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Investigating the Construction of Multilingual Identity: The Case of Pakistani Learners of Chinese Language in Lahore

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Abstract

This research aims to inquire how a multilingual learner in Lahore redefines identity while learning the Chinese Language. Despite the growing interest in learning the Chinese language due to economic benefits, limited research has aimed to identify the impact of learning Chinese on the identity of the participants. To achieve the aim, a qualitative research design was employed. The focus group interviews were conducted with purposefully selected 2 focus groups having 3 males and 3 females, participants of the Chinese language learning course. Thematic analysis was done to identify an in-depth understanding of underlying common patterns. With use of various learning strategies inside the classes, the findings indicate a significant relation of the construction between the local and target culture. Nonetheless, another distinct view resurfaced is how learning Chinese, a language of commerce and power, can instil a sense of superiority in the identity. Future studies may greatly benefit from planning further research with Pakistani immigrants learning the Chinese Language in China.

Keywords: Language Learning Practices, Chinese Language, Third Place, Intercultural Identity, Pakistani Learners.

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Introduction

It is ideally known that our identity is built and influenced by the society and culture we are part of (Bourne et al., 2025). However, we often forget that language is an integral part of the culture, which becomes a main source of not just communicating cultures among the variety of societies residing on the Earth, rather language also brings an influence on one's identity. This notion gives rise to the idea that with each additional language learned by an individual, a new hybrid identity will be born. The aforementioned idea has become vital to present research being conducted in multilingualism. The huge economic factors that are being brought about due to the Pak-China friendship have pushed our young generation to learn the Chinese language. The studies conducted before on the Chinese learners have mainly endeavoured to uncover the challenges they encounter, the benefits they avail, and the reasons that made them acquire the language, yet not much light has been shed on exploring how they organize and reorganize their identity while sitting in a language learning classroom resulting into a hybrid identity.

Multilinguals often find it hard to confine themselves to one identity due to a prejudice that exists about identity, claiming it to be a statistic; however, it is a dynamic process that keeps on evolving with time. Schwartz, Luyckx and Vignoles (2011) argued that identifying oneself, knowing who you are, is central for personal development and mental health. Hence, this paper aims to support the argument by trying to study how Pakistani multilinguals develop a hybrid identity when learning the Chinese language in a classroom, helping them acknowledge their refined identity. Alongside, this study can contribute to the awareness of Pakistani multilingual citizens by providing a rationale that being multilingual is about developing multiple identities, instead of being only about learning an additional language, resulting in making them feel connected and respectful towards multiple cultures.

Literature Review

Humans are known to have a significant identity through the language that they speak, and thus, ideally suggesting that language has been the source that plays a vital role in shaping or contributing in constructing an individual language speaker's identity (Beqiri, 2025). Over the period of time, multilingualism, the daily use of more than one language (de Bot, 2019) has become the trend. In addition, language and identity refers to the idea of sharing certain traits that help define a person who he is (Stets & Serpe, 2013) have become the most discussed concerns in the research of multilingualism (Norton & De Costa, 2018). Multiple studies in multilingualism have endeavoured to explore multilingual identity's impact. The paper aims to investigate the idea of how a multilingual learner adds a new identity in the context of Chinese language learners in Lahore.

The theories that have argued and supported the notion that identity is not statistics, but rather a constantly dynamic process that also alters when a new language is introduced to a language learner are "**Third Space**" by Homi K. Bhabha, 2004, and "**Third Place**" by Claire Kramsch, 1993 (Benzehaf, 2021). Initially, this concept of thirdness was surfaced by Lev Vygotsky (1986) in his **theory of socioculturalism** (Levy, 2008). Vygotsky (1986) theory discusses how change in identity is the byproduct of cultural interaction. With other perspectives, one major view that entails the language is not only that source which enables one to communicate, in addition it is that component which creates an individual's pattern of meaning making and ways of thinking (Vygotsky, 1986). Chen (2025) used the theory in his research work to explore using the yopurposive sampling method, discussing how the pre-school children from Taiwan, in their child play, learn and discover about different cultures when interacting using different languages or

speeches. The variant languages being used at the time of children's play are not only introducing ones to the new words but are also introducing them to the new cultural practices as well.

