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Teachers' Lives
A Life History Narrative Inquiry into Chinese College English
Teachers' Professional Development in the Context of Chinese
Culture

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

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Declaration

I hereby certify that:

- (a) the thesis has been composed by me, and
- (b) the work is my own
- (c) the work has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification except as specified.

Signature:

Date:

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Abstract

Although each of the life stories and cases of teachers are personal and specific, and although they have already become subjects of attention for anthropologists, educationalists, sociologists and psychologists, there is still a lack of in-depth research examining the actual processes and dynamics of teaching careers as experienced by individuals. This is especially true of China. The actual situation of teachers' professional development in China remains a mystery.

Since biography, the changes in society and their impact on education are intimately connected, this study intends to uncover and explore these connections in relation to Chinese College English teachers. It discusses and studies eight Chinese College English teachers' professional development stories in the specific context of one university. The main aim of the study is to reveal how those teachers in a Chinese context and at different stages of their careers, construct, maintain and develop their professional identities. The study explores, in particular, how far China's educational changes over the past sixty years (1949-2009) have impacted on these three groups of Chinese College English teachers' professional identities. The focus on teachers' lives in this study will enable the teachers' voice to be heard.

The study draws data from three groups of Chinese College English teachers: early-career, mid-career and late-career, reflecting the footprints of China's educational changes over the past sixty years. It hypothesises that the professional identity construction of these teachers may be influenced by the Chinese historical background that their professional development may be a microcosm of Chinese history of education and that the career of each group may be in stark contrast with the others.

To fully understand their professional development, a life history narrative was adopted. During eight-week's fieldwork, a series of in-depth interviews combining topical interview with narrative interview were carried out with eight College English teachers at Sun Yat-sen University. A voice-centred approach combining (i) a voice-centred relational method of data analysis with four steps of reading and (ii) thematic narrative analysis was undertaken.

Drawing on stories identified from Reading 1 and combining it with thematic narrative analysis method, I looked for what I think to be ‘critical events’. In Chapter 4, teachers’ stories are told in ‘I’ poems generated from Reading 2, which combines longer summaries of the content of the transcript and direct quotes to illustrate diverse and sometimes conflicting factors which influenced the development of teacher identity along with the participants’ professional teaching journeys. The narratives of each individual are guided by the processes they went through in their professional development (becoming a teacher - being a teacher - future development) and therefore were able to illustrate any general patterns that could be found in other interviews. Participating teachers’ stories illustrate the complexity of the experiences of Chinese College English teachers. Their experiences have shown the dynamic nature of teachers’ professional identity construction in times of educational changes. Their stories illustrate how the broader sociocultural and political context shapes teachers’ professional identity and how teachers play out their agency throughout the process of their professional identity construction.

Based on roles emerging from Reading 2 which focuses on how the teachers speak about themselves and combining it with thematic narrative analysis, teachers’ professional identity construction is examined through the lens of what they do (their professional role identities) in Chapter 5. The findings show that no matter which career stages they were at, they are all capable of taking on the roles of manager, professional, acculturator and researcher. The construction of role identities is a self-internalised process, which needs continuous negotiation through interactions in specific social settings.

In Chapter 6 teachers’ professional identity construction of the relational context of teaching was explored by combining thematic narrative analysis with Reading 3 which focuses on how teachers talked about themselves in relation to others. From the difference between teachers at different career stages, the findings reveal the teachers’ professional identity construction is a process of self-mirroring based on their understanding of how others (especially students and colleagues) perceive them. Moreover, there are two steps of the self-mirroring process: the individual recognises who she or he is and the individual identifies her or his uniqueness. Since the second

step only showed in the mid and late-career teachers' stories, the first and second step appears to be in a sequence.

The connection between the teachers' professional identity construction and the context was investigated in Chapter 7. In this chapter thematic narrative analysis is combined with Reading 4 which sets the context by placing the teachers within the cultural context and social structure. Analysis showed the teachers' sense of professional identity appears to be largely characterised by their personal histories and experiences and it is constantly reshaped by the new relationships developed within the professional context where the initial conception of teaching and teachers confronts changes. Throughout the participating teachers' life stories, even though they were unique, they were not disengaged from society and context. On more than one occasion, they made reference to different social and contextual issues that were shaping their selves either consciously or unconsciously. Additionally, when the narratives of all participating teachers are brought together they reveal important aspects of how the broader community - society and context - behaves and evolves. The contextual influences in teachers' professional identity construction in this study could be classified in three main categories: micro-social, meso-social and macro-social, which are interwoven with each other. Furthermore, the study provides the evidence to show that teachers' career stages, employment status and life stage/age all contribute to their perceptions of their professional identity construction.

Through each teacher's stories, we are able to get to know each teacher as a whole person with complex lived realities. Those individual voices can be put together to show the collective voices from each group and those groups can be put together to show the collective voices from the cohort of eight College English teachers. The research is significant in collecting individual voices from Chinese College English teachers, and building their collective voice through exemplification, orchestration and amplification. Individual stories are examples which show how teachers live and struggle in their meso context with cultural uniqueness and the macro context of reforms. The hypothesis (see page iii) was not fully upheld – i.e., personal/individual and meso context seemed much more significant than macro. Teachers' experiences and interpretations are orchestrated through comparing, contrasting and building

theory/theories from the ground stories as an attempt to produce a new but coherent narrative at an intellectual level. The orchestration of teachers' voices can be amplified in terms of its scope of impact and to inform the public of the subjective reality experienced by teachers. This small-scale, in-depth research project attempts to begin that process. It is anticipated that it will resonate with teachers who lived under the same context, and illuminate their perspectives for those who did not.

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Lists of Abbreviations

CLT	communicative language teaching
CPC	Communist Party of China
ELT	English Language Teaching
Guidelines	College English Teaching Guidelines
MoE	Ministry of Education
NCEC	National College English Curriculum
TBLT	Task-based Language teaching
TM	teacher-centred traditional method
PRC	People's Republic of China
Requirements	College English Curriculum Requirements (for Trial Implementation)
SEDC	State Education Development Commission
VCR	A voice-centred relational method of data analysis

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Choice of Topic

Teachers being a silent group in traditional quantitative research internationally (Goodson, 1994), their feelings and experiences are generally ignored. Although each of the life stories and cases of teachers are personal and specific, and although they have already become subjects of attention for anthropologists, educationalists, sociologists and psychologists (e.g., Kelchtermans, 1993; Marsden, 1997; Alan, 2004; Day, 2008; Müller et al., 2010; Thorburn, 2011; Cottle, 2013), there is still a lack of in-depth ethnographic research examining the actual processes and dynamics experienced by individuals. This is especially true of China. China is a country with a large population, hence a country with great demand for education. The number of teaching staff, matching the great number of students in China, amounts to millions. Therefore, the repertoire of stories still waiting to be told and studied is practically limitless. The actual situation of teachers' professional development in China remains a mystery. In China, research into teachers' professional development in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT hereafter) has just begun. Ouyang (2004), Liu (2005) and Li (2008) are scholars who have conducted this kind of research in the field of ELT. Ouyang (2004) conducted an ethnographic study of how ELT reform impacts on local and expatriate teachers in China. Liu (2005) used an ethnographic study to explore how College English teachers learn in a *Danwei* community of practice at a university in the context of China's English Language Teaching reform in higher education. Li (2008) carried on a qualitative study to investigate secondary English teachers' professional development phases.

China's College Expansion Plan that began in 1999 has greatly increased college enrolment. The College English Course as a compulsory course for non-English major undergraduates has attracted the attention of the leaders of our country. The

ELT reforms in primary and secondary education started in the early 1990s, an initiative which implies that the current college English teaching system can no longer meet the needs of high school leavers going to college (e.g., Wang, 2004; Wu, 2004; Xia, 2007). In 2001, the Ministry of Education organised a curriculum revision team responsible for summarising the past experience of reforming college ELT and formulating the *College English Curriculum Requirements (for Trial Implementation)* (*Requirements* hereafter). The *Requirements* was published in 2004 and the scheme is being piloted in 180 higher institutions across the country. The *Requirements* was revised and published again in 2007. It is not just a revised version of the old *College English Teaching Guidelines* (*Guidelines* hereafter), rather it reflects a fundamental shift in the ideology of teaching and learning in line with social change – ‘Whole-Person Education’. Important changes have been made in curriculum aims and objectives, teaching content and instruction, evaluation and assessment as well as teacher training and support (see China’s Ministry of Education, 2007). All these highlight the tasks of College English teachers. But we do not know the perceptions of the teachers themselves.

The choice of this topic originates from my previous educational and teaching experiences. I was educated in China from elementary school to graduate school, I learned English language and literature in my undergraduate programme and studied applied linguistics in my Master’s programme, which will enable me to develop a direct and in-depth understanding of Chinese English teaching and learning practices and their influence in Chinese educational institutions. A great part of my motivation to study Chinese College English teachers¹’ professional development lies in my teaching experience as a College English teacher which has helped me to have a better understanding of this job.

¹ In China, the word ‘college’ means undergraduate education. College English teachers here refer to those who teach the College English Course for non-English major students – those who study in all disciplines except English language and literature.

1.2 Purpose and Significance of the Study

This thesis discusses and studies eight Chinese College English teachers' professional development stories in the specific context of one university. The main aim of the study is to reveal, in the context of Chinese culture, how teachers, at different stages of their careers, construct, maintain and develop their professional identities. The study explores, in particular, how far China's educational changes over the past sixty years (1949-2009)² have impacted on three groups of Chinese College English teachers' professional identities. The focus on teachers' lives in this research will enable the teachers' voices to be heard.

Mills asserts that one must look inside oneself to help important research problems, and that (1959/2000: 187):

It is the political task of the social scientist -- as of any liberal educator -- continually to translate personal troubles into public issues, and public issues into the terms of their human meaning for a variety of individuals.

Therefore, biography and the changes in society are intimately connected. This research aims to make those connections for Chinese College English teachers. More specifically, the objectives of this research will be to:

- 1) Record the processes the Chinese College English teachers go through in coming to identify themselves as professionals.
- 2) Investigate how these processes in Chinese College English teachers' professional identity construction came about.
- 3) Explore the reasons why differences in Chinese College English teachers' professional identity construction emerge.

This research focuses on three groups of Chinese College English teachers: early-career teachers, mid-career teachers and late-career teachers, reflecting the footprints

² October 1, 2009 witnessed the 60th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China.

of China's educational changes over the past sixty years. It hypothesises that the professional identity construction of these teachers may be influenced by the Chinese historical background and that their professional development may be a microcosm of Chinese history; the career of each group may be in stark contrast with the others.

To fully understand these three groups of teachers' professional development against the background of social transformation in the context of educational reforms of English Language Teaching in China, it is crucial to conduct in-depth studies of individual teachers' perceptions and interpretations of their actual experiences from a sociological and micro-political perspective (Waller, 1932; Mills, 1959/2000). In addressing the research aims and questions, a qualitative research design will be employed. It will adopt a life history narrative that uses oral history and life stories to construct and deconstruct identities of Chinese College English teachers' professional development in the process of educational changes (see Chapter 2, the discussion of in the Chinese Context Section 2.2).

This research will have two linked outcomes. Firstly, it collects and records Chinese College English teachers' professional development stories to prevent them from disappearing forever. From this viewpoint, it has anthropological, historical and educational significance. Secondly, by doing an in-depth life history narrative to examine the actual processes and dynamics experienced by individual teachers in the processes of their professional development in the context of Chinese culture, it will provide real life cases and contribute to the developing empirical and theoretical knowledge base for later researchers to use. It will also have implications for teacher education and policy making.

1.3 Research Questions

The research is designed according to what Chinese College English teachers used to be, what they are now, what happened on the road of their professional development

and what is their view of the future, to address the following overarching question:

How do teachers, at different stages of their careers, construct, maintain and develop their professional identities in the context of Chinese culture?

In answering this question, the following sub-questions are addressed:

What processes did the Chinese College English teachers go through in coming to identify themselves as professionals?

How did these processes in Chinese College English teachers' professional identity construction come about?

Were there any differences emerging in Chinese College English teachers' professional identity construction? If yes, why? / If no, why not?

1.4 Theoretical Setting for the Study

I chose to study teachers' professional identity because research on teachers' professional identity is useful in helping teachers cope with institutional change, and can be seen as a basis for institutional and educational changes (Hargreaves & Goodson, 1996).

Teachers' professional identities are neither 'intrinsically stable nor intrinsically fragmented' (Day et al., 2006: 601). Rather, they are affected by the personal, situated, professional and social dimensions of the context. However, Beijaard et al. (2004) point out that most research mainly focuses on the personal side rather than on the context, and how professional is seen in and by this context. Although teachers' professional identity develops throughout a career, most studies only focus on a particular period of teachers' lives, either of the transformation from students to teachers (Antonek, et al., 1997; Volkman & Anderson, 1998), or of teachers' experiences of educational reforms (Clarke, 2009; Tsui, 2007; Liu & Xu, 2011), not the whole dynamic processes. Moreover, studies on teachers' professional identity in

the Chinese context are limited. Thus, this research explores teachers' professional identity construction at different stages of their careers in order to study the process of teachers' professional identity construction from both personal and contextual sides.

1.5 Structure of this Thesis

This thesis is divided into four major sections:

Part I: Context

Part I of this thesis consists of two chapters.

Chapter 1 provides an introduction to this study. It begins with an explanation of my choice of topic, followed by the purpose and significance of the study. Then an overarching research question with sub-questions are introduced and the theoretical settings for this study are briefly described.

Chapter 2 introduces the social, cultural, historical and political context in China's past 60 years, as well as the institutional context in which the teachers' lives are situated. Then it focuses on the academic literature and empirical work on teachers' professional identity and teachers' voices in order to provide a theoretical backup and theoretical framework which informs the study.

Part II: Research Design

Part II of this thesis introduces the research design.

Chapter 3 includes the epistemological and ontological positions and how these influence my decisions and interpretations. Then it describes and discusses research design and process, providing a critical and reflexive account of the methods and techniques adopted, together with the process involved and the problems encountered in carrying out this research. Finally, it outlines the discussion of validity and ethical

issues.

Part III: Analysis and Discussion of Findings

Part III of this thesis includes four chapters, with an attempt to explore Chinese College English teachers' professional development, at different stages of their careers, evolving perceptions of themselves and experiences as they embarked on their teaching journey. It aims to answer the overarching research question which explores, in the context of Chinese culture, how teachers, at different stages of their careers, construct, maintain and develop their professional identities. These chapters attempt to provide answers through sub-questions including: what is the process of teachers' professional identity construction; what are the factors that influence teachers' professional identity construction; and are there any differences identified among teachers at different stages of their careers and the possible reasons. The findings and analysis of the interview data from teachers will be expanded in the following chapters.

