

Developing the rationale for teaching local languages to young language learners:

*A case study of teaching and learning
Chinese language and culture (CLC)
in a Scottish primary school*

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Rationale for teaching local languages in primary schools

- **Inclusivity:** providing opportunities for all children to share and explore local languages and cultures
- **Transformational learning experiences:** enabling all children to see themselves as (emergent) bilinguals
- **Innovative pedagogies:** involving co-teaching and co-learning

Local languages are ...

- ...the languages in use among our friends, neighbours, close and extended families, including
 - languages with a long-standing presence in Scotland: Scots, Gaelic, British Sign Language and English (including associated varieties in each case)
 - languages which have more recently arrived in Scotland, as a consequence of migration: e.g. Polish, Urdu, Chinese, Yoruba, Arabic, Spanish (including associated varieties, plus sign languages, in each case)
 - languages used locally for business purposes (e.g. in shops, restaurants, tourism)
 - languages used locally for cultural purposes (e.g. in cultural centres, places of worship)
- ... all around us in spoken, signed and written form, and in the virtual spaces that we habitually use.
- ∴ Any of the world's 6000+ languages could be a significant local language in Scotland.

Local language encounters

- Opportunities for pupils to explore and share languages they encounter in their own classrooms, at school or in the community served by the school.
- Critical to success in transforming these encounters into learning opportunities
 - primary class teacher's work as a facilitator and consolidator,
 - commitment to and existing expertise in interdisciplinary learning in the Scottish primary curriculum
 - the introduction of 'L3' provision in the upper primary school



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6SDe6gIT3Ls>

- ... leading to integration of local language encounters into a planned programme of local language learning.

Scotland's 1+2 Policy: The L3 'Radical Space'