The Third Space Theory, built by Homi K. Bhabha in 1994, as stated, advances the idea of Claire Kramsch by introducing the notion of “in-between place”; elaborating that when 2 or more cultures interact in a space, it instigates another place called “third space”. In simple terms it is the mixing of places where a person constructs a hybrid identity, resulting in finding himself a sense of belonging (Bhabha, 2012). Alongside this contribution to culture and identity, Bhabha (2012) highlighted and emphasized that our identity is not static; instead, it is very dynamic, naturally. For this reason, we can presume that with the interaction of a new language, one is not only adding the lexicon items to their vocabulary, however is also learning about the culture and constructing a hybrid identity along the way. This theory has been employed in various studies, such as Weerasuriya (2024) used this framework in her theoretical/conceptual analysis work to establish the claim that there is a need to understand how youth who grow up in an environment where there is a use of more than one language see themselves in “in-between” place rather than one place, supporting the idea to bring language in focus while studying “place attachment” in youth. Concluding that the users of multiple languages living in one space build an identity of not a single culture but a hybrid one that also improves their sense of belonging.

The Third Place Theory, introduced by Claire Kramsch (1993) a similar term to third space had a slightly different focus. It concentrates on the intercultural space which comes into existence where foreign language learning takes place, for example classroom. Kramsch (1993) states signifies the language learning space where a learner's identity becomes more fluid as it contemplates while organizing and reorganizes while trying to blend in. Moreover, it posits that the new identity is neither fully of the native one nor of the targeted language one. Li and Girvan (2004) used this framework to explore how multicultural learners confer their new identity in an ESL classroom. Using the qualitative method, observations and interviews, the researchers concluded that in a hybrid cultural space, the learners' identities are neither entirely native nor fully of the targeted language. Similarly, Mehmedbegović and Bak (2021) explored how the discourse in the use of society becomes a way of reconstructing identity. In another study MacIntyre & McGillivray (2023) pointed out that the experiences of struggling in language learning classes reflect the organizing and recognizing themselves when trying to adapt to these new cultures and identities. Gil (2016) established that Third place emerges where the culture is not considered merely a fact; it is when the viewpoints are discussed, compared, and shared among the language learners and instructors.

Empirical Review

Language is not just a way of communication but also a reflection of who you are (Ali & Akram, 2026). An individual learning a language finds himself in an ambiguous state where he dwells in negotiation between the identities, one that is already developed and the other that belongs to the community of the target language (Kramsch, 1993). Alongside, Pavlenko & Blackledge (2004) defined the context as the source of reconstructing identities. The identity negotiation emerges as a sense of in-betweenness in the context of language learning, forming a hybrid identity (Bhabha, 2012). An identity that is neither completely native nor fully of a target language. A study investigated the language classroom practices in vocational universities located in South Korea. Finding how acquiring language constructs a new identity. The emergence of identities is highly influenced by classroom participation and interaction alongside organizational requirements (Rabbidge, 2020). Likewise, Salmanova (2025) mentioned that language learning happens not

through the use of one single method but through a cluster of different methods and that identity construction depends upon the way language is being practiced and learned inside the boundaries of the classroom (Richards, 2021). Wang (2021) highlighted the fluidity of identity, contradicting the idea that identity is fixed and unchangeable. Besides, the paper highlights the role of classroom interactions and practices in shaping an individual learner's perception of self. Consequently, this piques interest in directing attention towards language learning strategies, thereby becoming central to the objective of the study.

In the present times, multilingualism has become a point of interest not just among the Pakistani public (Saleem et al., 2023) but also has captured the interest of researchers as well. Alongside this, the distinguished researchers have also endeavored to explore Pakistanis' multilingual identities to uncover the underlying factors. Likewise, Pakistani researchers have brought the different identity theories into use to explore different aspects of language and identity, mainly focusing on English as an additional language of multilingual speakers. Some of the recent studies, such as Capstick (2021), conducted a study on transnational multilingual families residing in Mirpur and the United Kingdom using Vygotsky's Theory of Sociocultural. The results of the study revealed that their aim behind using mixed language is not only to communicate but instead is to be able to encounter challenges and set well among different communities by building mixed cultural identities. In another study, the researchers observed the conflict of identity encountered by the multilingual students enrolled in an English Language Learning program. The conflict arises when they face ambiguity in answering which culture to value, the one they belong to or the one they are being introduced to; however, the results highlighted that they do have to adopt the new culture,

As it is the demand of the current Pakistani educational and social system (Saeed, Zafar & Khan, 2023). Aqeel and Hussain (2023), with a focus on the writer of the local language, uncovered their identity challenges, which their study illustrated are in threat due to Urdu and English being the language of power and dominance. Pathan et al. (2024) employed Bonny Norton's theory to conduct a qualitative study to find a relationship between language and identity among the ESL students and instructors in Pakistan. The results demonstrated the intended desire to identify as modernized and well-educated by using code mixing of two languages (Urdu and English), thus depicting the relationship between language and identity.