Chapter 4 presents the narratives of each teacher among three groups of Chinese College English Teachers to bring to the fore their voices. It aims to introduce these teachers and provide some insights into their experiences in the teaching journey. These narratives serve to illustrate the complexities of teachers' professional identity construction process and introduce the key ideas of the subsequent chapters.

Then, the three main themes, namely, 'professional role identities', 'self and others' and 'the teachers' lives in the context of reforms', which emerged from the analysis of the interview data, will be discussed in the subsequent chapters. Teachers' narratives acquired from interviews are presented in separate sections in an attempt to show my participants' perceptions of themselves as teachers along their teaching journey. It concludes with a discussion and further examination of the connection between the findings and the relevant literature on constructing teachers' professional identity.

Chapter 5 investigates the impact from a personal-micro level and examines professional identity through the lens of their professional role identity, which mainly focuses on ‘I’, but the teachers partly discuss the ‘I’ in terms of others.

Chapter 6 investigates the impact from a micro-meso level and explores teachers’ professional identity construction of the relational context of teaching by focusing on how teachers talked about themselves in relation to others and the consequences of these relationships, while it is also informed by, and interacts with, the analysis of the teachers’ identification of self and others.

Chapter 7 investigates the impact from a macro-meso level and studies teachers’ professional identity construction under the impact of the interwoven macro-meso context on teachers.

Part IV: Closing Thoughts

Chapter 8 concludes the study by summarising the findings in response to the research question and the previous literature. In this chapter, issues concerning implications for policy-making, teacher education and teachers’ practices are discussed. The limitations of this study in relation to its methodology and methods, data collection, analysis and findings are addressed and suggestions for future research are made.

Chapter 2 Research Background and the Conceptualisation of Teachers' Professional Identity

2.1 Introduction

This chapter gives an overview of the context. By the context, here I mean the social, cultural, political and social background and the institutional background which have impacted on teachers' lives. Then I focus in particular on a literature review of teachers' professional identity and the teacher's voice in order to provide a theoretical background to the study as well as present the theoretical framework which, in detail, underpins the study.

2.2 The Chinese Context

Teachers' lives cannot be studied out of context. To understand teachers' professional identity construction, it is important to have an historical overview of the context in the chosen period in which teachers' lives are situated. The purpose of this section is to give a clear illustration of the general context where the present study takes place. It begins by providing an historical overview of: (a) the development of Chinese College English teachers (b) College English teaching English and (c) language teaching reform in China, which provides a picture of the macro contexts of these teachers.

2.2.1 Historical Overview: Social, Cultural and Political Background of the Three Groups of Teachers in China

This research begins by defining the terms with respect to late, mid- and early-career teachers. In this thesis, I define late-career teachers as those who grew up along with New China's 60-year development, who were born between 1950-1955 and started to teach around the year 1980. The mid-career and early-career teachers experienced

fewer changes during their professional lives (for the methodology behind early, mid and late career teachers, please see Methodology Chapter 3). I define mid-career teachers as those who were born between 1965-1970 and grew up along with China's 30-year Reform and Opening-up (1978- present), and early-career teachers as those who were born between 1980 and 1985. They grew up in the new century.

The late-career teachers are called the 'Generation of Upheavals' since, from the time they were born, political, economic, social and intellectual upheavals came upon them one after another. Due to the close connection between the Chinese educational system and social change, their educational stories may provide evidence of various different critical points in time.

Sixty years ago, the foundation of a new state provided the opportunity to alter traditional rules and structures. The late-career teachers lived through the period of political upheavals with the Anti-Rightist Movement (1957-1958), the Great Leap Forward (1958-1960), the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), the Era of Reconstruction (1977-1989) and the Era of Reform and Development (1989-present).

The history of China from 1949-1977 is dominated by the conflicts for power between two factions (radicals and moderates), in the Communist Party of China (hereafter CPC) (Tsang, 2000). Therefore, the educational policies inevitably have been characterised by major shifts and reversals. On the one hand, education was considered as a tool in political and ideological development which aimed to achieve communism and human liberation in China by the radicals, led by Mao Zedong and others. On the other hand, education was seen as a mediator in developing the human talents to support national economic and technical development by the moderates, who were represented by Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping (Tsang, 2000).

In December 1949, strongly influenced by Soviet Russia, a guideline for education reform in the newly-founded People's Republic of China (hereafter PRC) was launched in the 1st National Educational Conference. The ultimate goal of this

guideline was to construct a new socialist educational system. Meanwhile, although the entire transfer of Soviet Russian educational policy was constantly debated by policy makers in China, a Soviet Russian style educational system was tentatively imported in the early 1950s (Yang, 2005). This educational system contained the nationalised educational institutions at various levels, including primary schools, secondary schools (junior and senior), vocational schools and universities. After the reconstitution of institutions founded before 1949, policies were launched to centralise Higher Education with its admission, placement of graduates, management and finance (Tsang, 2000).

In 1957, the Anti-Rightist Movement was led by Mao Zedong, when hundreds upon hundreds of outspoken intellectuals were under political investigation and later sent to the countryside to do physical labour and to obtain 're-education'. During that time, there was a rapid development of industry in the Soviet Union and China. In the late Fifties, both States announced their intention to surpass the USA and Great Britain in the production of steel. In effect, China needed to make a Great Leap Forward to skip some stages in order to establish people's communes in rural areas (Xu, 2008). During 1950s, due to the close relationship with the Soviet Union at that time, Russian became the primary foreign language for Chinese secondary and tertiary students. At the same time, English was removed from the secondary education syllabus because it was the language that our enemy, the USA, used. But it does not mean English language teaching (ELT) completely ceased, although it was rare to find English being taught anywhere (Ross, 1993: 37; Cortazzi & Jin, 1996a: 64). These late-career teachers learnt Russian when they were in secondary school. After the Sino-Soviet relationship breakdown, Russian lost its priority, English gradually attracted attention, and thus these teachers began to learn English in their early twenties.

In the Education Guideline launched in 1958 by the Central Committee of the CPC and the State Department, the leadership of the CPC in the educational field was

ensured and emphasised by Mao Zedong. On the one hand, the unsurpassable status of the CPC over Chinese education policy-making has been established since then and would have far-reaching influence in the development of education in China for a relatively long period of time. On the other hand, this Guideline brought forward a politically-loaded educational system for the development of education in China, which emphasised the role of manual labour in the education and the aim of education was to meet the needs of proletariat class (Tsang, 2000). Therefore, students from workers', farmers' and revolutionary cadres' families would enjoy priorities in education; however, it discriminated against non-proletariat students. The 1962 Higher Education Admission Regulations promoted a political censorship on students, which included a check-up on a student's background, on family members and connections. It specified that students with anti-communist thoughts and behaviour would not be offered opportunities in higher education. Meanwhile, it put emphasis upon political and ideological education, which was based on Marxism and Leninism. Yang (2005) points out that required political directions always outmatched academic knowledge delivery in the educational field until the late 1970s in the PRC. Meanwhile, extra manual labour and social activities were added to the curriculum in secondary and higher education.

In 1961-1965, the policies on economic development were adjusted under the leadership of Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping, until their replacement by Mao Zedong and the 'Gang of Four' through the launching of the Cultural Revolution in 1966-1976. In the adjustment period, a dual system of regular schools and work-study (part-time) schools was introduced (Tsang, 2000).

Between 1966 and 1976, China underwent the Cultural Revolution, when the leadership of the CPC was re-captured by Mao Zedong and the 'Gang of Four'. In the Cultural Revolution, when people were forced to experience violence and immorality, civil education was ignored. The late-career teachers in my research were deprived of education during their later secondary school years. During the

Cultural Revolution, political and ideological targets of education were re-focused upon combining theory and practice. As a part of manual-labour practices, educated youths were sent to rural China for re-education and learning from the ‘real proletariat’. Admissions into higher education were stopped until 1970. Later, the National Higher Education Entrance Examination (or the National College Entrance Examination) was replaced by recommending the admission of students from peasant and working classes, to reform universities. Owing to the emphasis on political performance, it was extremely hard for candidates outside favoured families, as mentioned earlier, to be offered positions in universities. The National Examination was ceased until 1977 (Tsang, 2000). At that time, under the influence of anti-western ideology, various channels for learning English were banned. During that time, China was closed off from the outside world. In the early 1970s, some schools and universities began to teach English and political slogans designed for the Cultural Revolution were taught (Yao, 1993: 74; Adamson & Morris, 1997: 12). These teachers learnt political English at that time. It was hardly possible to listen to the BBC or the VOA. People learnt English covertly.

The mid-career teachers were born between 1965-1970 and grew up alongside China’s 30-year Reform and Opening-up (1978- present). The year 2008 marked this Reform and Opening-up policy’s 30th anniversary. Therefore, we refer to ‘the 30-year Reform and Opening-up’. They lived through the Era of Reconstruction (1977-1989) and the Era of Reform and Development (1989-present). Affected by the Cultural Revolution, they were deprived of education during their primary school years.

After the death of Mao Zedong and the capture of the ‘Gang of Four’ in 1976, the Cultural Revolution eventually ended. A series of Cultural Revolution period policies were reversed. In 1977, the National Higher Education Entrance Examination was restarted, which re-emphasised academic performance in admissions (Yang, 2005). China began to develop international exchange and cooperation. Deng Xiaoping re-

captured the Party leadership in 1978 and initiated the Reform and Opening-up policies, which emphasised economic development. Education was seen as a means to develop the national economy (Wang, 2010). Experimentation with the decentralisation of management and finance provision in education was scheduled. In 1980, China started to import foreign teachers from America and the UK and sent scholars and delegations to study or visit abroad (Dai & Hu, 2009). In 1980, Deng Xiaoping proposed that the aim of education was ‘for the development of a new generation of people with lofty ideals, moral integrity, good education and a strong sense of discipline’ (Inscription). In 1983, he proposed that education must face modernisation, face the world, and face the future (Deng, 1983). Modernisation was then focused upon as a target for China’s educational reform. During this period, the mid-career teachers gained a regular school education and a better English learning environment. They were recommended by their teachers to stay in the university after undergraduate graduation because they were excellent students.

The early-career teachers were born between 1980 and 1985. They grew up in the new century. They lived through the Era of Reform and Development (1989-present). They did not experience any deprivation of education. They had the best opportunity to learn English among these three groups of teachers and they are in the initial stages of professional development.

In 1985, the CPC Central Committee launched the *Decision on the Reform of the Educational Structure*, which proposed reform in admission and graduate placement in higher education. In the late 1990s, higher education started to expand its enrolment and the period of free higher education came to an end. In early 1999, the State Council ratified the ‘Action Plan for Education Development’, formulated by the Ministry of Education (hereafter MoE), clarifying the promotion of a quality-oriented education at all levels. In June 1999, the *Decision on the Deepening of Education Reform and the Full Promotion of Quality of Education*, issued by the CPC Central Committee and the State Council, emphasised the direction for the

establishment of a socialistic education with a Chinese character in the 21st Century. In 2006, the Council State launched a *Decision on the key issues to the construction of a socialist harmonious society*, which emphasised the need to ensure the key position of education in national development and to promote equality in education (Sun, 1996).

The three groups of teachers' growth may reflect the footprints of China's educational changes over the past sixty years. This study hypothesises that the professional identity construction of these teachers may be influenced by the Chinese historical background, and that their professional development may be a microcosm of Chinese history; the career of each group may be in stark contrast to the others.

2.2.2 Historical Overview: College English Teaching in Mainland China

'College English' here refers to the English programmes for non-English major students, those who study in all disciplines except English language and literature at the tertiary level (Wang, 2008) (It was once called as 'public English' or 'foundation English', see page 17). English language education in China has experienced fluctuations (e.g., Wang, 2008; Zhuang, 2009) in relation to the fall and rise of political movements and the change of economic policies since the foundation of the People's Republic of China in 1949. The changes and developments in College English teaching can be divided into four stages: 1) from 1949 to 1977, when English language teaching was generally ignored; 2) from 1978 to 1984, when College English teaching was restored; 3) from 1985 to 2001, when College English teaching was advanced; and 4) from 2002 to present, when College English teaching has undergone substantial reform (Wang, 2008).

The political movements from 1949 to 1977 heavily influenced the College English development in Chinese tertiary institutions. Due to the historical context of that time, the development of College English teaching was not very smooth. Relatively

speaking, it had not gained as much attention as it deserved (Dai & Hu, 2009). During 1954-1957, the foreign language test was excluded in the National College Entrance Examination in accordance with the fact that some secondary schools had not had foreign language courses or various teaching schedules. Although, later on, the foreign language test was restored, before 1962 the score was not included in the total score for the National College Entrance Examination; it was used as a reference. The effect of the National College Entrance Examination was to play a negative role on College English teaching. During the 1950s and the early 1960s, 'the Cold War chilled Sino-American relations and the Soviet influence was at its height' (Ford, 1988: 25). The status of the College English programme deteriorated when China developed a close relationship with the Soviet Union. Russian became the primary foreign language for Chinese university students. Many College English teachers had to teach Russian. With the breakup of Sino-Soviet solidarity in the late 1950s, many universities and colleges started to restore, or establish, English programmes for the students of arts, sciences, and engineering. Those who had learned Russian in high school had to start from the beginning when entering higher educational institutions (Sun, 1996).

In 1964, the Ministry of Education of China established a 7-year program for the teaching of foreign languages, giving English top priority in recognition of its increasing popularity around the world (Ford, 1988: 25).

But soon, English teaching lost its status again due to the Cultural Revolution, a political and ideological movement lasting from 1966 to 1977 (Ford, 1988; Sun, 1996; Yan & Zhang, 1995). At the very beginning, Chinese higher education came to a halt: all colleges and universities stopped enrolling new students for a few years. Language teachers were prosecuted for having treasonous relations with a foreign country. From 1970-1976, 295 colleges and universities throughout the country recruited workers, peasants and soldiers as students to study for three years. At that time, universities taught English. Some Russian teachers changed to teach English.

Among them, there were excellent teachers, but in general the whole teaching group was not ideal and the status of College English teachers was not high. The level of students varied. When they were at university, they had a lot of political activities; the time for English learning was limited. The content of teaching was affected by the politics, which was full of revolutionary slogans. The quality of teaching was worse than the 1960s. After colleges and universities began to teach, under the influence of 'learning a foreign language is useless' (Liu, 2014), the effectiveness of teaching was not good. As the famous Chinese linguist, Lu, said, the College English course was just 'an empty shell' (Dai & Hu, 2009: 448). The average reading speed of college students was around 17 words per minute, which meant that they did not have real ability in reading, not to mention listening, speaking and writing.

