

Analysing the Teachers' Resistance Behaviour in Integrating Foreign Language Teaching Reforms in Chinese Colleges and Universities

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ABSTRACT

The research delves into the perceptions, attitudes, and resistance of teachers toward foreign language reform at the higher education levels in China, emphasising the internal and external factors responsible for the resistance. The research further indicates that multilingual proficiency is becoming increasingly prevalent because of global demands as well as China's socio-political aspirations, including initiatives like the Belt and Road Initiative. The research uses qualitative methodology with semi-structured interviews with five teachers through snowball sampling. The data, thematically analysed in NVivo, reveals four major categories: perceptions and attitudes toward reforms; perceived limitations of existing efforts; internal resistance factors; and external barriers. The findings reveal scepticism regarding the relevance of reform, lack of training in practical skills, resource insufficiency, and weak collaboration as prime inhibitions. This highlights the interconnectedness of internal and external factors which underscore the need for realistic reform objectives, and strong leadership. The study suggests better planning, stakeholder collaboration, and clear communication of the benefits of reforms. Limitations are small sample size and lack of quantitative analysis leading to future research in students' perceptions and particular language needs for career development.

Keywords: Resistance behaviour, language training, resistance, foreign language.

INTRODUCTION

With globalisation, the need to learn foreign languages has become an important part of higher education curriculums for skill development and career development. The political and economic ambitions of the Chinese government have also increased the demand in the nation to learn foreign languages. For instance, in China, multilingualism has replaced monolingual English as a result of the Belt and Road Initiative (Shouren, 2024). German, French, and Spanish are all taught in senior high school, while Russian and Japanese are now part of the national curriculum for compulsory education (Shouren, 2024). Courses in second and third foreign languages are also offered by universities (Shouren, 2024). There have been changes made to the way foreign languages are taught in Chinese universities, particularly the way English is taught (Shouren, 2024). The quality of instruction has increased as a result of these reforms, which address curriculum development, teaching assessment, syllabus creation, and teaching techniques and strategies.

However, integrating foreign language reforms requires the major stakeholders for the successful execution of the reforms are the teachers. Chinese teachers often resist these changes due to their traditional teaching practices, which pose a major problem in adopting the new curricula and also the teacher training is not enough to support them to become comfortable teaching foreign languages (Lei & Medwell, 2022). Studies reveal that teachers often adhere to conventional teaching practices to avoid risks, especially when imposed policies conflict with their beliefs, prior knowledge, and experiences (Wang, 2022; Le et al., 2020; Muzira & Bondai, 2020). The Ministry of Education's (MOE) 2018 introduction of the revised General High School English Curriculum Standards (课程标准 or xin kebiao) emphasised developing students' core competencies—language competence, cultural awareness, thinking capacity, and learning capacity. However, the top-down, prescriptive nature of policy implementation has led to limited teacher agency as educators struggle to balance innovative reforms with the demands of exam-oriented systems and sociocultural contexts (Wang, 2022; Tao and Gao, 2021). Hence, considering these issues and the required demand

to integrate foreign language teaching reforms in colleges and universities, this study has focused on understanding the issues faced by the teachers and how they could be integrated into the reformation process.

To satisfy the demands of the global economy and prepare students for the future, Chinese colleges and universities must implement foreign language reform to guarantee that students are fluent in English and other languages. This study addresses a critical gap by analysing how Chinese English teachers' agency interacts with personal and contextual factors during the implementation of *xin kebiao*. Adopting an ecological perspective, the research examines how historical experiences, present conditions, and future aspirations influence teachers' responses to reform. The findings will provide valuable insights for policymakers and educators to foster teacher agency and improve reform outcomes in China's centralized education system.

- To explore the perceptions and attitudes of teachers regarding the proposed foreign language teaching reforms
- To investigate the internal factors impacting teacher resistance behaviour to foreign language teaching reforms in colleges and universities in China
- To understand the external factors that impact teachers' resistance to foreign language teaching reforms in colleges and universities in China