With English language influence, the economic benefits Pakistan is receiving from China have made people divert their attention towards learning Chinese (Hanif, 2023). Chinese is considered as a prestigious language in Pakistan and in the world (Xu, 2023). This trend is advancing among the youth and the Higher Education institutes of Pakistan, as seen in them declaring learning Chinese as mandatory (Khan et al., 2022). Previously, studies were conducted to figure out the challenges that Chinese language learners come across while learning it as a foreign language (Aftab & Abbasi, 2024). To strengthen the connection with China, Pakistan is focusing on improving the language learning environment; Iftikhar and Li (2024) conducted semi-structured interviews to uncover the motivation and need for resources that are required to make Chinese language learning more accessible and easier. Hanif (2023), while centering on economic benefits driven from the "One Belt One Road" project, portrayed the interest of people towards learning the Chinese language as it can provide a promising future for Urdu-Chinese interpreters.

The previously found studies have established multiple methods and have followed different identity theories to unveil the notion of language being the source of redefining the learners' identity. However, relatively less studies have been found that aim to discover the idea of

interculture or hybrid identity that learners build when they sit in a language learning classroom, especially in the context of Chinese language learners residing in Pakistan. The studies pointed out that the learning practices and learners' strategies being utilized inside the class (action and behaviors (Sharmeen, 2025)) remain integral in the construction of identity (Russell et al, 2024).

Prior studies conducted under the same context have rather explored more economic factors with less focus on the change of identity. Alongside, the study becomes significant as the previous literature has suggested that a focus on the classroom learning practices is essential in the identity formation procedure. Therefore, the study question and objective dwell on how learning strategies used by Pakistani Chinese learners contributed to the development of the intercultural place (third place) and how they foster an impression on their cultural identity. Especially in Pakistan universities context, where Chinese is being learnt as a foreign language course in a semester system, which turns the learning mode more exam-oriented (Yasmin et al., 2023), and rote learning somehow becomes preferable over any other language learning methods (Khattak et al., 2022). Thus, this study aims to investigate how Chinese language learners compare (organize and reorganize) their national identity with the new identity, while sitting in the Chinese Language learning classroom with the lenses of Kramch's Third Place theory, and how, after this comparison, they construct a hybrid identity using the framework of Bhabha's Third Space.

Research Question

- How do strategies of learning used by Pakistani Chinese learners influence the cultural identity of the male and female learners at the sampled institute?

Research Methodology

The study aims to explore and investigate how language acquirers in Pakistan reconstruct their identities with the learning of a new language, the Chinese language. This study follows interpretivism paradigms to investigate the learners' development of identity while learning a foreign language. For this qualitative research design, the tool employed to collect data was structured interviews. The fixed and pre-determined questions were asked by the participants to gather their insight. The data was analyzed with the help of thematic analysis.

Starting off by selecting the population, 2 focus group interviews were conducted with purposefully selected participants, having 3 males and 3 females learning the Chinese language and enrolled in the HSK (Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi) level-1. In this non-random sampling method, 12 participants were carefully selected based on the mentioned criteria from sampled University offering Chinese Language courses, located in Lahore, Pakistan. The data were analyzed using Nvivo.

Findings

The qualitative findings addressed the influence of the learning strategies used by Pakistani male and female learners in Chinese language classrooms at the sampled institute. Five major themes emerged from the thematic analysis: (1) Learning Strategies in the Chinese Language Classroom, (2) Chinese Classroom Learning Experiences, (3) Cross-Cultural Understanding and Awareness, (4) Identity Development through Language Learning, and (5) Hybrid and Multilingual Identity Formation. The identified themes and sub-themes are presented in Graph 4.1.

Graph 6.1: The identified themes and sub-themes



6.1- Learning Strategies in the Chinese Language Classroom

The findings indicated that Chinese language learners used several learning strategies to comprehend and use the target language in the classroom. Participants emphasized practicing vocabulary, repeating culturally embedded phrases, relying on teachers' guidance, and engaging in classroom interaction because Chinese was unfamiliar to them. Learners also translated Urdu or English into Chinese and used code-mixing to facilitate communication. Three sub-themes emerged: Teacher-Based Learning, Translation and Code-Mixing, and Classroom Interaction Practice.