The year 1978 marked a turning point in the modern history of China. In 1977, the Chinese government declared an end to the Cultural Revolution. In 1978, the Chinese government initiated reforms. Chinese educational systems, which had been damaged during the Cultural Revolution, were restored and College English teaching was reinvigorated (Yan & Zhang, 1995). The English language was believed to be an important tool to help modernise China (Cowan et al., 1979; Ford, 1988; Adamson, 1995; Yan & Zhang, 1995; Wang 1999). In such circumstances, the College English programmes were viewed as an important element both in the higher educational system and in the development of the nation. In 1979, the language score accounted for 10% of the total score for the National College Entrance Examination. Until 1983 it accounted for 100% which encouraged the middle school students' attention towards English learning, thus raising the threshold of College English teaching. The 1980s witnessed further changes in China's College English Education: the establishment of the China Association of Teaching Foreign Languages to Non-foreign language major students and the formulation of the College English teaching curriculum in draft in 1980.

In 1986, the English programmes for non-English major students in Chinese tertiary

institutions, which had been called ‘public English’ or ‘foundation English’, were renamed ‘College English’ (Dai & Hu, 2009: 445). The explosive growth of College English teaching in China has been striking since the 1986 implementation of the National College English Curriculum (hereafter NCEC) for non-English major students. The NCEC is the first unified English curriculum that ‘gives a general outline for college English teaching’ in objectives, aims, requirements, organisation, and assessment (Yan & Zhang, 1995: 37), and it was the first time since 1949 ‘that listening, speaking and writing were listed as teaching objectives in a national syllabus’ (Yang, 1990: 157), with new books published in response to the NCEC. In 1987, it was also the first time that students across China had to take the unified College English Test Band 4 (CET-4) after completing English courses at the foundation stage.

With the development of multi-media computer and network technology, computer-assisted teaching has been experienced since the middle of the 1990s. In 2008, internet-based CET-4 began to be implemented.

In the new century, based on modern information technology, the reform of College English teaching began:

to develop the students as modern human resources with cross-cultural communication knowledge and capabilities that the global world needs, to receive higher education through language learning and to operationally command English as a tool for international communication. (College English Curriculum, 2007: 1)

Teachers are living in the context of reforms. In this study, I explore how those reforms may affect teachers’ perceptions of their professional identity.

2.2.3 Historical Background of English Language Teaching Reform in Mainland China

Since the founding of the People’s Republic of China, over the past 60 years, the

teacher-centred traditional method (hereafter TM) has dominated College English teaching for a relatively long period of time. Due to the limitations of various conditions, College English teaching has kept the mode of teacher – blackboard – chalk, namely teacher-centred teaching, which is characterised by being textbook, teaching/teacher-centred and test-oriented (Ouyang, 2000).

‘In a TM English language classroom, the standardised textbooks are used nationwide with a few exceptions in universities with privileged resources and expertise’ (Ouyang, 2000: 399). Normally, a class has more than one hundred students. The teacher dominates the class and imparts the linguistic knowledge to students. Wang (1999) describes how general classroom teaching follows the procedure that the teacher explains the grammatical rules, new words and language points in the text in great detail in Chinese. The students are passive listeners and receivers of such knowledge. They are required to take notes in class and after class they should memorise new words, grammatical rules and finish exercises on what they have learnt that day. In the next class, dictation and answers to the exercises will be done. This way of teaching is known as the Grammar-Translation method (Stern, 1983; Wang, 1999). The teacher is considered as a knowledge-giver and the students are ‘spoon-fed’ by the teacher. The teacher has absolute authority and credibility. Usually, examinations are achievement tests to test textbook knowledge. As a result, the students learn ‘Deaf and Dumb English’. They have the knowledge of usage but not the ability to use English in real communicative environments.

In the early 1980s, the educational reform in ELT began with an aim to replace the traditional method with the communicative language teaching (hereafter CLT) approach imported from the West. Since 1978, due to the Reform and Opening-up, China was once again open to the outside world and embarked on a series of reforms with an aim to catch up the rapid development of the outside world in the areas of agriculture, industry, national defence and science and technology, which are termed as the Four Modernisations (Mackerras et al., 1998:9-10; Xu, 2008). With the

changes of the social and economic environment, communication and cooperation between China and foreign countries was becoming more and more important. Proficiency in foreign languages, especially in English, became vital, not only for personal development such as further education, employment, promotion and overseas study and training (Ross, 1993: 38-40), but also for our country's development in the longer term. But the traditional method of English teaching failed to meet this need and has been criticised by ELT professionals (e.g., Li, 1984; Penner, 1995; Wang, 1999). Therefore, in 1979, Li and her associates compiled a series of CLT textbooks and published an article in 1984 in support of CLT, which affected teachers' attitudes towards CLT and initiated projects in investigating CLT in China (Yu, 2001).

However, what CLT advocates, such as student-centeredness, learning, creativity and communicative competence, fits in well with the demand, therefore, it was inevitable that it would be chosen to replace the TM (Ouyang, 2000). However, it was not until the early 1990s that we have witnessed progress in applying CLT to teaching practice in China. In 1992 the State Education Development Commission (SEDC) launched the new syllabus, which called for training students to 'gain basic knowledge of English and competence to use English for communication' (1992: 1). This top-down intervention proved to be very effective in urging teachers to teach communicatively in classrooms, due to the highly centralised Chinese system of education (Liao, 2000). By the mid-1990s, CLT had become 'a general approach in teaching and learning' (Gong, 1999: 116). But some constraints have inhibited the adoption of CLT in China (Yu, 2001). In a CLT classroom, students play the major role in class. The size of class is small, with 30 or 40 students, but with the current conditions in China, it is hard to limit the number of students to the suitable size for student-centred teaching or to have enough qualified teachers to fulfil this need (Liu & Gong, 2000). Furthermore, to take students away from passive learning, authentic materials are used, i.e., to expand the classroom into the society or to bring the society into the

classroom (Clarke & Silberstein, 1977). It is believed that skills cannot be developed by knowledge/instruction but by practising (Richards, 2006). If students know the usage of the language but cannot use it, they need to make an effort to develop those skills, just like playing musical instruments or sports games, working on computers, learning driving, and those sort of things. The teacher facilitates students to undertake tasks and helps them engage in autonomous learning (Jacobs & Farrell, 2003; Richards, 2006). Grammar and language points are seldom explained by the teacher. The students are encouraged to make full use of what they have learnt before, and to learn something new in the process of doing through collaboration and cooperation with other students. They are subdivided into some groups. Each group has a theme according to the topic in the textbooks. The students make preparations before class with the assistance of the teacher. In class, they make presentations and take part in activities with authentic communication in English. Examinations test students' performance in using English. Moreover, with the development of computer and multi-media technology, computer-assisted teaching can provide more visual aids, and link students, teachers and the external world together in order to facilitate students' learning. The changes in teachers' roles challenged the Confucius traditions of viewing the teacher as knowledge holder, by which teachers were greatly influenced (Hui, 1997).

The CLT has more student-centred conceptions of teaching with greater emphasis on learning and less on teaching, which implies that a teacher must be more of a facilitator of learning and less of a transmitter of knowledge. This shift in the conception of teaching has had great impact on the teacher's role in general, and his or her knowledge and skills in particular (Beijaard et al., 2000). It is expected that the shift of the teacher's role may affect teachers' perceptions of their professional identity (I will discuss this further in Chapter 7).

Task-based Language Teaching in China

As mentioned earlier, a common phenomenon – ‘Deaf and Dumb English’ – exists in today’s Chinese context, which is that learners may get high grades in their English classes, but are not able to communicate with others in English. Firstly, it is because ‘what is consciously learnt is not necessarily incorporated into spontaneous language production’ (Willis & Willis, 2001: 173). Secondly, from the perspective of constructivism, knowledge cannot be taught but is actively constructed by the learner through interaction with the social environment (Vygotsky, 1978; Benson, 1997; Boudourides, 1998). Therefore, task-based language teaching (hereafter TBLT), as an extension of the CLT movement, has been piloted in China in the late 1990s (Xia, 1998). It has been trialled by teachers at Sun Yat-sen University, which was frequently mentioned in teachers’ stories (see Chapter 3, Chapter 4 and Chapter 7).

TBLT was firstly developed by Prabhu (1987) (cited in Littlewood, 2004). It is a process-based methodology which promotes that teaching through tasks. It emphasises classroom interaction, could promote language learning most effectively (Richard & Rodgers, 2001; Ellis, 2003; Nunan, 2004; Richards, 2006). Using tasks first appeared in the vocational training practice in the 1950s (Richard & Rodgers, 2001). Tasks here refer to ‘activities that learners engage in to further the process of learning a language’ (Williams & Burden, 1997: 168). With the use of tasks to organise learning, TBLT has focused on the meaning as well as the form in which is re-incorporated (Skehan, 1996; Willis, 1996, Norris & Ortega, 2000). As a strong version of CLT (Skehan, 2003), the teacher’s dominant authority turns into learning facilitator, which challenges the teacher’s authority in the Chinese Confucius tradition (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996b). As shown in Willis’ (1996) framework of pre-task, task cycle and post-task, teachers should define objectives and expected outcomes, select and adapt authentic materials, design suitable tasks, motivate, activate, engage, encourage, involve and support students and monitor and assess performance (Xia, 1998), which means that teachers need to act as coordinators, facilitators and consultants. Probably teachers’ change of roles may impact on their perceptions of

their professional identity. Moreover, teachers not only need to shift their role but also need to develop new skills, which is not an easy task for them (I will explore this further in Chapter 7).

2.3 The University Context

I chose Sun Yat-sen University as my research site (see Choice of the Field Section in Chapter 3, where I will say more). The institution was inevitably under the influences of historical and political upheavals, such as the military takeover period at the very beginning of New China's establishment, the adjustment of colleges and departments in 1952, the Culture Revolution, Reform and Opening-up and so on. I do not try to do an historical overview of the institution because lots of changes happened before those teachers' teaching journeys, with a minimal effect on them. Thus, I chose to just focus on the most recent ones. This section portrays the meso-context of these teachers by viewing Sun Yat-sen University's different development plans that have influenced the financial rewards, status and professional development opportunities for the teaching faculty, and by providing a description of the origins and evolution of the Faculty of English Education.

Sun Yat-sen University, as one of the pro-reform universities, tried out a series of reforms in order to make the teaching staff become both active teachers and researchers.

Personnel System Reform

According to the old personnel system, once a teacher entered the teaching faculty, regardless of how good or bad their teaching and research were, their position was a tenured one. No matter how much or little they did, it made no difference. There was not any danger of them losing their job. They could get promotion as time went by. The promotion was always an internal one, as there was no external competition. The teachers were lacking in motivation for their development. In order to bring teachers'

potential and initiative into full play, Sun Yat-sen University was one of the pro-reform universities to practise personnel system reforms. Since 1999, a series of reforms has been trialled. In 2000, the income distribution, which links allowance to performance, has been implemented. In 2003, the personnel system reform which changed tenure to appointment system began. The teachers' position was subdivided into Series A and B.

Within Series A, the teacher's appointment has two categories: the fixed and unfixed term.

Teaching assistant is a fixed term appointment. The first duration of employment is a maximum of three years and the duration of reappointment is one to three years. At most, the teacher can be reappointed once.

Lecturer is a fixed term appointment. The first duration of employment is three years and the duration of reappointment is three years. At most, the teacher can be reappointed twice.

Associate professor is usually a fixed term appointment. Each duration of employment is three years. The teacher can be reappointed. If the duration of employment exceeds three years and both party agree to the reappointment, the teacher can apply for an unfixed term contract.

Professor is an unfixed term appointment.

(Sun Yat-sen University administrative regulations, 2003: 205)

According to this regulation, actually the position of associate professor and professor is a tenured position. For the lecturers, if they cannot get promoted within nine years, they will lose their job. The university will recruit new ones from both at home and abroad. Moreover, 'if a lecturer who was born after 1963 applies for an associate professor position, he or she must have a PhD degree' (Sun Yat-sen University administrative regulations, 2003: 206). Reform has undoubtedly pushed lecturers to the cusp of reform. There is a selection process among lecturers to see whether they are suitable to be a scholar. If they are not suitable for an academic job, they have to leave and find a more suitable job. If they are suitable, they can stay.

The professor's teaching workload is 270 hours per academic year, the associate professor's is 250 hours per academic year and lecturer's is 220 per academic year.

There is no direct personnel relationship between the university and teachers in Series B. It is an adjunct position.

The first duration of employment is one to two years. When the contract ends, the teacher can be reappointed. Each duration of employment cannot exceed two years. When the duration of employment reaches six years and the teacher has more than two excellent scores in the assessment, the teacher can apply for an unfixed term contract (Personnel section, 2012).

Series B teachers' work mainly is classroom teaching and the workload is no less than 480 hours per year. There is no specific requirement for them to carry out research. They cannot apply for a professorial position.

The majority of early-career teachers belong to Series B.

Students' Evaluation of Teaching

In the late 1990s, Sun Yat-sen University tried to ask students to evaluate teaching. In 2005, it used an on-line evaluation system. The students were asked to mark a teacher's attitude, teaching content, methods and effectiveness with the grade and scores of: excellent (9.5), good (7.5), fair (6.0) and poor (3.0). Then they were asked to comment on the characteristics of the teacher and give some suggestions (see Appendix A). The teacher's attitude includes manner, being a model of virtue, well-prepared and skilful teaching. The teaching content covers clarity, fitting in the syllabus with a focus; emphasising learning methods and cultivating learners' language communication capability. The teaching methods include using English to teach with accuracy and proficiency, using contexts to raise learners' language learning interests and motivation, teaching vividly, emphasising communication with students and providing lots of students' interaction activities, supervising students' learning after class, combining classroom teaching and students'

autonomous learning well, and effectively using multi-media to assist teaching. The effectiveness of teaching includes gaining knowledge as well as enhancing comprehensive capabilities of English use.

In order to bring the stimuli function of students' evaluation into play, the university used the results of the evaluation as one of the most important criteria for teaching excellence, allowance, and professorial application. If they teach badly, they will lose the chance to apply for a professorial position. If their score falls within the final band (the last 20% in the overall university ranking scale), they will not be allowed to teach next term.

Understanding the impact that different life experiences have on the teachers' professional identity construction enabled me to have a better understanding of why Chinese College English teachers in this specific context behave in the ways that they do, which might lead to a closer relationship between the different members of an educational community. In the following section, I will discuss the academic literature and empirical work on teachers' professional identity.