This research is essential for identifying the factors that hinder successful foreign language teaching reform in China's colleges and universities. Exploring teachers' perceptions and attitudes illuminates resistance behaviour—a critical void in educational reform literature. The internal factors of self-efficacy and professional competencies, intertwined with external factors such as institutional support and policy clarity, reflect multidimensional resistance. By such findings, policymakers and administrators could be properly informed on the designing of effective approaches targeting training and improving resource allocation toward minimising resistance for improved success in the implementation of reforms in foreign languages.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Foreign language teaching reforms refer to integrating policies and strategies to integrate foreign languages into the education system. In that context, Yu (2020) mentioned that the societal need for foreign language proficiency is growing, and more demanding standards have been proposed for these individuals. To satisfy societal demands, language instruction in colleges and universities must be modified. On the other hand, **teacher's resistance behaviour** is another important factor that is also associated with the current research. A study by Le et al. (2021) mentioned that teachers' resistance to education reforms occurs due to some complicated variables, such as the needs of the students, personal interest and passion, and teaching conditions. In the situation of foreign language reforms, the qualification, knowledge, language proficiency, and stress of teaching the language often cause resistant behaviour (Yu, 2019). The resistant behaviour among the teachers can result in poor educational outcomes and impact their morality towards the teaching profession (García-Martínez, 2021). Hence, understanding these factors is important to explore deeper insights into teachers' resistance towards foreign language reforms, specifically in higher educational institutes.

2.1 Perceptions and attitudes of teachers regarding the proposed foreign language teaching reforms

Teachers' perceptions and attitudes are key factors in the successful implementation of proposed foreign language teaching reforms. Teacher's receptiveness to such reforms is often dependent on whether they understand the goals of these reforms and how far they are by their philosophies of teaching. A positive attitude among the teachers is usually generated when they perceive these reforms as improving student outcomes which can be integrated into their current pedagogical practice (Gess-Newsome et al., 2019). On the other hand, scepticism may occur if reforms seem to be doubtful demanding or otherwise unrealistic to the classroom teacher experience and also poorly resourced and trained (Bullough, 2021; Park & Son, 2022). Research finds that teachers commonly tend to have feelings regarding the reforms and engage actively in participating in the reform design process. Teachers do not always seek or value the support they receive for their professional development. In contrast to more global, systematic, or operational requirements, their objectives for their professional learning needs are typically more influenced by their personal views on teaching and learning (Cooper et al. 2020). Hence, teachers' views about the objectives the reforms intend to unfold are influenced by how they perceive message clarity in telling the teachers about the objectives and what kind of professional development activities are made available before entering new methodologies. The workload, assessment-related entanglement, and institutional affiliation of teachers significantly

mean their attitudes towards reforms. Inadequate training, resources, and continuing support will make teachers view reforms as burdensome or impractical and may end in resistance to them. Therefore, creating a positive attitude towards reforms would mean an understanding of teacher concerns, promotion of inclusivity, and ensuring that the policy predictors mirror what is practically real.

2.2 Internal and external factors associated with teacher's behaviour in integrating foreign language

Figure 1 shows how both internal and external factors play an important role in shaping the outcomes of teaching. Internal factors such as skills, knowledge, and personality directly affect the behaviours of the teacher and consultant, impacting their quality of practice and fidelity (Ruble et al., 2015). Influenced by these characteristics, personal attributes play an important role in the effective implementation of strategies and interventions. On the other hand, external factors such as training and support systems are those internal elements cross-coupled with resources and guidance to improve adherence and consistency in practice (Ruble et al., 2015). This combination strengthens quality practice outcomes with its consequent benefit on the behaviour of the students. Hence, to gain better outcomes from students regarding foreign language reforms, understanding the internal and external factors impacting the behaviour of the teachers is important.

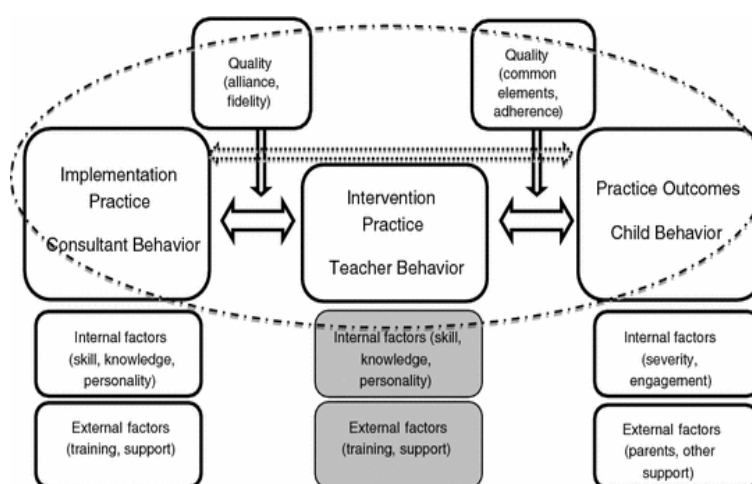


Figure 1: Internal and External Factors of Teachers

(Source: Ruble et al., 2015)