In Teacher Based Learning, the teacher is seen as the centre of learning activity as described by the participants. For the students to gain some understanding of the vocabulary, sentence structures, and Chinese tones, they depended on the teachers' pronunciation, explanation, repetition, imitation and taking notes. *"To try to understand the phrases and imitate the tones the teacher shares, I write them down in my notebook and then try to speak in the same pattern with other students"* (Group A, Participant 2).

Participants were found to be using Urdu and English language naturally in learning Chinese in the sub-theme of "Translation and Code-Mixing". Some sentences were translated mentally before speaking; some learners mixed languages when they didn't remember Chinese words. The use of these multilingual practices helped to improve understanding and minimise communication barriers. Peer learning was highlighted in the third sub-theme Classroom Interaction Practice. Vocabulary and sentence structure were practiced with pair work, oral activities and classroom discussions, this facilitated the development of confidence and vocabulary retention. *"Mostly, we practice Chinese with our fellows and practise Chinese words orally with each other"* (Group A, Participant 5).

6.2- Chinese Classroom Learning Experiences

The results indicated that the Chinese classroom was demanding and disciplinary for the participants. Three sub-themes were identified: Fear and Hesitation, Exam-oriented learning, Discipline and concentration. In Fear and Hesitation, students expressed anxiety about the possibility of changing tones changing the meaning of the word; they were less confident in speaking Chinese. One participant said, “One word has different tones, if the tone changes, the meaning changes too. This makes me less confident in speaking Chinese” (Group A, Participant 1). The results of the Exam-Oriented Learning sub-theme showed that the students' primary understanding of Chinese learning was to prepare for the HSK exam. Vocabulary, phrases, and sentence structures were included in daily learning activities, which were memorized. “The words and phrases we learn in class are mainly for the HSK exam” (Group A, Participant 6) was one learner's explanation. The sub-theme Discipline and Concentration proved that the participants considered the classroom in China to be more organised and focused than the classroom in the traditional way. The learning process of Chinese was also a constant focus on peer practice, pronunciation, tones and sentence structure, which promoted discipline and concentration.

6.3 - Cross-Cultural Understanding and Awareness

The results showed that learning Chinese had a positive impact on participants' understanding of Chinese culture and prompted them to make cross-cultural comparisons with Pakistani culture. Three subthemes arose: Similarity across Cultures, Difference across Cultures and Interest in Chinese Culture. Participants acknowledged that there were similarities that existed between the Chinese and the local culture, including respect for elders, family values, and polite communication, which decreased the cultural distance and increased understanding of the Chinese culture. Respecting the elders is important in both cultures which made me feel “familiar with Chinese culture” (Group B Participant 5). They also noted the variations in greetings, methods of communication and behaviour of the participants in both countries, Chinese people being formal and reserved in their greetings as compared to Pakistani people. In addition, learning Chinese also sparked an interest in Chinese traditions, festivals, food, dramas, and daily life. In Chinese language learning, learners expressed that he became interested in learning more about Chinese culture and tradition, while learning Chinese: “From learning Chinese, I became interested in learning more about Chinese culture and tradition” (Group B, Participant 2).

6.4 - Identity Development through Language Learning

The results showed that Chinese learning had a positive impact on the confidence, self-perception and personal development of the participants. Three sub-themes have been obtained: Sense of Pride and Confidence, Personal Development, and Limited Identity Change. Participants reported that it was a great achievement to learn another language and they felt good about it. “Speaking another language among friends, this is something to be proud of and they will be surprised” (Participant 4, Group B). Participants also linked the learning of Chinese with increased discipline and responsibility. “Chinese learning has made me feel more disciplined and serious about learning and work” said one learner (Group A, Participant 4). Other participants, however, felt that the change in identity was not that great as Chinese was not widely spoken outside the classroom. One participant commented, “No major change as we only use Chinese in class and not daily” (Group A, Participant 5).

6.5 - Hybrid and Multilingual Identity Formation

The results also showed that the Chinese language learning process helped in the establishment of hybrid and multilingual identities. Three sub-themes that developed were Mixing of Languages, Negotiating New Identity, and Shared Learning Space. During classroom communication, participants naturally integrated Urdu, English and Chinese to negotiate meaning and resolve difficulties with vocabulary. They also felt Chinese as an added identity to them, whilst retaining their Pakistani cultural identity. “The addition of another part of my identity along with my own culture and languages” (Group B, Participant 6) is how one participant explained learning Chinese. The classroom was also a learning space in which students helped each other learn, practicing together and repeating what they heard. “It’s a learning experience for everybody in the class, so it’s a collective learning process” (Group B, Participant 3).