2.4 Teachers' Professional Identity

Researchers have claimed that one of the keys to understanding teaching and learning is to know teachers better whilst one of the best ways of understanding teachers is by having a clear idea of who they are and what kinds of teacher they want to become (Varghese, et al., 2005). Studies on teachers should view teachers as whole persons (Carter & Doyler, 1996; Trent, 2013). Namely, to consider teachers' experiences, what is important in their professional work and life, the core values they embrace in teaching and learning, the concept that they have about themselves and students, the choices they make, and the process of learning to teach. All the above mentioned points are closely connected to teachers' professional identity

construction and echoes the narrative turn in studying teachers' lives and identities (Goodson & Hargreaves, 1996).

In this research, I adopt Beijaard et al.'s (2004) definition of teachers' professional identity as:

Identity is not a fixed attribute of a person, but a relational phenomenon. Identity development occurs in an intersubjective field and can be best characterised as an ongoing process, a process of interpreting oneself as a certain kind of person and being recognised as such in a given context. In this context then, identity can also be seen as an answer to the recurrent question: 'who am I at this moment?' (108) From a professional development perspective, therefore, professional identity formation and development are, not only an answer to the question: 'who am I at this moment?' but also an answer to the question: 'who do I want to become?' (122)

Identity is always in the process of making sense, it shifts according to context and relationships, and is therefore varied and multiple (Rogers & Scott, 2008). Thus this chronological research examines a snapshot of teachers' professional identity construction in a Chinese context at a particular point in time. Therefore, I do not aim to discover any unchanging identity among teachers.

In the definition of the teacher's professional identity, the 'self' is implied. Sfar and Pusak (2005) distinguish between actual and designated identities to show the 'actual' self and the 'ought' self. They argue that it is 'our version of our own or other people's experiences, and not the experiences as such, that constitute identities' (17), which raises questions about the connection between self and identity (Hiver, 2013). Wenger (1998) points out that the personal and professional self are mirror images of one another and the link between them is through practice. I agree with Atkinson's (2002) claim that the self should be illuminated by inclusion rather than exclusion, hence the researchers could take personal journeys and challenges into consideration in order to gain a better understanding of how the teachers' professional identity was constructed. Furthermore, I agree with Mead's (1934) distinction between 'I' and

'Me'. The former refers to the action part of oneself and the latter is the comprised self based on the other people's views. 'I' and 'Me' interact with each other. In this interaction, 'I' acts as the initiator and once the action is completed, the reflection takes place, 'I' becomes a part of 'Me', thus 'Me' acts as the evaluator of 'I' from the perspective of the society (Woods, 1996). Additionally, I would like to distinguish between teacher identity and teacher's professional identity. My understanding of teacher identity is that the identity includes both personal and professional identities (Day et al., 2006). However, as we know, being a teacher may affect a person's personal identity (e.g., as a wife or a linguist). I am only interested in teachers' professional identity, though of course, the two may overlap and in that case, I am interested in personal identity as well. Informed by Rodgers and Scott's (2008:738) idea, I differentiate the self and teachers' professional identity. The self is considered as the 'meaning maker' and the teachers' professional identity as 'the meaning made' or in other words, identities as 'stories' and self as 'storyteller' (see *The Narrative Construction of Teachers' Professional Identity* Section 2.4.2). They point out that in interaction with the contexts, institutions, and others, self is consciously and unconsciously constructed and reconstructed, hence as identity, self should be understood as an evolving yet coherent being (Rogers & Scott, 2008).

This notion of self and identity implies that teaching is an occupation that strongly involves the teachers as a person for the reason that teachers' professional identities are closely associated with their biographies and personal experiences (Nias, 1989). Moreover, as Kelchtermans (1993) points out, occupation is also an essential part in making sense of the self. However, Cooper and Olsen (1996) argue that teachers' professional thinking and conduct are neither solely determined by their past experiences nor current situations. Rather, they are creating their world while also being shaped by it (Day et al., 2005), which shows the active role of agency over the structure.

Sachs (2001: 149) proposes two competing discourses of professionalism: the managerial and democratic professionalism. The former is 'being reinforced by employing authorities through their policies on teacher professional development with their emphasis on accountability and effectiveness' and the latter is 'emerging from the profession itself'. Teachers with an entrepreneur identity which is formed by the managerial professionalism tend to be more individualistic, controlled and regulation-minded because their professional identities are influenced more by external policy and standards. Teachers with an activist identity which is formed by democratic professionalism are more critical, reflective, and strategic based on internal standards.

To characterise the process of teachers' professional identity shifts and reshaping, I have chosen to use the term identity construction, acknowledging the role of self and external contextual influences in the dynamism of identity (Coldron & Smith, 1999; Wenger, 1998; Søreide, 2006).

2.4.1 Teachers' Professional Identity as Contextual, Relational and Emotional

The concept of teachers' professional identity has evolved from initially being thought of as a fixed and stable entity, to being thought of as a fragmented, dynamic, and temporal construct which is socially situated, contingent, and constructed (Beijaard et al., 2004; Day et al., 2006; Sutherland et al., 2010). Teachers' professional identity is constructed within multiple contexts which bring social, cultural, political and historical forces to bear upon it and is constructed in relationship with others. During this process, it involves emotions, whereas contexts and relationships form the external aspects of identity construction and emotions, the internal, meaning-making aspect (Rodgers & Scott, 2008). It is an ongoing process which involves the continuous reinterpretation of lived experiences as people connect and interact with meanings of identity (Cooper & Olson, 1996). That is, it is not something which people have; it is something which people use to justify,

explain, and make sense of themselves in relation to their contexts and other people (MacLure, 1993; Coldron & Smith, 1999). Thus, I am going to explore the contextual, relational and emotional dimensions of teachers' professional identity.

Teachers' Professional Identity as Contextual

Some studies only focus on the personal perspective on who one is and what one wants to become (e.g., Antonek et al., 1997; Volkmann & Anderson, 1998). For example, Volkmann and Anderson (1998), who studied the professional identity formation of a beginning science teacher, found that this teacher's images of teaching conflicted with general expectations of what makes a teacher. The three dilemmas she was struggling with were: feeling like a student versus the expectation to act like an adult; wanting to care for students versus the expectation to be tough; and feeling incompetent in the knowledge of chemistry versus the expectation to be an expert. This helps us to understand to a very large extent the professional identity processes through which student teachers may pass. I agree with Trejo-Guzman's (2009) idea that, although their research provides a thorough description of this teacher's struggles to construct her professional identity, which may enable many other student teachers find echoes, issues such as politics and power remained unexplored within their work. They did not question the reasons why this teacher felt compelled to act as she did or the reasons for not showing any resistance to.

However, a number of researchers have pointed out the importance of context in the process of teachers' professional identity construction (MacLure, 1993; Reynolds, 1996; Sugrue, 1997; Coldron & Smith, 1999; Samuel & Stephens, 2000; Gee, 2001; Britzman, 2003; Watson, 2006; Rodgers & Scott, 2008). Watson (2006), for example, presents us with an investigation into the construction of a secondary English teacher's professional identity. Drawing on Giddens' (1991) notion of self-identity, she investigates professional identity in context of our working lives that influences professional action. The findings show how the influence that institutions have in

the formation of teacher identities and how a subversive identity is used to resist what the participant conceives of as ‘a tension between educational values and the structure of the educational system’ (2006: 514). Watson (2006) illustrates how discourse is used both to construct a teacher self and resist the power structures that intend to unify practice in secondary English teaching. However, the discussion is limited to the issues of power, politics and culture. There is no suggestion as to how these issues could be dealt with and how to face disempowerment in their workplaces (Trejo-Guzman, 2009).

Wenger (1998) suggests that five characteristics apply to both: identity is the negotiated experience of self, involves community membership, has a learning trajectory, combines different forms of membership within an identity and presumes engagement in the local and global context. Its contested nature was shown in the relations between ‘intimate identities’, ‘contentious local practice’ and ‘enduring struggles’ (Holland & Lave, 2009):

... the participants are historically related, partially united, partially divided, and surely always in conflict and tension through different political stances and relations of power, then a reasonable designation for this would be ‘contentious local practice’...taking part in contentious local practice shapes intimate identity in complex ways...contentious practice is not only a matter of local practice, local institutions, and local history. Local struggles are also always part of larger historical, cultural, and political-economic struggles but in particular local ways worked out in practice...enduring struggles and intimate identities are mediated through contentious local practice (Holland & Lave, 2009: 3) .

It echoes with my research purpose of placing teachers into their community of practice and linking their personal development with the boarder context. A teacher’s professional identity comes out of his/her personal knowledge and development of this knowledge through his/her negotiated experiences within a community of practice in local and global context (Wenger, 1998). Therefore, the concepts of identity and communities of practice are mutual dependent. The identity associated with communities of practice is positional identities, which ‘have to do with the day-

to-day and on-the-ground relations of power, defence and entitlement, social affiliation and distance – with the social-interactive, social-relational structures of the lived world’ (Holland et al., 1998: 127).

The concept of communities of practice was originally developed by Lave and Wenger (1991: 98) in a study of situated learning, which they define as ‘a system of relationships between people, activities, and the world; developing with time, and in relation to other tangential and overlapping communities of practice’. This concept emphasises the relational interdependency of agency and world and a dialectical relations between the individual and socially and culturally structured worlds (Lave & Wenger, 1991). It coincides with the understanding of identity as relational (see Teachers’ Professional Identity as Relational Section on page 35). Later on, Wenger (1998) further developed a detailed understanding of the dynamic operation of communities of practice, which focused on the social interactive dimensions of situated learning. Criticisms concern, for example, the vague clarification of the concept of community, which embodies positive connotations and is open to multiple interpretations (Lindkvist, 2005, Roberts, 2006), the emphasis on homogeneity (Trowler, 2008) and the overlook of personal construals (Billett, 2007). Most recently, the ‘multimembership’ individual members of a community have in many different communities can be seen as an element of dynamism; which would bring multiply the possibilities for simultaneous participation in communities (Wenger et al., 2009). Therefore, they viewed communities of practice as more dynamic. However, even this more fluid conception is ‘lacking of sufficient attention to the heterogeneity of motives, experiences and trajectories of the members of a community’ (Anderson & McCune, 2013: 285). I agree with Anderson and McCune (2013) that communities of practice can be extended to take into account the features that make higher education learning and teaching environments very distinctive kinds of communities, thus it is an important setting to examine teachers’ professional identity construction in the higher education.

Furthermore, the term pedagogy can be understood in a simplified term and a more complex term. The former refers to teachers' principles and methods of teaching while the later refers to what teachers are responsible for with respect to the tensions within society's knowledge creation and the purposes of schooling (Tickle, 2001). In other words, pedagogy includes not only teacher behaviour in the classroom, but also the implicit assumptions and intentions which lie behind teachers' actions. Moreover, Calderhead and Shorrock (1997) highlight the moral and ethical dimensions. Thus, teachers' pedagogical identities are associated with teachers' pedagogical practice and their values (Bejaard et al., 2000). Additionally, teachers' pedagogical identities develop throughout the process of teacher socialisation (Calderhead & Shorrock, 1997). This means that they will be influenced by teachers' communities of practice experiences. That is, teachers' pedagogical identities can also be constructed or reconstructed in the relational context in interaction with the different values, beliefs and expectations of society, institutions and students. Furthermore, the educational reforms can also create unease as their traditional ways of practicing being challenged (Gordon, 2005).

Bernstein (1996) elaborates how the particular pedagogical identities are formed under the constraint of two interwoven factors in society. First, due to the influence of deregulation in the economic domain and devolution in the political domain, the school level is experienced marketised forms of provision, increased inter-school competition, and growing self-governance. Second, there is the fact of ever-increasing regulation from the centre defined by targets, National Curricula, standards and so on. Bernstein (1996) argues that these competing pressures are leading to the recontextualisation. He uses the term 'retrospective' pedagogic identity and a new 'prospective' pedagogic identity. The former refers to those conservatives try to find support for the State in the structure and style of the curriculum and in the rhetoric of standards and the latter is future orientated and seeks to recast old school subjects in response to the pressures of a new economic and social climate. Thus the

‘prospective’ identity carries within it the potential for a reinvention of the old progressive identity, which grew out of the curricular and reforms. This study invites reflection on the extent to which these apparently contradictory identities are able to coexist and the sorts of confusion felt by teachers in their everyday working lives as they rise to the challenge presented to their pedagogic identity by various reforms.

As contexts inevitably shape our understandings of who we perceive ourselves to be and how others perceive us (Rodgers & Scott, 2008), my research adopts a holistic view to record and study the process of Chinese College teachers’ professional identity construction focusing on both personal and contextual dimensions and the interaction between wider socio-political and political contexts and individual selves. In order to provide a holistic picture of how macro, meso and micro level contexts, as well as teachers’ biographical background and experience, may have impacted on teachers’ professional identity construction, my research is informed by Day et al.’s study on teachers’ lives, work and effectiveness, which proposed a number of levels of influence as follows (2006: 611):

- Macro structures: broad social/cultural features usually referred to in discussions of social diversity and/or government policy;
- Meso structures: the social/cultural/organisational formations of schools and teacher education;
- Micro structures: talked of in terms of colleagues, pupils and parents;
- Personal biographies: values, beliefs, ideologies.

When looking into the conflicting dimensions of teachers’ identities, namely, the balance and conflicts between the professional, personal and situated selves, several levels of influence, as listed above, need to be taken into consideration. The stability of teachers’ personal self and professional self is affected by the above-mentioned levels of influence. On one hand, although the stability of professional identity could provide an externally prescribed framework to serve bureaucratic purposes, overemphasis of this might endanger the balance of professional, personal and situated dimensions, unless the teachers received support for the personal and

situated dimensions. On the other hand, the situated dimension is largely influenced by authorities (Britzman, 1992). Therefore, the pressure to internalise and socialise into the norms within a particular institution may upset the personal dimension of identity, robbing them of agency, creativity and voice (Rodgers & Scott, 2008).

Gee (2001) provides a comprehensive view of the four interrelated contextual forces on identity (see Table 1): the nature perspective (Nature-identity, e.g., a tall person); the institutional perspective (Institutional-identity, e.g., a school teacher); the discourse perspective (Discourse-identity, e.g., someone who is perceived by others as a ‘charismatic person’) and the affinity perspective (Affinity-identity, e.g., a Red Sox fan).

Process		Power	Source of Power
1. Nature-Identity	Developed from	Forces	In nature
2. Institutional-Identity	Authorised by	Authorities	Within institutions
3. Discourse-Identity	Recognised in	The discourse/ Dialogue	Of/with ‘rational’ individuals
4. Affinity-Identity	Shared in	The practice	Of ‘affinity groups’

Table 2.1: Four Ways to View Identity (Gee, 2001: 100)

Gee (2001:109) argues that what is essential is ‘how and by whom a particular identity is to be recognised.’ Therefore, to be seen as a teacher by himself or herself and by others is important in teachers’ identity construction (Coldron & Smith, 1999). That is, teachers’ professional identity is relational.