2.2.1 Internal Factors

The existing literary evidence has indicated that the resistance from teachers to foreign language reform is often caused by several issues which are typically associated with their experiences, skills, proficiency and other factors. These factors are showcased as internal factors which are solely associated with their personal aspects. Teacher-related issues have been extensively researched since teachers have a significant impact on students' psychological health and language learning success (Zhao & Yang, 2022). In that context, a study has mentioned that internal factors include prior learning and teaching experiences, attitudes, stress, and self-efficacy (Thao & Mai, 2022). These elements shape individual beliefs and responses to changes, significantly affecting their willingness to adopt new practices. Research indicates that teachers with positive experiences and strong self-efficacy are more likely to embrace reforms, whereas stress and negative attitudes often lead to resistance (Le et al. 2021). Participation in educational reforms and a sense of empowerment also play pivotal roles in shaping teacher attitudes toward change. The internal variables that affect teachers' behaviours in foreign language instruction would normally spring from the personal characteristics and professional skills of the teachers.

However, teachers' pedagogical beliefs and their attitudes toward language learning are also important in this aspect. It has been found although the technology tools utilised by English as foreign language teachers were comparable, they supported various teaching styles based on the pedagogical ideas of the teachers (Ding et al. 2019). Hence, teaching efficiency and practices can differ as per the expertise and confidence of the teachers towards teaching a foreign language. Teachers' motivation is a critical factor that can further influence their preparedness for the adoption of innovations (Huang & Zhou, 2019). Professional experience in foreign languages and teaching methodologies would also be maximally important.

2.2.2 External Factors

There are several external factors through which a teacher's behaviour is affected in integrating foreign language instructions and entails the ability of conducting and sustaining effective teaching behaviour. External factors, such as institutional policies, leadership support, professional communities, and student outcomes, complicate resistance behaviours (Thao & Mai, 2022). Previous studies suggest that inadequate leadership, time constraints, and conflicting educational policies hinder reform adoption (Gouédard et al., 2020). The professional environment, including interactions with colleagues and the perceived impact of reforms on student learning outcomes, also affects teachers' willingness to adapt. Institutional support, such as all institutional resources, including teaching materials, technological tools, and language labs, is necessary for aiding foreign language learning (Garg & Sharma, 2020; Gao & Zhang, 2020). Teacher training workshops on certain topics and mentoring by supervisors for their teachers' professional development have been found appropriate in providing new pedagogical methods to teachers (Walters et al., 2020; Fernandes et al., 2023). These aspects boost confidence and competence in the foreign language classroom.

The role of leadership and school culture is equally critical, as administrative encouragement and a supportive environment foster innovation and collaboration among teachers. Leadership enables collaboration with peers and engagement with professional networks providing teachers with avenues to exchange ideas, share challenges, and adopt best practices, further enhancing their teaching efficacy (Akinyemi et al., 2019; Pineda-Báez et al., 2020). External expectations, such as curricular requirements and policy mandates, also shape teachers' practices by influencing their instructional priorities.

2.3 Theoretical underpinning: Positioning Theory

Davies and Harré brought Positioning theory, which had a foundation in social constructivism and discursive psychology, to the social sciences (Bjerre, 2021). Since its beginning, the theory has been promoted as a foundation for investigating various facets of social life and has served as a theoretical framework for a large number of analyses of social discourse (Van Langenhove, 2016). According to recent studies, positioning theory offers a useful framework for examining the issue of agency in education. For instance, Kayi-Aydar (2015) employed positioning theory to investigate identity negotiation and agency among language pre-service teachers in the United States. It discovered that the participants' positional identities influenced their classroom practices and agency. Three concepts of sensemaking, agency, and ownership have been examined concerning teachers' attitudes towards educational innovations (Kayi-Aydar, 2015). They concluded that a high level of agency is associated with a high level of ownership; however, this was not as true for sense-making.