In general, the results showed that the learning strategies used by Pakistani Chinese language learners were not just language learning strategies but they also facilitated cultural awareness, confidence, personal growth and the formation of multilingual identity. Teacher-based learning, translation, code-mixing, and classroom interaction supported learners' understanding of Chinese language and culture, while classroom experiences encouraged discipline and intercultural awareness. Although Chinese remained largely confined to the classroom and identity transformation was sometimes mentioned as partial, language learning promoted the development of hybrid multilingual identities while participants maintained their Pakistani cultural identity.

Discussion

The study under discussion aimed to investigate the construction of multilingual Identity in the Case of Pakistani Learners of the Chinese Language in Lahore. The findings of qualitative results revealed that the use of variant language learning practices in the Chinese classroom resulted in fostering the construction of a hybrid or new identity. Although some of the participants experienced only partial identity transformation and Chinese was still confined to the classroom, language learning still contributed to shaping the cultural awareness and hybrid identity of the learners.

From a social perspective, the classroom is more than a learning space; it is an environment where individuals develop socially and academically. Interactions between teachers and students, learning practices, and educational experiences shape learners' future aspirations and sense of self. As highlighted in previous research, classrooms are important sites where identities are negotiated, making learning practices and learners' strategies central to identity construction (Russell et al., 2024; Sharmeen, 2025). Qualitative analysis identified repetition, imitation, note-taking, understanding Chinese structures and tones, explanations of culturally embedded words and phrases, classroom interaction, Urdu translation, and code-mixing as key learning strategies. Learners also reported that Chinese classrooms were difficult and disciplined; they reported language learning problems with Chinese pronunciation, tone, and speaking confidence. These experiences contributed to their process of learning language and negotiating identity in a new sociocultural learning environment (MacIntyre & McGillivray, 2023). The very traditional examination focussed class was frequently using a number of learning strategies because students had the opportunity to repeat culturally-loaded words and discuss them with peers, which was also a strong focus. The results showed that the students often interspersed Urdu in their Chinese speaking and introduced what Kramsch (1993) calls a third language in the speech. The multilingual nature of this discourse was the result of negotiation and reconstruction of identities in the Chinese language classroom (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004). Like Capstick (2021), code

mixing was not only a communicative tool, but was also used to adjust to a new sociocultural space. The learners' experiences of the challenges of 'hesitation', 'fear' and 'discomfort' continued to demonstrate the ongoing process of negotiating identity as one gets used to a new language and culture (MacIntyre & McGillivray, 2023). Learners imitated, repeated, engaged in classroom interaction and communicated with one another to learn culturally appropriate vocabulary and language. They successfully identified the different expressions in context, such as Ni hao and Nin hao, and this finding confirmed that cultural awareness can be acquired in collaborative learning spaces, which is consistent with Gill's (2016) argument that a third place can be created in the spaces of collaboration.

People tend to associate themselves with the language that they speak (Ali & Akram, 2026). Besides, language is also used to separate oneself from other social groups. Consequently, there was a high degree of relationship between language and identity demonstrated. It would be misguided then to allow oneself to be convinced that, with the introduction of a new language into the interaction, a new identity is born. Qualitative results indicated that classroom interaction emerged as a key element of learners' language and culture development. Teacher-guided learning, imitation, peer discussion and oral practice helped learners to negotiate meaning, and to learn the language structures, tones and culturally embedded expressions of Chinese. Translation and code mixing were also used as features to facilitate the communication process, enabling learners to engage and participate actively regardless of language challenges. The interactive practices resulted in what Kramsch (1993) calls a third place, in which language learning was no longer simply about language acquisition, but also about negotiating identity. But also about negotiating identity. Furthermore, learners developed cross-cultural awareness by recognising similarities and differences between Pakistani and Chinese cultures, while the shared learning space encouraged confidence, discipline, and collaborative learning. Consistent with Bhabha (2012), participants developed hybrid identities by incorporating new cultural perspectives while maintaining their existing Pakistani cultural identity.