Teachers’ Professional Identity as Relational

Gee (2001) points out that relationships are interwoven with all four of the perspectives on identity. It identifies the relational dimension of identity, the complex relationships between teachers, students, colleagues, communities, institutions and society. The social interactions with others influence how teachers

view themselves as teachers, which echoes with Cooley's (1902) concept of 'the looking-glass self' (cited in Cooley, 1983).

Samuel and Stephens (2000) examine teachers' professional identity construction by conducting a case study of two South African student teachers entering the profession. They observe multiple layers of relationship, where teachers 'walk a tightrope in both development of a personal teacher identity which sits comfortably with their own sense of self and maintaining a balance between satisfying the requirements of state and society and providing the source and impetus for change' (478). Beijaard (1995), drawing on the work of Sikes et al. (1991), studies the perceptions of 28 experienced secondary school teachers' professional identity. He notes that: 1) relationships with colleagues in the school who also teach the same subject have particular significance to teachers, together with the different statuses of particular subjects; 2) fundamental to the teachers' professional development was the establishment of relationships with pupils; and 3) the significance of pupil agency in this process. Carter and Doyle (1996) examine teachers' professional identity through the lenses of personal narrative and life history and argue that 'becoming a teacher means: a) identity transformation; b) adaptation of ideal personal beliefs to institutional realities; and c) establishment of one's self in classroom activities' (139). Their findings suggest that the teachers' professional identity construction involves interplay between both external and internal forces.

The complex relationships, on the one hand, would form a variety of professional roles and sub-identities (Vloet, 2009). Some studies equate teachers' professional role identities to teachers' professional identity (e.g., Samuel and Stephens; 2000; Farrell, 2011). Although I agree with Britzman's (1992: 24) argument that 'teachers' identities is not synonymous with roles and responsibilities as role speaks to function whereas identity voices personal investment', I do believe that identity reflects not only how individuals view themselves but also what they do (role) within different settings (Burns & Richards, 2009). Therefore, teachers' professional role identity

offers a useful lens to investigate teachers' professional identity because teachers' role identities 'indicates the configuration of interpretations that language teachers attach to themselves, as related to the different roles they enact and the different professional activities that they participate in as well as how others see these roles and activities' (Farrell, 2011: 55). On the other hand, the complex relationships arouse the emotional aspect of identity.

Teachers' Professional Identity as Emotional

Emotions play an important role in the construction of identity (Britzman, 1992; Hargreaves, 2001; Zembylas, 2003). 'Feelings are made in social relationships' (Britzman, 1992: 252). Hargreaves (2001) points out that teachers' emotions are embedded in their work. Echoing Hargreaves, Zembylas (2003) asserts that teachers are 'emotional labours' (Hoshchild, 1983) because 'a significant and ongoing part of being a teacher is the experiencing and management of strong emotions' (Day et al., 2006: 612). McNally et al. (2008) highlight the importance of learning in the process of identity construction which is informal and personal with emotional dimensions. Cooper and Olsen (1996) suggest that, when teachers are encouraged to take on roles prescribed by the state and the school which involve the suppression of personal voice in favour of an external voice, their emotional identities may be suppressed. Lewis's (2000) cognitive attributional theory offers a structural model to explain the emergence of pride, shame and guilt. In his model, self-conscious emotions are evaluative (Ho, 2005). Those self-conscious emotions contribute to the self because they make a judgment of the self in relation to personal beliefs (Leary & Tangney, 2003; Stets & Burke, 2003). Explaining the connection between emotion and identity, Haviland and Kahlbaugh (2000) consider the emotions as 'glues'. Margolis (1998: 135) provides a further elaboration of emotions as 'glues': '...emotions... seem to be the capacity that allows humans to build, maintain, or dissolve boundaries around the self. They provide us with the ability to feel of glue binding us to some people and a kind of wall separating us from others'. Linking this to previously mentioned Mead's

(1934) concept of self (see Section 2.4), the 'I' feels emotions and the 'Me' reflects and interprets those emotions. The glue could either attach or repel the self towards or away from the social world.

2.4.2 The Narrative Construction of Teachers' Professional Identity

According to Riessman (2008), a core function of narrative is the construction of identities. Narratives act as a means by which individuals make sense of life experiences and convey their self-knowledge into telling, which links the notion of identity to the activity of communication in the process of social interaction (Heikkinen, 2002); that is, when people tell stories about themselves they also construct their identities through narratives. Kerby's (1991) idea is that the self appears in a teacher's narrative or life story, and through stories, a teacher creates a sense of self. Stories are based on experience and by telling stories, a teacher shapes his or her self. Connelly and Clandinin (1999) note that teachers' professional identities act as stories to live by. Therefore, through the process of representation, identities emerge in narrative (Menard-warwich, 2011). Thus, using narrative-biographical interviews (Kelchtermans, 1993) which include aspects of professional identity, such as significant events, persons and factors that influence teachers' professional identity construction and so on, can provide a better perspective on studying teachers' professional identity construction.

Furthermore, the thinking and dialogue about identity is not only descriptive but also selective (Elliott, 2005), because telling a life story always includes a selection of significant experiences (Ricoeur, 1992).

What is implied is that there is a bidirectional relationship between experience and identity, in which individuals make sense of themselves through narratives of their experience and at the same time they use narratives as an interpretative tool to understand their environment. The relationship between identity and experience not

only enables understanding teachers' professional identity construction through their stories, but also helps researchers to understand differences between the experiences in teachers' professional development.

2.5 The Teacher's Voice

The term 'voice' is always used against the background of a previous silence, and it is a political usage as well as an epistemological one (Gilligan 1982). For many years, educational research and policy on teaching and learning have passed teachers by (Hargreaves, 1996). Teachers' real classroom lives and feelings as they are lived within the academic culture are rarely to be heard (Elbaz, 1991). Thus, this research wanted to use Gilligan's (1982) definition of 'voice' and follow Goodson's (1992: 112) call for 'reconceptualising research so as to assure that "the teacher's voices" is heard, both loudly and articulately.'

Research on teachers' knowledge and thinking placed at its centre the notion of voice (Elbaz, 1991). Researchers studied teachers' lived experiences, stories or biographies to represent and sponsor the teacher's voice (e.g., Hargreaves, 1984; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Goodson, 1992; Britzman, 2003; Ben-David & Orion, 2013). However, studies on the teacher's voice have been presented in a decontextualised way (Elbaz, 1991; Hargreaves, 1996). The contexts in which voices are situated help shape their meaning and weigh their value (Clark 1986; Naidu, 2011). Therefore, teachers' voices in this research speak from an embeddedness within the landscape of the Chinese social, cultural, historical and political context and the particular university in China in which the teachers live and work.

This research focuses on the teachers' lives with an aim of enabling the teacher's voice to be heard. An attempt to understand teachers' lived experiences may be seen as an enquiry into their stories because humans can be conceptualised as 'storytelling organisms' who lead 'storied lives' (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Furthermore,

teachers' stories can be seen as a means of gaining access to the teacher's voice (Elbaz, 2005). The relationship between story and voice can be seen on almost every dimension (Elbaz, 2005), as firstly, the telling of a story reflects the inseparability of thought and action because it is simultaneously the making public of someone's thinking and also a performance in the real world: the story affects those who listen, and possibly also the teller, through the dialogue that may take place between storyteller and audience, sometimes even changing the story. Secondly, storytelling takes place in a context which gives meaning to what is said; thirdly, it calls on traditions of telling which make possible certain kinds of story, with accepted structures for beginning and end, and so on; fourthly, it is often a way of voicing severe criticism in a form that is socially acceptable or at least not dangerous to the teller (Day et al., 1990). For all these reasons, story seems to be a particularly fitting way to make public the teacher's voice. Additionally, as pointed out earlier, the core function of narrative is the construction of identities (Riessman, 2008) (see the Narrative Construction of Teachers' Professional Identity Section 2.4.2) and the story is a way for accessing to the teacher's voice (Elbaz, 2005), thus the teachers' voice provides insights into understanding of teachers' identity (Sutherland et al., 2010).

2.6. Summary

This chapter contains three parts. The first part has attempted to give a brief introduction to the Chinese context. The second part focuses on the university context. The third part focuses on teachers' professional identity, which is used as the central theoretical theme, and the last part investigates research on teachers' voices.

The changing educational context in China provides an interesting site to explore how teachers at different stage of their careers construct their professional identity. The study of narratives enables me to understand the multi-faceted, multi-

dimensional and dynamic nature of teachers' professional identity by linking existing theories with stories told by participating teachers (Cooper & Olson, 2004).

Adopting a narrative approach and locating teachers' professional identity at the centre could give voice to teachers and enable teachers' voices to be heard. At the same time, it also allows me to identify the social and professional conditions which support or restrain teachers' professional identity construction and provide a chance for critically engaging with previous literature.

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This research discusses and studies Chinese College English teachers' professional development stories with the main aim of understanding in the context of Chinese culture how teachers, at different stages of their careers, construct, maintain and develop their professional identities. The focus on teachers' lives enables the teachers' voices to be heard. Careful choices and decisions have been made to ensure that the research is designed to allow a full exploration of the research questions in the most appropriate way. My epistemological and ontological assumptions inform the framework and methodological decisions guiding the research.

Through this chapter I position, explore and discuss my epistemological and ontological positions and how these influence my decisions and interpretations. Then I describe and discuss the research design and process, providing a critical and reflexive account of the methods and techniques I adopted together with the process involved and the problems encountered in carrying out the research. This will give readers information about why I have acted in the way I have, giving the implications of these actions for the research, and enabling them to judge the truthfulness, worth and value of this research.

3.2 Looking for 'Little Stories'

According to Cohen et al. (2007), Kuhn (1962) points out that research paradigms are known as theoretical perspectives which are mainly constituted of epistemology and ontology. The former is a theory of knowledge and how knowledge is gained while the latter is a theory of reality.

In order to achieve this study's main aim, a life history narrative inquiry was employed in finding out how the stories of the teachers in this research reflect their professional identity construction. This places the current study under the theoretical perspective of symbolic interactionism, which informs my thinking about the nature of reality, the logical process of research and what counts as knowledge (Griffiths, 1998).

Symbolic interactionism offers a way of seeing which rejects the idea of universal truth(s) (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). According to Blumer (1969), symbolic interactionism is a methodological perspective congruent with the empirical world, with a focus on the nature of human group life and conduct. However, this methodological perspective does not merely consist of response procedures but rather a foundation is built up by the theoretical assumptions on self and social structure. Blumer (1969) defines symbolic interaction as:

...the peculiar and distinctive character of interaction as it takes place between human beings. The peculiarity consists in the fact that human beings interpret or 'define' each other's actions instead of merely reacting to each other's actions. Their 'response' is not made directly to the actions of one another but instead is based on the meaning which they attach to such actions. Thus, human interaction is mediated by the use of symbols, by interpretation, or by ascertaining the meaning of one another's actions (78-79).

According to Blumer (1969), there are three premises constituting the nature of symbolic interactionism. Firstly, human beings act towards things based on the meanings that the things have for them. Secondly, meanings, which form the core element of human action, are derived from the social interaction that one has with one's fellow human beings. Meanings are considered as social products that are formed in and through the defining activities of people as they interact. Thirdly, forming, handling and modification of meanings are interpretive processes used by a person dealing with things he or she encounters. The use of meaning by an actor must go through a process of interpretation, an internalised social process of the actor

in interacting with himself or herself. Therefore, symbolic interactionism emphasises an interpretive approach to the study of human lived experience. ‘The study of human behaviour is the study of human lived experiences and that human experience is rooted in people’s meanings, interpretations, activities, and interactions’ (Prus, 1996: 6). It conceives knowledge as something that is socially constructed, that is to say, reality is being continuously constructed as the product of human experience and is determined by social context and constructed out of interaction between human beings and their world (Cohen et al., 2007; Crotty, 2003; Guba, 1990; Pring, 2000). It highlights the importance of individuals in the construction of knowledge and on the influence of culture and society in the generation of knowledge (Crotty, 2003).

Symbolic interactionism highlights the concept of double hermeneutics offered by Giddens (cited in Prus, 1996: 92), in which ‘researchers immerse themselves in the life-world of the other in order to develop a stronger (intersubjective) awareness of the other, while at the same time recognising that one’s task as a social scientist requires that one also be able to situate this material within the (ongoing, reconstitutionable) conceptual frame of the academic community’. This concept of double hermeneutics echoes the keen interests of the present study. First of all, participating teachers were conversation partners who made sense of their lived experience in the life world through a process of interpretation as self-interaction. Secondly, the researcher’s unfolding subjectivity in shaping the process of the inquiry, especially the act of interpretation of what the participants had interpreted, is foregrounded (see Section 3.4 The Participants, Data Collection Process and Methods Adopted). Active interaction and interpretation between the researcher and participants entails a deep connection between knower, known and the culture and society that surrounds them. It is a process of reconstruction of previous life events, where the researcher makes interpretations of participants’ interpretations of previous experiences until the researcher and the participants arrive at a consensus, which

enables the researcher to construct a theory that is the result of dialectical interchanges. I will give an example of this dialectical interchanges in Section 3.4.

This research studies Chinese College English teachers' professional development stories in order to explore to what extent China's educational changes (see Chapter 2, discussion of the changes in the Historical Overview Sections) over the past sixty years (1949-2009) have impacted on Chinese College English teachers' professional identities. As noted, the research asks how teachers, at different stages of their careers, construct, maintain and develop their professional identities in the context of Chinese culture.

In answering this question, the following sub-questions are addressed:

What processes did the Chinese College English teachers go through in coming to identify themselves as professionals?

How did these processes in Chinese College English teachers' professional identity construction come about?

Were there any differences emerging in Chinese College English teachers' professional identity construction? If yes, why? / If no, why not?

In addressing the research aims and questions, considering the dominant position of quantitative research methods in China, a qualitative approach best suits this study, which will be able to provide an opportunity to hear individual teachers' voices (Dimmock, 2007). Lyotard questions the grand narratives and the dominance of scientific discourse that serves to legitimate the knowledge and highlights the *petit récit* or 'little narrative' (Lyotard, 1984: 60). For my study, it is important to look for Lyotardian 'little stories', which emphasise voice, diversity, localised struggles and the claims of the particular and which are context-bound (Griffiths, 2003). Recognising multiple meanings in the social construction of reality, I adopt a relativist ontology that recognises these multiple constructed realities.