Even though positioning theory has not been applied extensively in empirical research yet, particularly in the area of language education, it has the potential to be a helpful instrument for examining the relationship between what is allowed and what is possible about the agentic choices and decisions made by teachers in their classroom practices (Le et al. 2021). Because of this, it serves as a theoretical framework for investigating teacher agency in putting teaching methods into practice as mandated by modifications to language policy in this particular setting.

2.4 Literature Gap

While existing literature addresses internal and external factors influencing teacher resistance, there is limited exploration of how these factors interplay specifically within the context of foreign language reforms in Chinese colleges and universities. Most studies focus on general resistance behaviours or other subject areas or country-basis like Vietnam which leaves a gap in understanding the unique challenges posed by foreign language reforms in China's higher education system.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study has adopted the primary qualitative method by using the semi-structured interview as a data collection tool to meet the research objectives of the study. Qualitative research is multimethod and takes a naturalistic, interpretative approach to its topic. Essentially, qualitative researchers investigate events in their natural environments, trying to understand or interpret them in terms of the meanings that individuals assign to them (Aspers & Corte, 2019). Moreover, a qualitative research technique, in-depth interviews are discussions in which participants converse, engage, and ask and receive questions. They follow a surprisingly familiar logic of human interaction (Knott et al., 2022). By this method, an intensive study has been done which assesses the perceptions,

attitudes, and resistance of teachers from this country towards reforms in foreign languages. This is complemented by semi-structured interviews which provide rich, multi-faceted insights into the internal and external factors shaping resistance, and contextual understanding that cannot be offered by quantitative devices. Hence, qualitative research with interviews as a data collection process has been justified for this study.

To practically implement the interview, the target population has been the teachers of the colleges and universities of China. Snowball sampling is one of the non-probability sampling techniques which require the initial participants to include or recruit others they know who fit the criteria for the study under consideration. Such an approach is generally meant for research that deals with specific or hard-to-reach populations (Kirchherr & Charles, 2019). Since the main method is referral followed by expansion of the sample, it tends to maximise possible diversity and relevance in its selection of participants (Kirchherr & Charles, 2019). Snowball sampling has been used to recruit participants by relying on referrals from initial respondents who meet the inclusion criteria, ensuring access to a diverse range of teachers with varying experiences and perspectives on foreign language reforms in Chinese colleges and universities. A total of 5 teachers have been interviewed for the data collection, which has been conducted over DingTalk applications and initially, a set of 5-7 interview questions has been designed, which has been updated based on interview circumstances [Refer to Appendix 1]. Thematic analysis is a qualitative data analysis technique that involves looking for, examining, and reporting recurring patterns within a data collection (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). Although it is a technique for characterising data, choosing codes and developing themes also require interpretation. Hence, the collected data has been analysed by Nvivo software through thematic coding and theme generation.

4. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Themes Formation and Thematic Map

After analysing the interview responses of 5 teachers for 5 interview questions in NVIVO software total of 4 themes have been identified. In Figure 2, the 4 themes can be found along with their child codes, which represent the underlying constructs found in the responses. In each theme around 5 to 6 sub-codes or contexts have been found.