The findings reflected that in an exam-oriented language learning place, students engaged in various learning practices and strategies, fostering the development of a hybrid identity. This is in line with the findings of the earlier studies that suggest that classroom practices and policies contribute significantly in creating learners' identity. In Salmanova (2025) words, language learning is achieved in a bundle of various ways and identity construction relies on the way language is used and learned in the classroom (Richards, 2021). The findings showed that despite the drilling practice that is followed in the exam oriented classes in Pakistan (Farooqui, Ahmed & Azmat, 2024), the classes in this study practiced beyond just the drilling practice. The Chinese language classroom was thus a potential place where identities were shaped (Benzehaf 2021) and a third place (Kramsch, 1993) in which language, culture and hybrid identities converged and intersected. Nonetheless, duplicating the instructor's voice for correctness and translation of phrases reflects what Bhabha (2012) determines as the existence of inequality in cultural interaction. Referring to the instructor as an authoritative and powerful entity conveys standardization, determining the most prestigious and righteous articulation over other erroneous forms and illustrating inequality within the intercultural language learning classroom. However, this power relation is also reshaped in the third space (Bhabha, 2012), where students, while learning Chinese vocabulary, compared and blended Chinese tones with Urdu words, such as "Shenmue," meaning "what" in Chinese, with Urdu "shama," meaning "light." Chinese is considered as a prestigious language in Pakistan and in the world (Xu, 2023), therefore, Chinese language learning gives rise to the sense of prestige. From the results, it shows that the students

constantly discussed the similarities and differences between the two cultures, which led to their interest in the target culture and their perception of themselves. Students' self-social positioning and identity reformation were found to have developed with the acquisition of a globally recognized language, thereby students gained the pride and confidence in their learning (Richards, 2021). This supports Norton's (2013) perspective of language investment and increasing social identity, and cultural relatability, which is the process of language learning as an identity navigation (Norton & De Costa, 2018).

Another important point of identity hybridity that was emphasized was the use of mixed language and code switching, which Bhabha (2012) describes as language mixing in between spaces. This aligns with Weerasuriya's (2024) view of 'place attachment', where there is more than one language used and an identity is formed which is not part of a single culture. Moreover, frequent usage of mixed language helped learners fit in and between different cultural positioning as Capstick (2021) noted that as the learners turn to Chinese and Urdu, they create understanding and 'blended intercultural positioning'. While this shift in identity was reflected on the part of the participants, some did not experience it this way, and felt that Chinese would no longer be a part of their context once the class ended. This illustrates that identity evolves in some contexts, one might feel a different identity in the classroom when using the second language, but back home, one might be a different person. This indicates that identity transformation is a constant negotiation, because people want to keep their true identity. Furthermore, at this early level of language acquisition, identity can get mixed up with fluency and lead to a lack of acceptance of the identity. However, linguistic identity is not just about fluency but also about the ways in which individuals interpret their meaning, coordinate their communicative intentions and engage in interaction (Park, 2024).

Due to constraints on time and the online transition of institutes for a month at the time of the study, the data were obtained from a single private institution; the revealed findings may not be generalized. The research contextually focused on Pakistan only, which is already a multilingual society with rich provincial languages in use and has a special socio-economic relationship with China; therefore, the findings may not apply to all contexts.

The sample might have given better results if it had included not just level-1 but also Chinese language learners from various institutes and HSK levels. However, the tools used for collecting the data have offered an in-depth understanding, even with the limited sample size and population. Future studies can employ the same method to explore languages and the identity relation of Pakistani immigrants in China learning Chinese, where they are interacting with multiple nationalities in the same language learning classroom environment. The study may assist language teachers and institutes to understand that language identity is not just about language proficiency, and that it needs an emotionally rich, multi-linguistic approach to learning. Teachers should encourage the use of both home language and target language and should break away from the "memorizing grammar" approach to a more interactive and experiential approach. Finally, the study helps in understanding the changing scenario of the education system in Pakistan where the schools with the focus on STEM, IB and Reggio Emilia Schools are now focusing on interaction as well.

The results reported that Chinese learners identifying themselves as being prouder and more disciplined considerably increased their commitment to certain values that they have attained after exploring (Maehler & Hernández-Torrano, 2025) and negotiating between the cultures. Hence, the

results demonstrated that the use of various language strategies in the Chinese language has fostered an intercultural environment that becomes the right place of identity construction.

Conclusion

The study, in conclusion, shows that the process of Chinese language learning is much more than just about the language, it is about cultural involvement and identity negotiation. Classroom interaction, code-switching, cultural comparison and learning practices helped students negotiate between Pakistani and Chinese identities, thereby creating a third space for the development of hybrid identity in the classroom. Due to time limitation, the study was conducted within one institute and may not reflect other context. The results suggest that language should foster more than fluency and grammar. The focus should be on culturally relevant, interactive, and multi-language, multi-cultural practices that facilitate the development of multilingual and intercultural identity.

Conflict of Interest

The authors showed no conflict of interest.

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