Now, I will introduce the methodological approach informing the design of the research.

3.3 The Research Design: A Life History Narrative Inquiry

This research is narrative inquiry, which can be considered as a subtype of the qualitative inquiry that is commonly used in interpretive research. Narrative inquiry is understood in this research as ‘the type of discourse composition that draws together diverse events, happenings, and actions of human life into thematically unified goal-directed processes’ (Polkinghorne, 1995: 5). As Chase (2005) has stated, the central interest of narrative inquiry is in the biographical events that constitute a person’s life.

Life history narrative is a subtype of narrative inquiry which constitutes a biographic narrative. A life history narrative that uses oral history and life stories to construct and deconstruct identities of Chinese College English teachers’ professional development in the process of educational changes will be adopted (For the definitions of narrative and story, see the Constructing Narratives Section). According to Atkinson (1998: 7), life history narrative sheds light on ‘the most important influences, experiences, circumstances, issues, themes, and lessons of a lifetime.’ Life history narrative can enable researchers, participants and readers to gain a recognisable impression of how particular lives are lived and expressed in a day-to-day context; as Josselson (1995) puts it, we live life forwards but understand it backwards. It enables the researcher to better understand the multiplicity of identities and the subjective nature of the self (Goodson & Sikes, 2001). It also enables researchers to explore ‘why’, ‘how’, ‘what is it like’ and ‘what does it mean to you’ (Goodson & Sikes, 2001: 22). ‘By providing contextual data, the life stories can be seen in the light of changing patterns of time and space in testimony and action as social constructions’ (Goodson & Sikes, 2001: 18). Therefore, it is considered to be an ideal medium to explore identity, being able to represent the

temporal self through meaningful portrayal in time and space from a relational perspective. In addition, life history narrative can capture developmental changes in people's identities; it is through the ongoing construction and reconstruction of stories that persons are able to connect lived experiences with new knowledge and vice versa in order to integrate them into who they are becoming. Participants in this research have told their autobiographical stories in their own words. Thus the main source of data for the present research is the stories that the participants and I have reconstructed about a significant aspect of their teaching lives; their lives as language teachers. A focus on narratives cherishes subjectivity, human agency and imagination which are reasons why it is suitable to study identity (Riessman, 1993). Narrative construction of teachers' professional identity provides an opportunity to activate the actual positioning that is situated and specific (Søreide, 2007).

Unlike most studies of members of the teaching profession, which adopt statistical research methods (Goodson, 1994), the current study focuses on the teachers and studies their lives. It can be seen as a way to empower teachers and to assure that the teacher's voice is heard.

My study thus aims to look at College English teachers' professional identity construction by hearing the voices of teachers. Life history narrative inquiry is appropriate for this research since it is concerned with how College English teachers' professional identities unfold through narratives, and explores how these identities reveal themselves in a Chinese context, with a very direct focus on how far China's educational changes over the past sixty years have impacted on these three groups of Chinese College English teachers' professional identities. Teachers' narratives do not necessarily represent individual experience as what really happened. As Holsten and Gubrium (2000) point out, subjects under study neither always have 'unmediated access' to experience nor hold the authenticity of experience. What matters most is how teachers make sense of their experience and bring meanings to their professional behaviours rather than the authenticity of their narratives (Miller & Glassner, 1997).

3.4 The Participants, Data Collection Process and Method Adopted

Having explored the research design, now I will explain in more depth the research field and participants involved, the specific process and the method adopted.

3.4.1 Sampling: Choice of the Field

Particular university contexts have impacted on the construction of teachers' professional identities. In reply to my research assumptions about the influence of historical background on teachers' professional identity construction, it is important to highlight the context of university when I chose the research field.

In the mainland of China, undergraduate education is provided by colleges and universities, independent institutes and military academies as shown in Figure 3.1.

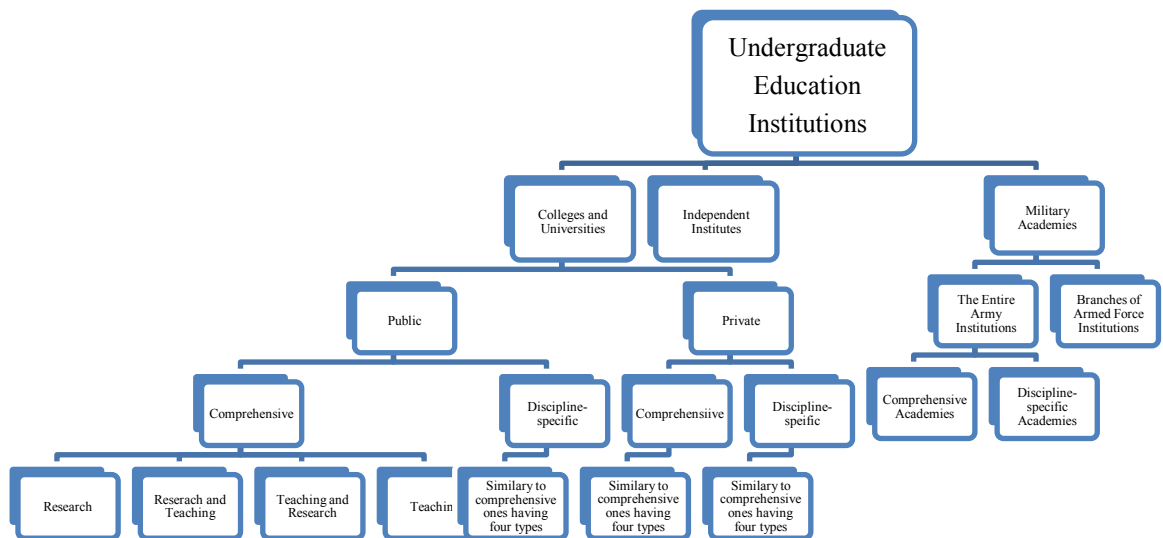


Figure 3.1 The Undergraduate Education Institutions in China

1) Colleges and universities are institutions of higher education which provide college education, undergraduate education or postgraduate education approved by

national administrative apartment of Education. There are 879 colleges and universities by 3rd May, 2013 (MoE, 2013).

Among them, there are 112 key universities and colleges in the Project 211, which aimed at strengthening about 100 institutions of higher education and key disciplinary areas as a national priority (MoE, 1995) and 39 key universities in the Project 985, which aimed to promote the Chinese higher education system by founding world-class universities in the 21st century (MoE, 1998). Being a member of these two projects represents the importance and ranking of these colleges and universities. Furthermore, with respect to their funding bodies, those colleges and universities are divided into public ones and private ones. The public ones are those funded by the central or local government whilst the private ones are those funded by non-state education budget. The Chinese-foreign cooperation universities belong to the private ones. There are 734 public ones and 134 private ones (MoE, 2013). Additionally, according to the management system, those colleges and universities are managed either by central government or provincial local government or local Education Commission. The majority of them are managed by local government and only a few national key universities which directly relate to the national development or universities in the highly specific professions are managed by Minister of Education (thereafter MoE) authorised by the State Council. They are 75 universities managed by MoE (MoE, 2012). The public ones are managed either by local government or the State Council and the private are managed by municipal Education Commission or provincial department of Education. Their funding bodies and management system further elaborate their position in China. The position of the university may affect teachers' social status which may further impact on their professional identity construction.

Upon their disciplines, those colleges and universities can be clarified as comprehensive ones, arts ones, sciences ones, agricultural ones, engineering ones, medical ones, literature ones, economical-management ones, law ones, artistic ones,

physical ones and so on (Wu, 2002). Moreover, in relation to their research and staff situation, those colleges and universities can be divided into research ones, research and teaching ones, teaching and research ones and teaching ones (Wu, 2002). Different types of colleges and universities have different focuses and requirements. All those may affect teachers' professional identity construction.

2) Independent institutes are higher education institutions which are established by the cooperation between the colleges and universities providing undergraduate and above education and non-state owned social organisations or individuals with non-state financial funds to mainly implement undergraduate education (GOV, 2008). For example, Tianjing University Ren'ai College is established by the cooperation between Tianjing University and Ren'ai Group. There are 287 independent institutes by 16th June, 2014 (MoE, 2014). They are an important part of China's private higher education institutions. The specific ways of establishment of the institutes may affect teachers' social status which may further impact on their professional identity construction.

3) Military academies aim to cultivate military personnel. There are divided into entire army institutions and branches of armed forces institutions. The entire army institutions are directly managed by General Staff Department, General Political Department, General Logistics Department and General Armament Department. The graduates would allocate among entire army, including the navy, the air force, the 2nd Artillery and the army. Among them, it could be subdivided into comprehensive academies (for example, National University of Defense Technology) and the discipline-specific academies (for example, The PLA University of Foreign Language) (cnjxedu, 2010). The branches of armed forces institutions are those directly aimed to branches of armed forces. The graduates would only allocate within its army. For example, the graduates of naval academies can only allocate to the navy (cnjxedu, 2010). There are 67 military academies (MoD, 2011). The uniqueness of military academies may make their teachers' professional identity quite different

from those in colleges and universities as well as independent institutes. In addition, due to the reform, some of the teachers in the military academies are army men, some of them are civilians which are appointed by the similar rules as the colleges and universities. Therefore, within the military academies, the teachers' professional identities are divergent.

All the above mentioned factors may all contribute to the construction of teachers' professional identity. For example, teachers' professional identity may be different among those who work in colleges and universities with those who work in the independent institutes or military academies. Even within colleges and universities, independent institutes and military academies, teachers' professional identity may be different due to its different funding sources, ranking, management and type. In some colleges and universities, teachers teach both English major students and non-English major students, they may both have Colleges English teachers' and English teachers' identity. Teachers in less research-intensive universities may not face the same problems as those in research-intensive ones. Moreover, due to different social-economic status of each province, the quality of education is different. Therefore, the location of the universities also plays a part which further complexes the teachers' professional identity construction. For example, reforms pilot in the coastal areas may not take place in the inland cities. Teachers in the inland cities may not have troubles those teachers are facing in the coastal areas, thus the competing identities come along with the reforms may not even appear among teachers in the inland cities. Therefore, in order to illuminate these subtle processes, choosing teachers within one university will reduce the contextual factors. The university I chose are one of compressive and research-intensive colleges and universities both in the Project of 211 and 985, funded by the central government and managed by the MoE. I conducted a two-month study in the College English Teaching Division, Faculty of English Education at Sun Yat-sen University in China. Site selection followed the principles of 'suitable' and 'feasible' (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001: 432). I chose

this site as my research field due to its location, impact and my personal connections with this university.

Sun Yat-sen University, originally known as Guangdong University, was founded as a national university in 1924 by Dr. Sun Yat-sen (also called Sun Zhongshan), a great democratic revolutionary leader of the 20th century, who is frequently referred to as the Father of the Nation. It is the only university in China that uses the name of a person as the name of the university. It is a prestigious university located in the southern part of China, Guangzhou, the capital city of Guangdong Province and the South Gate of China, an area neighbouring Hong Kong and Macao, which is at the forefront of China's reform and opening up. Any advanced theories in teaching, research or management and so on are all first practised here. Therefore, it is one of the pro-reform universities which implemented communicative language teaching (CLT). Furthermore, Sun Yat-sen University is the first university in China to conduct foreign exchanges. In 1979, Sun Yat-sen University received the first academic delegation from the United States to the mainland of China after the establishment of official relations between the United States and the People's Republic of China. In the same year, an academic delegation from Sun Yat-sen University visited the United States. It was the first academic delegation to go abroad for a visit after the initiation of the Reform and Opening-up Policy. During the thirty years from 1949 to 1979, no delegation visited the United States (Sun Yat-sen University History Museum). Being one of the leading universities in the People's Republic of China, Sun Yat-sen University is a comprehensive multi-disciplinary university, including humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, technical sciences, medical sciences, pharmacology, and management science.

I did my Master's programme in the School of Foreign Languages at Sun Yat-Sen University and graduated in 2009. Moreover, I had one year teaching experience there as a College English teacher. I knew before I conducted my research project that it was quite impossible for me to gain access to any universities if I did not have

any social connections with them; thus the decision to choose my former university as my research field where I had already had some professional relationship was a conscious choice allowing me to get easy access to the site and build on existing relationships with some of my participants. I want to remark briefly that it is important that I mention this because the relationship could affect the process of the research. In fact there is some evidence that it did. For example, some mid-career teachers seemed to have had issues with senior staff with whom they perceive me to be connected, as I show in the *Rejection and Ignorance* section (see Section 3.2 where I introduce the idea of how I might be affecting the research and see the *Fail to Find More Middle-career Teachers and Possible Reasons* section where I talk about the possible reasons).

3.4.2 Choice of Participants

Before I discuss the detailed information about my participants I would like to explain first why I choose to use the term ‘participants’ to refer the individuals involved in this study and how I perceive their roles. I use ‘participants’ because I think those involved in the study are not simply research subjects; most importantly, they have a participatory role in the research (Merriam, 1998). Therefore, I did try my best to encourage them to guide interviews and the interpretations I made and tried to involve them as far as possible in the analysis process by sending them transcripts and analysis for comments. However, I knew that this is my research not ours or theirs. The teachers had no ownership of this research design and they knew I was the one who made the final decisions and that the ultimate product of this research would be my thesis.

The Faculty of English Education, from which I chose the participants, was founded in 2004, originating from the School of Foreign Languages that was established in 1924 as one of oldest foreign language teaching schools in China. The Faculty of English Education is responsible for teaching English courses for non-English major

undergraduate and postgraduate students – those who study in all disciplines except English language and literature and online courses for applied English major students and Open University students. At present, it has four divisions: the College English Teaching Division, Postgraduate Teaching Division, Applied English Teaching Division and the College English Education Institute and employs 86 teachers with 4 professors, 22 associate professors and senior lecturers and 8 foreign teachers.

The participants were teachers chosen only from the College English Teaching Division. They adopted grade teaching based on students' scores in the placement test. That is, all the non-English major undergraduate students were required to learn English for two years when they were in the university. All of them had participated in a placement test after enrolment. College English classes are divided into Grade 1, Grade 2 and Grade 3 according to students' scores in the placement test, which is from lower, intermediate to advanced. For the Grade 1 class, students begin to learn from New College English book 1; Grade 2 from book 2, so on and so forth. After one year's learning, upon finishing book 4, Grade 3 class students can choose to go to follow-up courses, such as English News, English-speaking countries' culture, public speaking and so on.