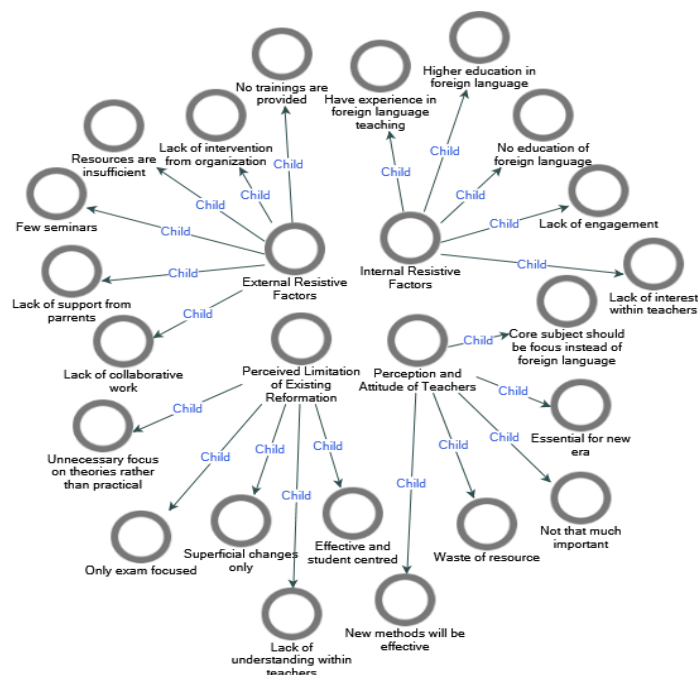


Figure 2: Map of Formulated Themes and Sub-codes from Interview Transcripts

Theme 1: Perception and Attitude of Teachers

This theme represents the perception and attitude of teachers of Chinese colleges and universities regarding the reformation of the foreign language teaching system. Figure 3 indicates that 5 major underlying perceptions and attitudes have been found in the responses.

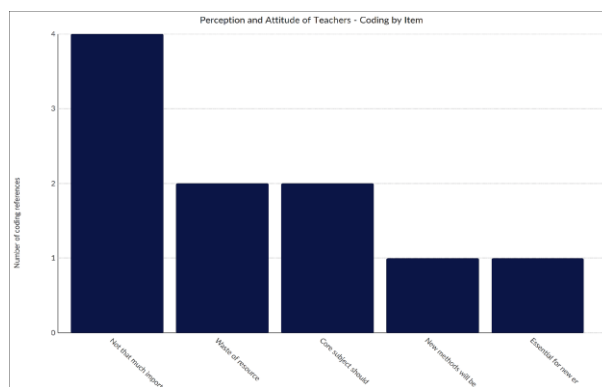


Figure 3: Code Frequency Analysis of Theme 1

Most respondents think that this new reformation of the foreign language teaching structure is not important. Respondent E mentioned that I do not see why foreign language teaching should undergo drastic reforms. Most institutions of higher education already incorporate language classes as elective and most students do so as a supplement to their major studies. Respondent C mentioned, *“I am not so sure it is absolutely necessary. For example, in order to be multilingual is a good thing, but in the majority of the students ordinary life or work opportunities do not require those skills”*. Respondents B and A supported this statement. Respondents also found these reformations as a waste of resources, where core subjects should be the focus of advancement and reformation. Respondent B more resources should be allocated for core subject teaching and learning methods *“as opposed to pouring in more resources into foreign language courses which only a few students will get the most out of”*. Only Respondent D thought that these reformations could be effective for students in this new era.

Theme 2: Perceived Limitation of Existing Reformation

Theme 2 represents the highlighted factors regarding the experienced limitations by the teachers regarding the new initiatives of reformations in foreign language learning systems in colleges and universities considering organizational and institutional changes.

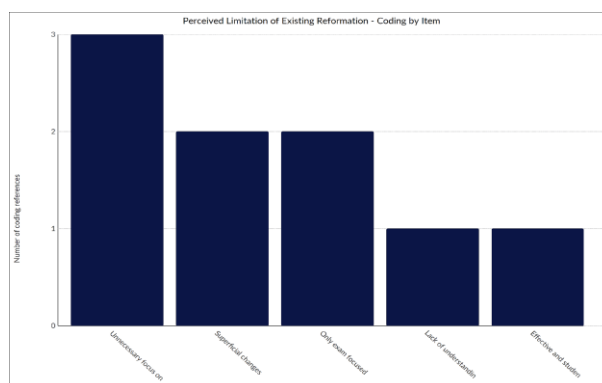


Figure 4: Code Frequency Analysis of Theme 2

The most highlighted factor as a limitation is the unnecessary focus on theory instead of practical skill. Respondent A mentioned that *“It appears hard to consider improvement but at this rate, the approach seems to focus more on a theoretical aspect rather than practical”*. Respondent highlighted that *“there is no point in enrolling in such fancy schemes if the alternative of really practical solution”*. It has been highlighted that the changes that have been done for the reformation of the foreign language teaching system are superficial and ineffective. Respondent B said that *“most of these changes appear to be superficial – introducing new syllabuses seem to be done without attention to such psychology and pedagogical aspects as teacher training or the provision of resources and facilities”*. It is supported that current changes are only exam focused rather than improving the learning method. Respondent A mentioned, *“The requirement for completing exams instead of concentrating on the programs is one of the greatest weaknesses”*. Only Respondent D said that the existing initiatives are effective and student-centred.