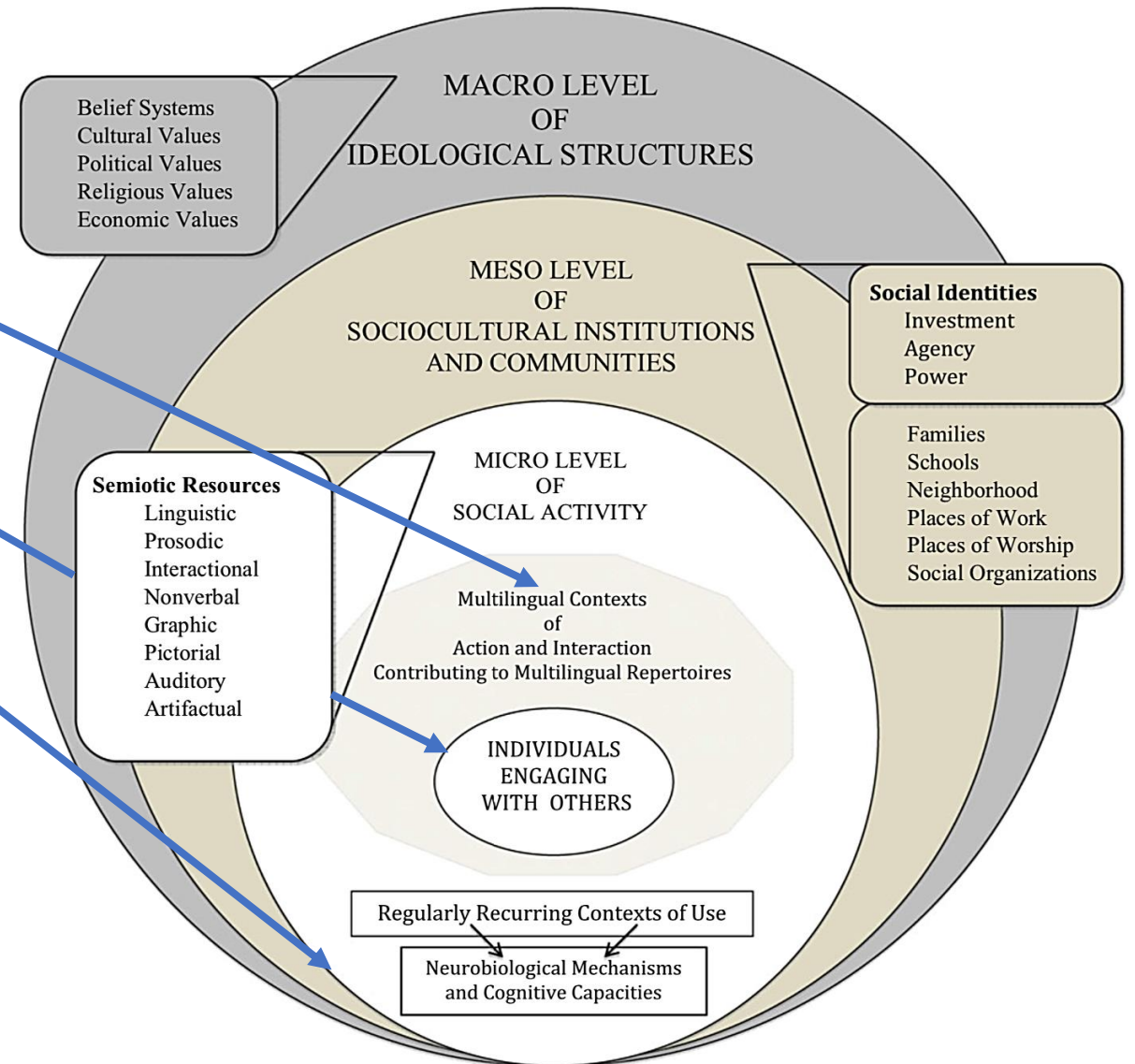


- 1+2 policy (Scottish Government, 2012) states that all primary pupils in Scotland are entitled to learn
 - one *additional* language (L2) starting in P1 (age 5)
 - another *additional* language (L3) starting from P5 (age 9)
- Focus of implementation to date has been on development of L2 provision
 - typically French, German or Spanish
 - from a very young age
 - ensuring continuity and progression throughout primary phase and into secondary phase
- Nature of L3 teaching is more open-ended
 - any language
 - less constrained by notions of continuity and progression
 - encouragement to use local resources
 - incipient debate about relationship between 'culture' and 'language'
 - strengthened argument for incorporation of language learning in interdisciplinary learning
- Has created a *radical space* in which to think differently about primary language learning

Douglas Fir Group's Framework

At the heart of this ecological model:

- multilingual contexts of action and interaction contributing to multilingual repertoire
- individuals engaging with others
- regular recurring context of use



What are the implications for primary language learning and teaching?

Decolonisation: an invitation to rethink language learning

Who do we want to talk to?

And how will we learn?

“With whom are we to speak in our new language(s)? And will this place limits on our normal ways of doing language pedagogy? If the answer to the first question means taking a look at communities around about us in cities and learning the languages of new arrivals, or refugees, or in remote areas learning the languages of indigenous peoples and marginalised travellers, or visitors passing through, then this will indeed limit our normal ways of doing language pedagogy. It will expand the portfolio of languages and mean our work needs to be co-taught and co-learned.”

(Phipps, 2019: 89-90)

Investigations of early L3 initiatives:

Our evaluations of L3 initiatives based on local language encounters showed them to be **engaging, relevant and effective**:

1. Learning the languages of friends and neighbours (Anderson, in preparation)
2. Pupils as teachers, in the context of the *Mother Tongue Other Tongue* competition (Pedley, 2018; 2021)
3. **Chinese language and culture (CLC) within an L3 space (Roxburgh, 2021)**

Research themes

- Pupils' classroom experiences of CLC (ages 9- 11)
- How Chinese culture is construed by Scottish and Chinese teachers delivering CLC
- The impact of CLC in shaping pupils' attitudes towards different cultures across Primaries 5- 7

Quantitative survey (SPSS: stage/ school/ gender/ longitudinal)

- 374 pupils (ages 9-12) in 5 primary schools across 3 local authorities

Qualitative focus groups (thematic analysis through NVivo)

- 18 Scottish teachers
- 11 Hanban teachers
- 3 Professional Development Officers at a Confucius Institute
- 140 pupils (groups of 10)

Some messages from the study (1)