The teachers as pioneers in Chinese universities have tried since 1998 to use the communicative language teaching method, specifically task-based (see Chapter 2 TBL Section). The idea of autonomous learning was highlighted. The students were subdivided into small groups, according to topics, requiring them to search for information, discuss it with group members and make a presentation. All kinds of things in the work place or in the real world that people have to sort out with a language and its related abilities such as planning, organising, thinking, negotiation, persuasion, explanation, argumentation, defence, evaluation, comment, comparison, decision making, solving problems, etc. were used to expand the classroom into the society or to bring the society into the classroom.

The College English Teaching Division I chose to study has 66 Chinese College English teachers who are mainly responsible for English Courses for all non-English major students at Sun Yat-sen University – those who study in all disciplines except English language and literature (see Table 3.1).

Overall Structure of College English Teaching Team		Number of Teachers
Professorial	Professor	3
	Associate Professor	13
	Lecturer	35
	Teaching Assistant	14
Qualification	PhD	18
	Master's	42
	Bachelor's	6
Graduation University	Sun Y at-sen University	36
	Other universities both from abroad and at home	30
Age	Above 50	10
	Between 40-50	23
	Between 30-40	22
	Below 30	11
Major	Applied Linguistics	36
	English Literature	30

Table 3.1 Overall Information about College English Teaching Team (College English, Sun Yat-sen University, 2009)

Although the ideal criterion for sampling is saturation, which indicates no new information is forthcoming (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), it leaves the sample size open and requires sufficient time and resources. For practical reasons, purposeful sampling was employed in the selection of teachers targeted for interviews in order to select information-rich cases for study in depth (Merriam, 2002). Teachers were chosen

according to their year of birth and years of teaching. A small sample size of twelve teachers may be appropriate considering time, resource constraints and the translation work. Although it should be acknowledged that the limitation of small samples is heterogeneity, since individual cases are different from each other, ‘the validity, meaningfulness and insights generated from qualitative inquiry have more to do with the information richness of the cases selected and the observational/analytical capabilities of the researcher than with sample size’ (Patton, 2002: 245).

Initially, twelve teachers (four for each group) were invited to the interviews in case any of them dropped out or choose to withdraw. After a preliminary analysis, a second series of interviews was planned (asking teachers to bring photos, pictures or any artefacts to provoke their memory and enable them to talk about their experiences in details) with six of the teachers chosen to be key informants. But due to constrains of my real situation I adjusted my original plan and just carried out the interview once (see Rethinking the Research Plan and Valuing ‘Failures’ Section) with eight teachers: early-career teachers Hu, Sun, Yi and Ding; mid-career teachers Ma; and late-career teachers Liu, Ren and Wang (see Table 3.2).

Career Stage	Name	Gender / Age	Professorial / Years of Teaching Experience	Qualification	Employment Status
Early-career	Teacher Hu	Female, 25-30	Teaching Assistant, 3 years	M. A.	Series B
	Teacher Sun	Female, 25-30	Teaching Assistant, 4 years	M. A.	Series B
	Teacher Guo	Female, 25-30	Teaching Assistant, 6 years	M. A.	Series B
	Teacher Ding	Female, 25-30	Teaching Assistant, 6 years	M. A.	Series B
Mid-career	Teacher Ma	Female, 40-45	Senior Lecturer, 21 years	M. A.	Series A
Late-career	Teacher Liu	Male, 55-60	Associate Professor, 30 years	M. A.	Series A
	Teacher Ren	Female, 55-60	Professor, 31 years	B. A.	Series A
	Teacher Wang	Female, 55-60	Associate Professor, 32 years	M. A.	Series A

Table 3.2 Overview of Participating Teacher

I will discuss why I found only one mid-career teacher further in the Fail to Find More Middle-career Teachers and Possible Reasons section and Reflections and the Rethinking the Teachers' Grouping Model section. Seven participants are females and one is male. Early-career teachers entered the Sun Yat-sen University at the same year as Series B teachers with different years of teaching experiences. They had all been local-university undergraduates. Teacher Hu, Teacher Sun and Teacher Guo had been postgraduates at Sun Yat-sen University, while Teacher Ding graduated as a postgraduate student from the University of Edinburgh, a prestigious overseas university. Teaching was Teacher Hu, Teacher Guo and Teacher Ding's first job though Teacher Hu became a teacher only after her graduation from her

postgraduate programme while Teacher Guo and Teacher Ding became teachers after they graduated from their undergraduate programme, having worked in another university for three years. Conversely, teaching was not Teacher Sun's first job. She worked in a company then became a teacher in another university and came to Sun Yat-sen University a year later. Moreover, like Teacher Sun, most of the participating teachers, graduated from Sun Yat-sen University, such as Teacher Hu, Teacher Sun and Teacher Guo graduated as postgraduates and Teacher Ma and Teacher Wang graduated as undergraduates. Their experience shines light on many changes and developments in the teaching profession. For example, at the time of graduation, early-career teachers chose their jobs themselves, while mid-career teachers were recommended by their teachers and late-career teachers' job was allocated by the government.

Most of them (Teacher Hu, Teacher Guo, Teacher Ding, Teacher Ma, Teacher Liu and Teacher Ren) had teaching as their first job though their reasons of entering the teaching profession vary from each other. Besides, although none changed their institute of service frequently, Teacher Hu, Teacher Ma, Teacher Ren and Teacher Wang, irrespective of the years of their teaching, had been working in the same university only. Stability and low mobility has been always a characteristic of the Chinese teaching profession. Teacher Guo and Teacher Ding used to be a College English teacher at university. However, due to the same reason of sustaining their job security through continuously seeking higher qualifications, they left their first university to pursue Master's degrees and after that chose to enter a prestigious university even with unstable employment status. Similarly, Teacher Sun and Teacher Liu left their former university due to the high ranking of the current one.

Mid- and late-career teachers had committed themselves in the teaching profession over 20 and 30 years respectively, thus their experience casts light on changes faced by teachers over the past 20 or 30 years. They would be the witnesses of changes in the teaching profession, if any.

On the one hand, I am not saying that the teachers involved are in any way representative of Chinese College English teachers as a homogenous group. However, on the other hand, the teachers involved are in no way atypical in terms of Chinese College English teachers group. I do believe that they are able to present one of the perspectives that may echo or offer commonalities with the experiences of other Chinese College English teachers.

In the following analytical chapters readers will find eight narratives of teachers who generously and sincerely shared their life stories. Meanwhile I inevitably integrated my own self with these eight narratives through the interpretive process, thus creating an orchestrated voice through symbolic interactions.

3.4.3 Data Collection Process and Method Adopted

This research mainly draws on in-depth interviews to build a comprehensive picture, address the complexity and ensure the depth of the research. In order to provide an overview of the process, I have produced a timeline and summary of what I have undertaken (see Appendix H).

In-depth Interviews Combining Topical Interviews with Narrative Interviews

In-depth interviews provide rich insights into individuals' lived experience, their thoughts, beliefs, values and understanding of their own context (May, 2001; McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). In-depth interviews may be affected by the researcher's beliefs and assumptions. Since they are contextually bounded and can be influenced by time and space and the relationship between interviewee and interviewer, they may be biased (Fontana & Frey 2005). But at the same time, interviews provide a chance to talk to people and hear their stories.

Different types of in-depth interviews are distinguished from each other in terms of preparation, instrumentation and conceptualisation (Patton, 2002). Researchers can make use of these different types to serve different purposes. For my study, I use

both 'topical interview' and 'narrative interview' in the terms adopted by Scheibelhofer (2008).

The topical interview is a semi-structured interview based on prepared interview questions which ensures the compatibility of data collected as each interview is guided by the same basic logic of inquiry (Scheibelhofer, 2008). It is beneficial for new researchers because prepared questions can compensate both for possible weaknesses in the skills and techniques of the interviewer and in interviewees' narrative competence (Patton, 2002). Moreover, prepared interview questions can make up for the limited time available in the interview session. However, Scheibelhofer (2008: 406) points out that the topical interview is structured by the researcher's concern and thus compromises to a certain extent a fundamental goal of qualitative research which is 'to be open to the social world we study without implicitly imposing our own ideas'.

The narrative interview, by contrast, is based on narrations and story-telling done by the interviewee and thus minimises structuring on the part of the interviewer (Scheibelhofer, 2008). It invites the interviewees to tell their stories and to take responsibility for the meaning-making of their talk (Chase, 2005). Questions emerged from talking which can capture individual and situational difference (Chase, 2005; Patton, 2002). However, it causes practical difficulties as the data will be different and individualised for each interviewee and thus will be hard to analyse and link together. Moreover, higher demands are thus placed on the interviewer (Patton, 2002).

My interview schedule has elements from both types of interviewing. The topical interviews take advantage of the theoretical themes of professional identity by bringing together the theoretical concepts and empirical evidence. The narrative interviews are used to collect their stories which might be able to reveal teachers' experiences, attitudes and perceptions in their teaching journey. We talked about how

the different experiences that participants have lived through change or affirm their perspectives regarding what they consider valuable or good for their careers. The narrative interviews would allow participants to feel the freedom to direct the progress of the interview and enable me to obtain original stories generated by the participants themselves, without the intrusion of my own biased lens.

By combining these two types of interviews, within the topics related to the research questions, I still can probe and explore certain topics in depth and generate new, unanticipated questions that arise from teachers' stories. The strategies I used to combine the topical and narrative interviews were: using a narrative beginning by asking about things that have happened in their teaching journey, followed by broad topics such as professional learning, training, teaching and research experience. My intention was to integrate narrative interview techniques integrated within each broad topic (see Appendix G for interview schedule). I only asked issues they had not mentioned or had left until the very end of the interview, a method suggested by Patton (2002). I also bore in mind Scheibelhofer's (2008) suggestion that the transition from the narrative to the semi-structured part within the interview should build a bridge coming from the immanent questions to the prepared questions in the interview schedule.

The interviews were where the co-construction of knowledge took place between the individual and me (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995). This was encouraged by my use of probe questions and the use of body language that encouraged an individual to continue to talk or clarify the points they were making. The teachers chose which of their stories they wished to tell during the interview. There will be also a lot of stories they chose not to share. In the interviews, there were often moments where only the body language, pause and laughter could indicate that words were being used ironically. In some cases, I felt that the interview process appeared not only to be a place to share experience but also a chance for teachers to negotiate their understandings and make sense of these. Having read all the transcripts, I also noted

that sentences were often left unfinished or words unsaid, as body language showed a shared understanding of a particular view, whereas in some cases there was ambiguity requiring further clarification. Thus the interviews are active, ambiguous and unstable, and that is why they are so rich.

The most significant source of data for my study was interviews. I have drawn primarily on these for my analysis chapter. (About the interview questions, such as how I came up with them, piloting etc. see the Piloting the Interview section.)

Seeking Approval

The initial step taken in order to conduct the interviews was to seek the approval of Sun Yat-sen University. I sent a letter via email to the principal's office explaining what my research was about and when I need to do interviews to gain access to the university. I also sent a letter to the dean of the Faculty of English Education via email in order to be able to send an invitation to the potential participants (see Appendix B). My personal connection with the research university and faculty helped me to gain the needed access (see Section 3.4.1). I got the approval letters from the faculty and university (see Appendix C and D). Once I had received approval from both authorities I contacted the potential participants and planned my fieldwork trip (see the Ethical Considerations section).

Piloting the Interviews

I organised three pilot interview sessions in Edinburgh with Chinese teachers in an attempt to prepare myself for my data collection. I worked on interview schedule, especially designing and trialling interview questions. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) highlight that there must be a continuous negotiation of researcher-participant relationships in order to encourage participants to share their stories, experiences and thoughts. During the pilot interviews it was important for me to be well prepared for the interviews by examining my own social and communication skills. I concentrated

on learning how to interview. I translated the first two interview transcripts but since that was too time-consuming, I have developed the following approach. I looked at the transcript I had in Chinese and asked myself some questions about them, which helped me to identify what I need to learn about the art of interviewing. I for instance asked myself how much I spoke in comparison to how much the interviewees spoke. It is easy to find out that I was talking more than the people I was interviewing and I had to learn how to avoid this. As I read them again, I found out the places where I interrupted them and where I did not let them continue a train of thought but just went on with the next question. It is usually better to probe in line with their thoughts (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995), but it is difficult to do, especially when their answers are not what I expected or wanted.

I then looked at whether I was thinking what they said was what they really meant, since often we say something but it is to cover up to ourselves or to the interviewer what we really think. I also tried to identify what they did not say due to the fact that silences and things not said are often just as significant as what is said. I have learnt to: (1) speak less; (2) let them speak without interrupting them; (3) probe rather than change the subject; and (4) listen for what is unsaid and, sometimes, probe that. I went through all my interview questions and transcripts. In the pilot some of my questions were too big and general. They were difficult to answer. I changed them and subdivided them into smaller ones. Some of my questions led to negatives, for example, I only asked about challenges and difficulties, I changed them to include both positives and negatives. I had to pay attention to the relationship between my interview questions and the research aims. I revised the Tentative Interview Schedule (see Appendix G) based on the purposes of each interview questions and how each interview question addressed the stated research questions.

Entering the Field: Approaching Participants

Rejection and Ignorance

I went back to China in October, 2010 to collect data when it was the middle of the semester when the teachers were not very busy. The dean of the Faculty of English Education gave me a faculty address book which helped me to get the information I needed to contact potential participants. In this initial stage I tried to stick to my original research plan of researching three groups of teachers (four for each group) based on their year of birth and years of teaching. After some research on the staff profiles on the websites, I realised that I was too idealistic when I laid out my research plan and participant choice model. Although I could easily find out the information about the teachers' year of birth, it was still quite hard to identify teachers' exact years of teaching. Not knowing the teachers, I had no knowledge about when they had begun to teach. I therefore consulted friends of mine and my Master's supervisor who worked in the faculty, but even for them sometimes it was still hard to know. I decided to send out the invitation to all the potential teachers first and ask them about their years of teaching later. Then I finally compiled a list of 30 teachers (five late-career, 14 mid-career and 11 early-career teachers). I could only find five late-career teachers, which made me worried about whether I could find enough participants as planned. The experience of rethinking my original plan of grouping teachers made me realise that my decision to choose teachers who were born between 1960-1965 as mid-career teachers was problematic because in fact they nearly had 25 years' teaching experience that could be considered as late-career teachers. I thus adjusted my plan to include teachers who were born between 1965-1970 as mid-career teachers.

There were several attempts to contact teachers. Despite I felt stressful and worried towards approaching participants, I initially sent out the invitation to all the potential participants via email and letters via post, which contained a brief description of the type of study I aimed to conduct and the reasons why I considered that this kind of research and their participation were important for the language teaching profession (see Appendix E).

