learning
- Get the benefits of peer interaction in class and out-of-class.

Subject specific intellectual and research Skills

Having successfully completed this module the students will be able to:

- Write short comprehension
- Organise and present information

- Come up with ideas and learning activities
- Articulate daily life conversations
- Familiar with HSK-3 test requirements and clear understanding about each type of questions.

Transferable and Generic Skills

Having successfully completed this module the students will be able to:

- Receive the benefits of peer-learning and independent learning.
- Improve interaction with teacher and peers
- Get the chance to practise Chinese outside-of-class
- Learn to use WeChat and google classroom to practise Chinese

Practical Skills

Having successfully completed this module the students will be able to:

- Grasp HSK-3's required vocabulary and grammar
- Apply classroom lessons in real-life context
- Understand basic Chinese etiquette and customs related to the course content (culture);
- Have a clear reflection on own learning;
- Experience technology assisted learning facilities;
- Receive benefits of out-of-class Chinese language learning.

Evaluations

- Attendance: 5%

- Continuous assessments (Assignments, Home works, Quiz, Learning activities) 15%
- Mid-term exam (TBA): 20%
- Final exam (TBA): 60%

Course policies

- The use of recording devices during lectures is forbidden.
- It is the student's responsibility to be aware of assignment due dates and exam dates.
- It is recommended to use email or WeChat to contact the course teacher. The course teacher may take up to 24 hours (excluding weekends and holidays) to answer student emails.

Consultation time

It is recommended to book time slot in advance for individual consultation.

Time: Tuesday 4-5pm

Contact

If you have any queries, please contact:

Aishowarza Manik

aishowarza.manik@gmail.com or aishowarza.manik2@mail.dcu.ie

Signature  Date 18.03.2022

Appendix E2. Sample of class lecture's slide



热身

A.    

E.    

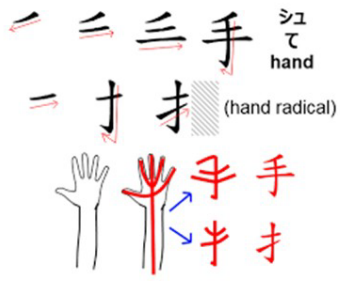
1.打算…… 2. 面条……. 3. 周末…… 4. 面包 …….

5. 复习…… 6. 着急……. 7.旅游…… 8.游戏……...

打算 dǎsuàn

Heat with hand　　Calculate

common expression: 算了吧(Suànle ba)



已经....了 to express "already" in Chinese. yijing...le

S+已经 + [Verb Phrase] + 了 (most common structure)

- 他们 已经 走 了。
- 妈妈 已经 回来 了。
- 作业已经做完了。

已经 + (很 +) Adj. + 了

- 爸爸 妈妈 已经 老 了。
- 这件衣服已经 很 便宜 了。

已经 + Time + 了

- 我 学习 中文 已经 一 年 了 。
- 爷爷 已经 八十五 岁 了 。
- 已经晚上 11点 了，爸爸 还 没 回来 。

Role play

今晚你有什么打算?

- 做什么?

（看书/ 看电影/看足球比赛/ 看板球比赛/ 听音乐/见朋友/搬家….

- 在哪儿 （place）

A:我今晚打算 在家

Appendix E3. Sample of Hanzi writing sheet




字帖工厂-练字本
lí
离
离
gōng
公
公
sī
司
司
yuǎn
远
远
gōng
公
公
gòng
共
本字帖归生成者所有，严禁转发分享
第2页
定制您的专属字帖，请访问字帖工厂
http://zitiegongchang.cn

字帖工厂-练字本



本字帖归生成者所有，严禁转发分享

定制您的专属字帖，请访问字帖工厂
http://zitiegongchang.cn

Appendix E4. Sample of mini exam for students' review

Sample Mini-Exam

第 4 次小考（HSK3 从第 15 课到第 18 课）

姓名：_____ 成绩：_____

3.写汉字子(15x1=15)