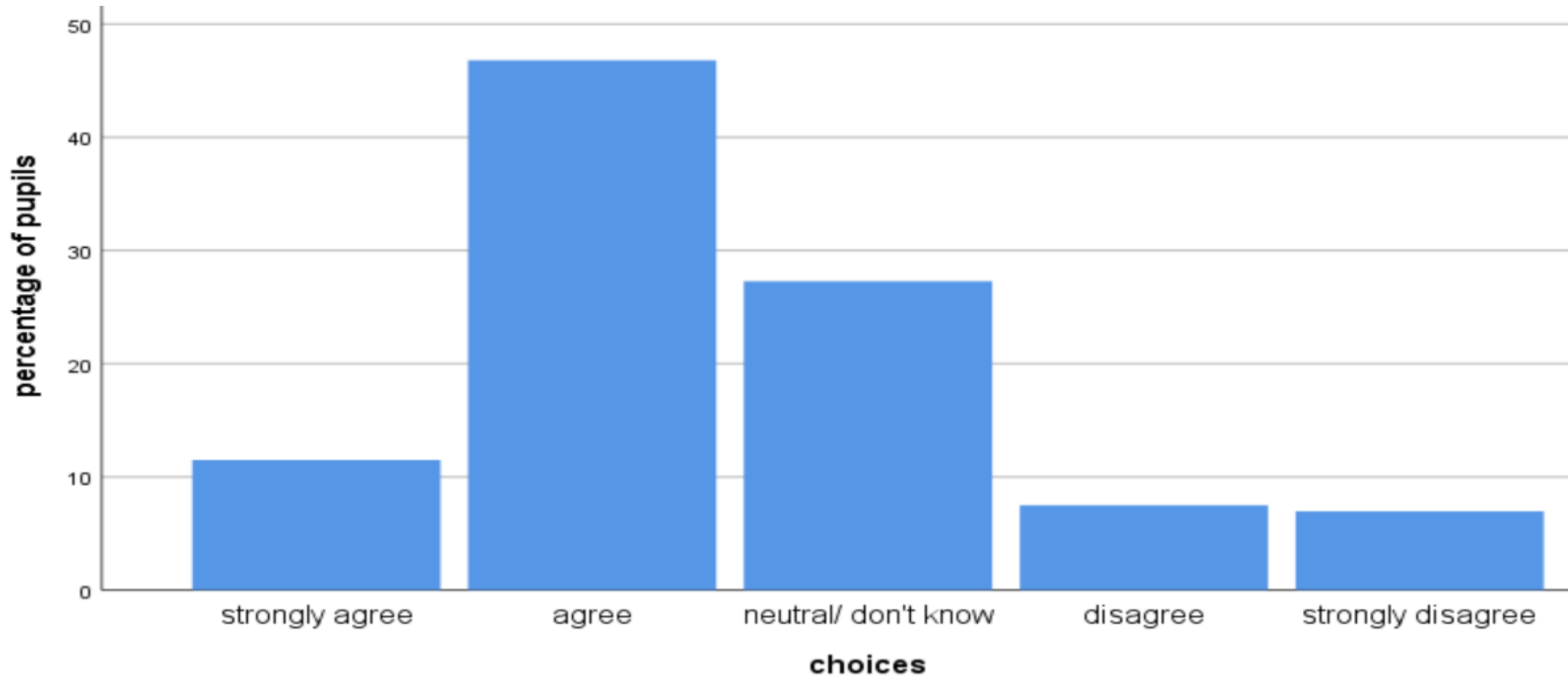


Figure 38. I understand why I am learning CLC
(by total, N = 374)

Some benchmarks from the study (2)