Theme 3: Internal Resistive Factors

The theme of internal resistive factors implies the intrinsic factors within the teachers that are causing the resistive force against the reformation of foreign language teaching methods in colleges and universities of China. As per the identified factors, education is found as a major internal resistive cause among teachers,

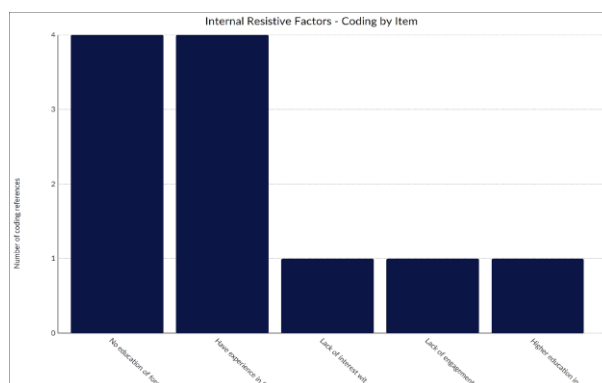


Figure 5: Code Frequency Analysis of Theme 3

Almost all respondents except Respondent A said that they do not have any formal education in a foreign language like English. Respondent C mentioned that he does not have any “*formal credentials in English or any other foreign language*”. Respondent A also highlighted “*I do not possess an official qualification or certificate in English or any other language for that matter*”. Respondent E mentioned, “*Some of my colleagues are more qualified in this area as they have diplomas or degrees in English*”. Respondent A supported this by stating that “*there are also workshops held now and then, but they are mostly not relevant, and one does not have the relevant resources to meet new requirements hence it is difficult*”. Apart from educational qualification, lack of interest and lack of engagement are found two other major internal resistive factors within teachers. Respondent A mentioned, “*Sadly, I do not have any interest or formal training to assist international language teaching or its change*”.

Theme 4: External Resistive Factors

Theme 4, external resistive factors indicates the external environmental factors and stakeholders of Chinese college and university level education that are causing resistive force or limitation in the process of reforming the foreign language learning and teaching systems.

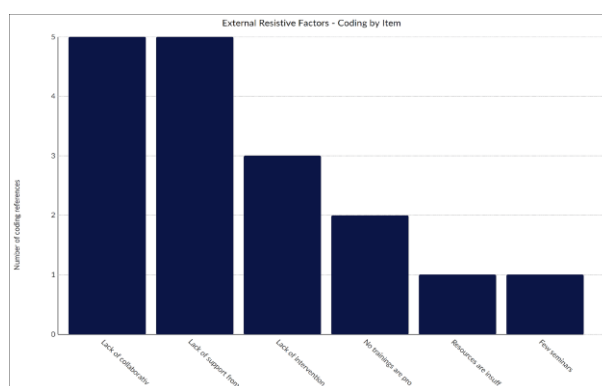


Figure 6: Code Frequency Analysis of Theme 4

The major external resistive factor is the lack of collaboration from other educators. Respondent C mentioned, “*Fellow educators are often sceptical and hesitant to adapt their methods*”, whereas “*the lack of a collective effort hinders the success of any meaningful change*”. Respondents, A, B and E also supported this fact. Lack of support from the parents of the students is another external resistive factor. Respondent B highlighted “*Parents rarely engage in discussions about these reforms, and fellow educators often view them as unnecessary or overly ambitious*”. Respondent E said, “*Most parents pay more attention to different areas of academic work and many of the other colleagues seem more preoccupied with the work they have rather than the possibility of reform*”. Lack of interventions is found from the educational organisations as well, where the teachers are not provided with

adequate training regarding the reformation of the foreign language education system. Respondent E mentioned, “*I have not had any particular course or incentive which would be focused on foreign language teaching*”. While highlighting the lack of resources Respondent E highlighted that very few guidelines are issued, but these are mostly insufficient.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 Perceptions and Attitudes of Teachers Regarding the Proposed Foreign Language Teaching Reforms