1.tí gāo_____2.yāoqiú_____3.zhùyì

4.shuǐpíng_____5.màozi_____6.tóufa

7.bízi_____8.shuāyá_____9.línjū

10.bìxū_____11.àihào_____12.zuǐ

13.dòngwù_____14.qíguài_____15.zhǒng

1.选词填空（10X2=20）

一共 机会 请假 段 相信 不但-而且 同意 关于 有名 国家

1. 考试以前这一_____时间过的很快

2. 这家公司_____ 很有名_____工作环境好。

3. 这次_____很重要。

4. 我_____自己努力就能成功。

5. 在中国长城是一个很_____地方。

6. 我很喜欢他，但是我爸爸不_____我和他结婚。

7. 我最近看了一些_____中国文化的电影。

8. 你是从哪个_____来的？。

9. 老师，我不舒服，我想跟你_____。

10.这两条裤子_____多少钱？

2.阅读部分（10X2=20）

1.手机使我们的学习工作越来越方便，除了打电.、写短信外，很多手机还可照相，有时候。

★ 手机经常：

A 写字　B 写短信　C 做练习

1. “再见”是一个很有意思的词语。“再见”表示“再一次见面”，所以人们离开时说“再见”，其实也是希望以后再见面。

★ “再见”出现在什么时候 ：

A 见面　　B 关灯　　C 离开

2. 我是一个中学老师，教学生画画儿。每次下课前，我会把下次学生要带的东西写在黑板上，但每次上课时，总会有学生忘了拿铅笔。

★ 学生会忘记拿什么？

A 画儿　　B 铅笔　C 手表

3. 每次经过他家门口的时候，我几乎都能看到他的那只老猫在树下睡觉。

★ 那只猫经常在哪儿睡觉？

A 椅子上　　B 周子下　C 树下

4. 奶奶经常对我说：“吃饭七分饱。”“七分”就是 70%的意思。很多中国人认为“吃饭七分饱”对身体健康很有帮助。 。

★ “吃饭七分饱”是为了：

A 帮助别人　　B 健康　　C 帮助奶奶

5. 这里的香蕉非常有名，每年 8 月这里会举行一个香蕉节，所以，夏季有很多人来这里。

★ 这个地方：

A 没有意思　　B 有很多故事　　C 很有名

6. 除了小红其他人都来了。老师说比赛马上就开始了，小红怎么还没来？刚才她给打电话说了在路上呢。今天的比赛我们一定能拿第。

★ 根据这段，小红：

A 不想参加　　B 马上到　　C 事故了

8.现在用电脑上网真方便。除了看新闻，人们还可以在网上听歌，看电影，玩儿游戏，买东西。我上个星期从晚上买了两件衬衫，一条裤子。真便宜还有打折。

★ 根据这段，可以知道他买了：

A 一件衬衫　　B 一条裤子　　C 一条裙子

9.我的牙还很疼，昨天去医院检查几次了。但是没有什么用。医生每次告诉我回家好好刷牙。

★ 根据这段，可以知道他买了：

A 很头疼　　B 很牙疼　　C 很脚疼

10.　　我的好朋友小明马上结婚。我很想参加他的婚礼但是我怕不能请假。最近在公司每个同事都加班，真的没办法了.

★ 根据这段，可以知道“他”：

A 不想参加　　B 马上结婚　　C 不能请假

4.句子重新排列 (3X10=30)

1. 看着我 奇怪 都 地 大家

2.有机会 只要 别的国家 我就去 旅游

3.书 关于 一本 我想买 动物 的

4.时候 打电话 我 给 什么 你 可以 帮

5.什么 妹妹 不想 都 妹妹 现在 喝

6.天气 玩儿 就 明天 我们 好 去 公园

7.甜 水果点 的 甜 的 西瓜

8.历史 除了 文化 我 还 喜欢 以外

9.除了 爬山 旅游 我 愿意 也

10.什么 有 好看 电影院 电影 的 吗

5.写句子（7X2=14）

1.S+V1+着+V2

2.如果.....就.....

3.除了.....以外，都.....

4.只要.....就.....

5.为了+purpose，S+.....

6.A+跟+B+请假

7.不但.....而且.....