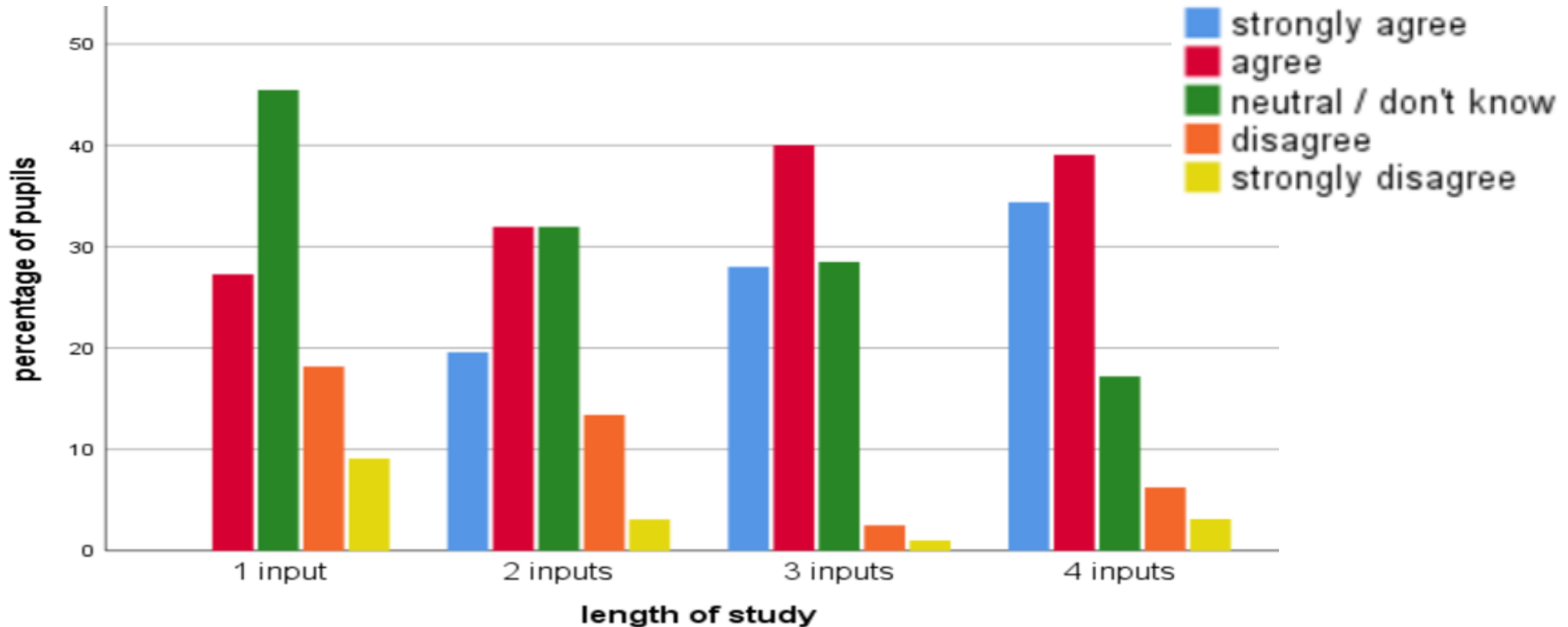


Figure 45. I think people in China are very different to people in Scotland (by length of study, N = 374)

Some benchmarks from the study (3)