The findings of the present study have showcased that Chinese teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards foreign language reforms are focused on whether the reforms are needed or not. According to the teachers, the new language reforms would not be impactful as already foreign languages are incorporated in higher education courses as elected subjects or as supplement subjects. Therefore, as per their perceptions new reforms for foreign languages will be a waste of resources. Similar findings have been found in another study, where students mentioned that foreign language studies were a waste of time, and they are not necessary for their career development (Parrish, 2020). Moreover, the literature review has also shown that adopting foreign language reforms became difficult due to a lack of resources (Garg & Sharma, 2020; Gao & Zhang, 2020). Along with that, the findings of the present study also highlighted that the teachers were more concerned that reformation and resource allocations should be conducted for core subjects. It showcased that students and teachers would like to provide more focus on the core subjects, and more resource allocations, rather than foreign language reformation. Hence, the perception and attitude towards foreign language reforms depend on the need for that language for career development and the outcome of the teaching practices. If a foreign language is not necessary for better teaching and professional outcomes, time and other resources are not required to be invested in it. However, only one respondent mentioned that foreign language reformation can be effective for students in the new era. In that context, a study by Gao & Zheng (2019) noted that the need for foreign language integration of English and languages other than English (LOTEs) in higher education is important, specifically for China due to changing socio-political situations. For instance, as part of the "Belt and Road" plan, each university in a province in Mainland China has been asked to provide one major LOTE program, such as Turkish or Russian (Gao & Zheng, 2019). Hence, to become a part of development projects in China, higher education students need a better understanding of necessary foreign languages. This discussion mainly showed that teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards forming language reformation are majority associated with the need to learn the language with the presence of proper resources.

5.2 Internal Factors Impact Teacher Resistance to Foreign Language Teaching Reforms in Colleges and Universities in China

The findings of the present study have shown that the teachers did not possess any formal credentials in any foreign languages. Moreover, foreign language teaching also impacts their confidence levels as other colleagues have more qualifications in foreign languages. Simultaneously, the literary findings have also shown that self-efficacy, qualification, and experiences are some of the internal factors that impact teachers' resistance towards foreign language reforms (Le et al. 2021; Thao & Mai, 2022). Other studies have also mentioned that an important hindrance that cuts against successful execution of language education policies is lack of confidence and resistance on the part of teachers to foreign language reforms. Much of this low confidence can be attributed to a lack of professional training, a poor support system or exposure to new ideas in approach to teaching (Bai & Yuan, 2019). All these inhibit the new ideas from entering the practice. Hence, the internal factors are also associated with the external factors for support and proper administrative execution of the reformation process. The literary evidence has also mentioned that external elements that are cross-coupled with resources and guidance to increase adherence and consistency in practice include training and support systems (Ruble et al., 2015). This combination improves the results of excellent practice, which in turn improves student behaviour. Resistance also arises because change threatens the existing paradigm of teaching, with attendant increases in workload, or has the propensity to conflict with individual beliefs regarding pedagogical practice. Such challenges weaken the success of reforms and pose an obstacle to student learning in terms of improving foreign language competency. Such issues must be treated with targeted in-service and inclusive policy design.

5.3 External Factors Impact Teachers' Resistance to Foreign Language Teaching Reforms in Colleges and Universities in China

The interview findings have suggested that there is a lack of collaboration within the educators which led to a sceptical and hesitant attitude among them. Additionally, parents of the students are also rarely engaged in foreign language reforms, as it is unnecessary for them. The findings from the literature review also showed that leadership and school culture play equally important roles because supportive environments and administrative encouragement allow teachers to be creative and work together. Collaboration with peers and participation in professional networks is made possible by leadership, giving educators opportunities to share challenges, adopt best practices, and exchange ideas, all of which increase their effectiveness as teachers (Akinyemi et al., 2019; Pineda-Báez et al., 2020). Hence, lack of leadership is a major issue which is causing a lack of collaboration among educators and also clearly states the need for foreign language reforms to the parents for the career development of their children. Proper leadership can enable collaboration and consistency in the foreign language reform process.

On the other hand, a study in Kyrgyzstan has showcased the English language educational change which occurred majorly due to poor planning in changing curricula and lacked proper support and resources for planned capacity building for teaching English (Kazakbaeva, 2023). The literary findings have also mentioned that resources, such as teaching materials, technological tools, and language labs, and organisational support, such as leadership, collaboration, and others are necessary external factors which are required for the teachers to become comfortable and adaptable to the reforms (Garg & Sharma, 2020; Gao & Zhang, 2020; Gouédard et al., 2020). Hence, with the intention to make reforms in foreign language integration, educational institutions also need to consider developing a proper plan with the necessary support and resources to execute the changing plan to be successful. Otherwise, without external support, successful foreign language reformation is difficult to accomplish. Hence, these discussions show that the perception, and attitude of the teachers are interconnected with the internal and external factors associated with the phenomenon. Majorly teachers are concerned about the need for foreign language reforms if they have no significant impact on career development. On the other hand, limited resources, time, support, lack of leadership, and collaboration lead to a lack of self-efficacy and lack of confidence among educators.

