

Title: Teacher Reflexivity and GenAI-Mediated Textbook Adaptation: Chinese Language Teachers' Use of AI in Teaching Classical Texts in Chinese Internationalised Schools

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Abstract:

The rapid expansion of international schools across the Global South has significantly reshaped the landscape of language education, particularly in non-English-speaking contexts (ISC Research, 2025). In China, however, international schools operate within a distinctive policy environment in which the teaching of Chinese (*yuwen*, 语文) remains closely regulated by the national education system (Liu, 2023). Unlike many international schools elsewhere, Chinese internationalised schools (CIS) are required to adopt Ministry of Education (MoE)-mandated Chinese language textbooks originally developed for the nine-year compulsory education system. Recent revisions to these textbooks have placed greater emphasis on classical Chinese poetry, *wenyanwen* (classical prose), and *baihua* (vernacular literary texts), reflecting a broader national agenda to strengthen the transmission of traditional Chinese culture.

Despite these curricular priorities, Chinese language education in CIS contexts presents significant pedagogical challenges. Students in these schools often demonstrate significantly weaker motivation and commitment to learning Chinese compared to their peers in the mainstream education system (Zhou, 2021), and they also possess diverse linguistic backgrounds and limited prior exposure to classical Chinese literature. As a result, teachers must navigate the tension between nationally prescribed curricular content and the diverse learning needs of internationalised student populations. At the same time, the rapid advancement of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) has begun to transform teaching and learning practices worldwide (Cai, 2022). Emerging research suggests that GenAI technologies can support teachers in content adaptation, multimodal material design, and differentiated instruction. However, existing studies provide limited insight into how Chinese language teachers use GenAI to adapt or mediate mandated textbooks in policy-constrained educational contexts such as CIS.

Addressing this gap, this study explores how Chinese language teachers in CIS use GenAI to interpret, adapt, and mediate prescribed textbooks when teaching classical Chinese texts. The study is informed by the concepts of teacher reflection and reflexivity and is theoretically grounded in Gibbs' Reflective Cycle (1988), which conceptualizes reflection as a cyclical process involving description, evaluation, analysis, conclusion, and action planning. By integrating this framework with the concept of epistemic reflexivity, the study examines how teachers critically engage with both curricular materials and emerging GenAI technologies in order to reshape knowledge representations in classroom practice.

This qualitative study was conducted in a CIS and involved two Chinese language teachers

purposively selected for their experience teaching classical texts using nationally mandated textbooks. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, teachers' reflective journals, and teaching artefacts, including lesson plans, AI-generated instructional materials, and modified textbook tasks. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis guided by the stages of Gibbs' Reflective Cycle in order to examine how teachers' reflective processes informed their pedagogical decisions regarding textbook adaptation and the integration of GenAI.

The study was guided by the following research questions:

- (1) How do Chinese language teachers in CIS use GenAI technologies to adapt and adopt mandated Chinese language textbooks in the teaching of classical texts?
- (2) How do teachers' reflective and reflexive practices shape their approaches to using GenAI for textbook adaptation?

The findings indicate that GenAI primarily functions as a mediating pedagogical tool that enables teachers to reinterpret and modify textbook content rather than replacing traditional pedagogical expertise. Teachers used GenAI to simplify classical language, generate contextual explanations, and design supplementary learning materials that made classical texts more accessible to students with diverse linguistic backgrounds. Through these practices, GenAI helped bridge the gap between textbook content and students' learning needs in CIS. Importantly, the study further reveals that integrating GenAI into textbook adaptation is closely intertwined with teachers' epistemic reflexivity. This reflexive process enabled teachers to transform mandated textbook content into learning experiences that are more accessible, culturally responsive, and pedagogically meaningful. By foregrounding the role of teacher reflexivity in textbook adaptation, this study contributes to provide new insights into how teachers exercise professional agency and offer practical implications for supporting reflective and critical uses of GenAI in Chinese language teaching in CIS settings.

Keywords: Teacher reflexivity, GenAI, Textbook adaptation, Chinese language education, Chinese internationalised school