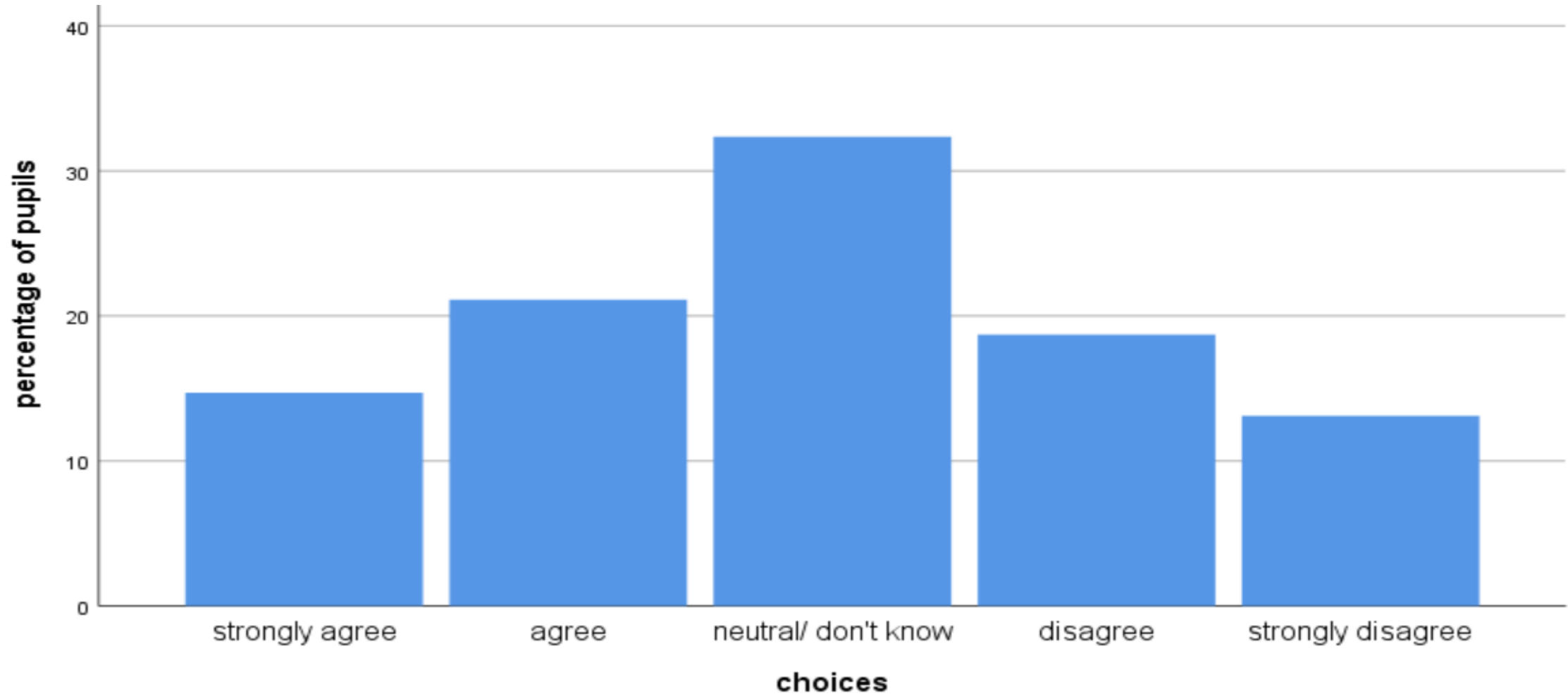


Figure 50. I would like to continue learning CLC in secondary school
(by total, N = 374)

Traditional vs. innovative pedagogies promoting CLC

- CLC as a ‘foreign’, ‘exotic’ or for use in the **distant future**



**Traditional
pedagogies for
CLC**

“Views from pupils can be quite stereotypical: Chinese people are all good cooks, not very friendly, over-disciplined and that seems a general view in some places. It can annoy me at times.” (Hanban teacher)

“In reality the children are very similar to them – they go to schools, go to clubs, play on the Internet and like social media. In schools, we tend to focus more on the differences, perhaps unhelpfully.” (Scottish teacher)



**‘Local
languages’
pedagogies for
CLC**

- CLC as a ‘local’, used in thematic contexts in the **here and now**

Local language encounters in the context of CLC

- Looking at purposeful uses for language learning within the local context
- Interdisciplinary learning: making connections across the curriculum
- Making use of local resources



Local language encounters in the context of CLC

- Co-teaching and co-learning
- Sustainable learning
- Building community
- Enjoyment of purposeful language learning

We had lots of fun making it, but we worked really hard. When we recorded the episode, I was excited, not nervous. My mum and dad were really proud of me.

Pupil participant

As well as developing their language, pupils have had the opportunity to build a wide range of skills including art and design, presentation, drama, script writing and public speaking while becoming more aware of their role as global citizens.

Co-ordinating class teacher

Well done to all involved - a great model emerging here that will help inform how we roll out this innovative approach to learning at other sites.

Senior Learning Manager for Commercial and Tourism, Historic Environment Scotland

Rationale for teaching local languages in primary schools

Revisiting key conclusions

- **Inclusivity:** providing opportunities for all children to share and explore local languages and cultures
- **Transformational learning experiences:** enabling all children to see themselves as (emergent) bilinguals
- **Innovative pedagogies:** involving co-teaching and co-learning

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谢谢

Go raibh maith agaibh

Mòran taing

Thank you

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