

## **Learning Mandarin Chinese as a Foreign Language in a Bilingual Context: Adult Learners' Perceptions of the Use of L1 Maltese and L2 English in Mandarin Chinese Lessons in Malta**

**Authors :** Christiana Gauci-Sciberras

**Abstract :** The first language (L1) could be used in foreign language teaching and learning as a pedagogical tool to scaffold new knowledge in the target language (TL) upon linguistic knowledge that the learner already has. In a bilingual context, code-switching between the two languages usually occurs in classrooms. One of the reasons for code-switching is because both languages are used for scaffolding new knowledge. This research paper aims to find out why both the L1 (Maltese) and the L2 (English) are used in the classroom of Mandarin Chinese as a foreign language (CFL) in the bilingual context of Malta. This research paper also aims to find out the learners' perceptions of the use of a bilingual medium of instruction. Two research methods were used to collect qualitative data; semi-structured interviews with adult learners of Mandarin Chinese and lesson observations. These two research methods were used so that the data collected in the interviews would be triangulated with data collected in lesson observations. The L1 (Maltese) is the language of instruction mostly used. The teacher and the learners switch to the L2 (English) or to any other foreign language according to the need at a particular instance during the lesson.

**Keywords :** Chinese, bilingual, pedagogical purpose of L1 and L2, CFL acquisition

**Conference Title :** ICCLL 2020 : International Conference on Chinese Language and Linguistics

**Conference Location :** Paris, France

**Conference Dates :** August 27-28, 2020