6. CONCLUSION

The research examined teachers' perceptions and attitudes toward the reforms of foreign language teaching in Chinese colleges and universities, alongside internal and external reasons that define such attitudes. The study discovered that the perceptions of teachers towards reforms were mainly determined by the necessity and practicality of such reforms. Most teachers viewed the reforms as irrelevant to career development and as misdirected funds that should have been allocated to core subjects; hence, they did not see the relevance of the reforms. This scepticism emphasises the need for reforms to be based on realistic objectives and their measurable impact.

Among other pertinent observations made by the literature review is the fact that internal factors like self-efficacy, qualifications, and experiences are significant in shaping attitudes towards change concerning teachers. Inadequate formal qualifications or restricted exposure to foreign languages are other influences on teachers' resistance to change, usually perceived as a lack of confidence and professional readiness. External factors such as institutional policies, leadership, and collaborative contexts are, indeed, influential factors in teacher predisposition toward adopting new practices. The absence of these supportive structures is an intensifier of resistance and a barrier to successful implementation.

The investigative method employed semi-structured interviews with teachers analyzed through thematic code using the NVivo software. This finding affirmed literary insights as manifests in scepticism about reform relevance, the limited scope of ongoing initiatives, and, of course, the interaction of internal and external resistive factors. According to respondents, practical training, limited resources, and inadequate collaboration are the critical impediments to meeting the objectives of the reform initiative.

In summary, this study concludes that successful foreign language reforms in Chinese higher education should be designed to address both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Cost-effective resources, contextual relevance, strong leadership, and appropriate initiation of professional development must be made to ensure well-funded reform. Then their environment will be made inclusive and supportive so that resistance is minimised, allowing educators freely to implement their foreign language teaching strategies consistent with those demands posed by the economy.

6.1 Theoretical implications

The most significant theoretical implications of this research stem from using the Positioning Theory to investigate teachers' resistance to foreign language reforms. This study extends the concept into analysing how teacher positional identities and agency act as mediators for the adoption of educational innovation. Internalities such as self-efficacy and professional competencies as well as external ones such as institutional support and leadership conditions determine a teacher's attitude and response to a reform. This research situated the resistance variable within the theoretical lens emphasising the need for reform policies to engage the practical realities of teachers and create supportive environments hence a better understanding of teacher agency in making sense of and transforming educational policy changes into practice.

6.2 Practical implications

The practical implications of the research are significant in terms of the consideration of proper planning and execution process for making the process of foreign language reforms. The issues are associated with a major lack of proper systematic execution of the reform and making the associated stakeholders adapt to the changing process. These stakeholders are the teachers, students, and the parents of the students. Most importantly, developing a proposal is necessary which can explain the practical needs of foreign language reform by addressing all these stakeholders. The proper explanation of the needs and benefits of the foreign language reforms will help the educational institutions to collaborate in the process and reduce scepticism of the process.

6.3 Limitation and Future Study

One of the major limitations of the study is the lack of quantitative research. Quantitative research helps to study a large amount of sample from a population. This could have provided a wider objective insight related to the topic. Moreover, the study has mainly focused on overall foreign language reform-related issues. However, as the teachers' attitudes towards language reforms are associated with the need and actual implications of the foreign language, the study lacks highlighting for which language teachers have positive attitudes toward reforms, and they think that language is important to be focused for career development. In terms of future studies, more studies can be conducted on the perception and attitude of the students of the higher education sector in China. The attitude and capabilities of teachers to teach a foreign language, also impact the learning process of the students. Hence, understanding students' perceptions and attitudes towards foreign language reformation in their courses and their thoughts on the significance of foreign language reforms.

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APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How much formal educational qualification do you have in any foreign language such as English?
2. What is your perception and opinion about the reformation of foreign language teaching in colleges and universities?
3. If you are against this reform then, what are the major limitations of the reformation procedure?
4. Have you received any training, motivation, or facilitation supporting foreign language teaching or its reformation?
5. How much support you are receiving from parents, your fellow educators and others against this reformation?