Soon I found that I had underestimated the difficulties of approaching participants or, more accurately, the difficulties of getting a reply from teachers. Before I came back to collect data I had talked to some teachers I knew, who all showed great interest in my research project and willingness to participate, but when I came back and sent out the invitation to them, it seemed that they had suddenly changed their minds. After sending out the emails and letters, a week later I had only received two replies (one late-career and one early-career teacher) accepting my invitation.

Then I began to make phone calls. I got four early-career teachers quickly. Contrary to my expectation the limited number of late-career teachers that I was worrying about at first turned out to be an advantage for me in persuading them to participate. When I told them I needed to find four late-career teachers who met my selection criteria, and I almost had the same amount of suitable candidates and had invited them all, they suddenly agreed. Only one of the late-career teachers did not pick up the phone or reply to my emails from the very beginning till the end of my data collection. One of the late-career teachers chose to withdraw because she said she needed to take care of her grandson and could not find any time, leaving only three.

Conversely, I had great difficulty in finding participants among the largest group of mid-career teachers. When I made phone calls, I felt like a salesperson who was always being rejected. When talking on the phone they all told me that they were astonished that I had chosen them rather than someone else, and always suggested I contact another of their colleagues. Some of them did not let me finish my introduction, directly hanging up the phone. Some of the teachers said they were busy at that moment and asked me to call them again several weeks later. When I called them again they still told me they were busy. It is quite interesting that one teacher refused me because she thought she was not a College English teacher. We used a textbook called *College English*. When I called her, she told me she had not taught College English for a long time, that now she taught English News and thus did not belong to the College English teacher group. Her understanding was different

from mine. I thought that no matter which book or course they were teaching, as long as their students were Non-English majors, they were College English teachers.

As the examination period was approaching for the teachers, I felt more and more frustrated and self-criticised. I started to question myself: why did not I carefully investigate the actual number of prospective teachers suiting my participant choice model before I carried out my data collection? Why did I not find the enough participants before going back to China? Why did I believe that my identity as a doctoral student would be convincing enough to persuade teachers to participate?

It was the result of this self-blame, anxiety and the pressure of not being able to find twelve teachers to be interviewed as planned that I faced the critical decision in my research of whether to just focus on early and late-career teachers. I did not want to give up and still wanted to try my best to include mid-career teachers because I thought they grew up along with China's 30-year Reform and Opening-up, influenced by the Chinese history background, that their professional development may be special and quite different from the other two groups. If I did not include this group, I felt that there was something important missing. Moreover, I knew the ten-year lecturer phenomenon (their professorial unchanged: they stayed as lecturer for such a long period of time and had not promoted as associated professors) existed in this group of teachers. Therefore I just kept this alternative plan as a backup and continued to search for the ways to approach mid-career teachers.

This time, I tried to meet them in person. I went to their classrooms to await them. I thought that perhaps when they saw me they might agree to be interviewed. But when I talked to them, they did not reply to me. Most of them just treated me like I did not exist. Some of them told me that they seemed to have had issues with senior staff with whom they connected me. They transferred their feeling of dissatisfaction towards her to me. They did not want to talk to anyone who had a certain kind of connection with her. Moreover, there was an incident. One day, when I walked on

campus with the teacher I lived with, we met a mid-career teacher. They were colleagues. The teacher I lived with introduced me to her. I thought that out of courtesy she should at least say hello or nod her head to me. But this teacher said I did not know her, why are you introducing her to me? There was a silence among us. It was so embarrassing that in the end I just interviewed one mid-career teacher.

In retrospect, apart from rejection, actually I could find twelve teachers to be interviewed easily and conveniently with the help of the dean, but I chose not to use this way to find participants because I did not want them to be forced to participate which would influence their willingness in expressing true feeling. Some teachers agreed to be interviewed but they asked for something in return which was either beyond my capability or against my values. Therefore, I chose not to interview them and contacted other teachers instead.

Rethinking the Research Plan and Valuing ‘Failures’

While contacting teachers they all expressed their difficulties in participating in two series of interviews, especially in bringing in artefacts, which need more time and energy, thus I decided to conduct interviews once and gave up the artefacts part.

This experience of rethinking my original plan and adjusting the research plan according to constraints in real life showed that there are always some discrepancies between the ideal research plan and the reality. It also illuminated the nature of qualitative research: the research field does not operate in a vacuum and is influenced by many factors causing the fieldwork process to change. I learned that by being a researcher I have to be prepared to cope with the demands of situations in the ever-changing research fields that may be different from what I had imagined when I planned my research. Therefore, I valued the ‘failure’ in getting participants and difficulties I encountered during the data collection as a significant part of the research process. It provided me with the opportunity to rethink my research design.

Taking such ‘failure’ as an integral part of the research also gave me the chance to reflect on what kinds of underlying messages were embedded in my experience of being rejected or ignored when finding participants. First of all, the fact that many teachers apparently found it so difficult to engage with me as a student researcher was clearly significant. Their unwillingness even to communicate with me is a common experience for student researchers who are not official staff or post-doctoral researchers based in higher education institutions. Due to the historical background of the development of China’s education system, although the reforms had gradually given schools a large degree of autonomy, the whole education sector still appeared to be an ‘enclosed system’ since no ‘outsider’ could easily get in and witness what is really happening inside schools. Living and working in such an enclosed system, the teacher’s voice has generally been ignored and silenced. Therefore, the reluctance to be interviewed may have resulted from the lack of culture in conducting research, especially qualitative research in Chinese schools from long ago. It also may be due to the current competitive atmosphere in the education sectors, teaching staff are sceptical towards people. Teachers would rather play safe to avoid any flaws or mistakes being recorded and taken to the public, which would bring lots of trouble.

Secondly, having grown up in the Chinese culture of collectivism, people felt safe in groups. Conversely, individual interviews made the participants lose their sense of security. Moreover, all members of a group shared the common responsibilities. When they knew there were limited number of members, such as only 5 suitable late-career teachers, the responsibility for each individual is greater and the chance for them to refuse to participate was rarer than the mid-career teachers’ group which had 14 candidates, all of whom suggested another colleague as an excuse (see Rejection and Ignorance Section).

Thirdly, my experience also revealed the need for having social connections with institutions or even teachers under the aforementioned culture and practice of Chinese institutions. Because of the ‘enclosed system’, social connections became

the easiest way to gain access to the system. My direct social connection to the university as an alumnus guaranteed my identity and personality and made me less threatening to the university. However, this did not mean that I had immediately become an ‘insider’ to everyone in the researched department because my appearance and purposes were not officially announced to the whole department and teachers remained sceptical even when they heard about my research (on the ‘insider and outsider’ issue see the Power to Know section). In retrospect I believe that when I was a complete stranger to my participants yet claimed insider status I was always refused. In the end, I failed to persuade any teachers who did not know me to take part in my study. It turned out to be that all my participants more or less knew me. For instance, Teacher Hu, Teacher Sun, Teacher Guo, Teacher Ding, Teacher Ma and I all taught the same course at the same campus during our university time. We took the same school bus to the campus and sometimes had lunch or dinner together when we were there. Teacher Liu knew me when we were invited to be judges in students’ presentation competitions. Later on we worked together to host a foreign visiting scholar for a week. Teacher Ren was my master programme supervisor and Teacher Wang was my master programme first year board and dissertation examiner. Probably because of the influence of traditional Chinese society, which Fei (2006) describes as the society of acquaintances (Shuren Society), the insider status could not bring any bonding or trust. It was the degree of familiarity that matters. However, the interpersonal relationship is complex, and for those who knew me the decision-making process for them was not simple due to this complexity and played a vital role for them in deciding whether or not they would participate. For instance, I mentioned earlier in the Rejection and Ignorance Section that some of the middle-career teachers refused to be interviewed because they seemed to have had issues with senior staff with whom they perceived me to be connected and did not want to talk to anyone who has certain connections with her.

Fail to Find More Middle-career Teachers and Possible Reasons

Firstly, the teachers were under great pressure. During the period of my fieldwork, it was the time for them to apply for the professorial. There was fierce competition among them. Some of them had been lecturers for more than ten years. They felt very nervous. What made it worse was the new university rule which said if a teacher's professorial had not changed within three years he or she would be fired. Secondly, they were facing a lot of trouble and were perhaps feeling burn-out. In teaching, they needed to change their approaches from teacher-centred to student-centred. They needed to balance teaching and research. At home, they needed to take care of family and children. Thirdly, the interpersonal relationships in the community of practice were complex. They did not want to expose their thinking. Fourthly, College English teaching was in the margin of the university, with many teachers looking down upon this job. The English teachers' status was not high within a comprehensive university. The status of a College English teacher was even lower, which was evident in Teacher Sun (Early-career, Series B), Teacher Ma (Mid-career, Series A) and Teacher Ren's (Late-career, Series A) narratives (see Chapter 7). Fifthly, they were lacking of a sense of professional achievement. They were excellent students and had been recommended by their teacher to stay at university as teachers. Now, when they rethought, there was nothing worthwhile for them to be proud of. When I contacted them they kept telling me that there was nothing they could say and they were not willing to say anything either. I tried to contact one teacher several times. A lot of people recommended I interview her but she always told me she was busy and asked me to call her later. In her colleagues' eyes she was a very nice person and good teacher. One of her colleagues told me that she did not want to be interviewed because one of her classmates, who worked in the same university, had already been the professor and dean of the other Schools and had English major students. She could not find the balance. They were willing to become somebody, but now they remained nobody. Sixthly, they did not know me. My

project could not bring any benefit for them. They were not willing to spend any time on me.

The Interviews

All the participants were given the option of deciding the date, time, and place of the interview. Each interview was tape-recorded with their permission (see my discussion in the Ethical Considerations section). Before and during the interview I took special care to make participants feel as comfortable as possible. I wanted my role to be that of an attentive listener and made an effort to keep my verbal interventions to the minimum. All of participants decided to be interviewed in their homes (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995).

In the interviews, at the very beginning, I briefly gave them the overview of the nature and purpose of the interviews. After explaining to the participants what they could expect from the interviews I gave them the informed consent form (see Appendix F). It basically contained information regarding the participants' rights such as anonymity, confidentiality, and the right to withdraw from the study at any time (I will discuss this further in 3.7, Ethical Considerations, the Researching with Integrity section). Participants could also read the transcripts of their interview and comment on them to add new ideas, suggest amendments, or opt to refuse permission to use certain information in the research.

I intended each interview to be approximately between one and one and a half hour in length as I felt this was sufficient time to engage in dialogue of some depth without occupying too much of their time. However, each interview lasted longer than this as the teachers talked at length about their experiences and thoughts. I did one nearly eight-hour interview, in three sections with breaks, with one of the late-career teachers.

Although all the participants were English teachers and their English is good, I did all interviews in Chinese in order to make them feel at ease and talked about their experiences freely without any language barriers. The original data are thus in Chinese. Only some of them would be translated by me into English (see section 3.5.6 on translation).

Field notes were taken during the interviews to capture non-verbal communication and the use and meaning of local terms and phrases. After the interviews, I wrote some reflective notes while things were still fresh in my mind. These varied from a descriptive note of what happened, to my reflective notes about my feelings and experience of the interview.

I transcribed the recordings personally from the interviews and this gave me the opportunity to read and re-read the interviews and enabled me to gain a deep understanding of the participants' lived experiences (Simons, 2009). Although I listened to the interview recordings in their entirety several times before transcribing them, I avoided transcribing only sections of the interviews because refining the discourse by editing would certainly produce an artificial clarity of a life history that I created using my participant's words (Wellington, 2000). As I finished the transcribing, I spent time listening to the audio recording, checking the transcripts for accuracy and most importantly, I integrated my own 'hearings' by inserting laughter, repetition, hesitation silences and the notes of body language which I cross-referenced with my own notes from the interviews. Such information was important because often there were unspoken hidden meanings when what the participant said was the opposite to what was meant, which was evident from the use of sarcastic tones, ironic comments, raised eyebrows and laughter.

Whilst I went through the process of checking the transcripts I made detailed notes about each interview on early interpretation and points that I found of interest, commenting when I thought: 'That is interesting! Wow! Look at that! That fits well

with the theory, or with what I expected. That doesn't fit with the theory, or with what I expected, at all. That is much the same as Interviewee X or Y said. That completely contradicts what Interviewee X or Y said. That contradicts what she said earlier. That makes me think of... This short quotation sums up very well what she seems to be getting at here.' These notes formed an important part of my research journal, where I kept planning, methodology and theory notes and notes and reflections about each teacher.

Since respondent validation (Ezzy, 2002; Simons, 2009) is an important aspect of research, a copy of their transcript was sent to each participant to check for accuracy or to add anything they had said. I also shared my initial analysis and the narratives I had written with each teacher. I found that they were not concerned about anonymity at all since none of them raised any question about this.

3.5 Data Analysis Approach: Voice-centred Relational Approach

3.5.1 Overview

There is a diverse selection of analytical approaches available for analysing interview transcripts. This means that the multiple layers of qualitative data can be analysed and interpreted in different ways. With open minds, researchers can make use of the advantages of different methods to make sense of research participants' narratives by combining them together, even when these methods have dissimilar epistemological underpinnings (Riessman, 2008; Mason, 2006). Therefore, I used the voice-centred relational approach combining a voice-centred relational method with thematic narrative analysis, which focuses on the participants' voices and possesses both structure and openness (Kiegelmann, 2009).

3.5.2 A voice-centred relational method of data analysis (VCR)

Brown, Gilligan and colleagues (Brown & Gilligan, 1992) from Harvard University originally developed the voice-centred relational method to study girls' and women's voices and experiences through their relationships. Mauthner and Doucet (1998) further elaborated this method, using it for more sociological purposes.

As Mauthner and Doucet (1998) point out, the relational ontology of this method conceives the social world as being constituted by social interaction and relations. Grounded in feminist research, this method emphasises interdependence and relationality. This method can be expressed through a multiplicity of voices and resonances (Gilligan et al., 2003); thus the wholeness of the text that contains many voices that are all part of the same composition but are distinctive in themselves (Said, 1993).

Voice-centred relational method focuses on the story-teller's relationships to the people around them and to the broader context which is consistent with the perspectives of teacher identity and develops along with the teaching journey. That journey is an emotional one in a relational context (McNally, 2006). Moreover, teachers' professional identity is influenced by personal, professional and situated factors within the broader social and cultural context (Day & Gu, 2007). I used this method because it puts at the centre the voices of the storytellers which echoes my research aim of enabling teachers' voices to be heard. It provides the possibility of looking at transcripts from both individual and cultural/social-oriented perspectives; that is, it could place the people within the cultural context and social structure which could fit my research purpose of linking personal development with social background. Additionally, it makes the interpretation process more transparent and addresses the issue of trustworthiness in qualitative study (Brown & Giligan, 1992; Mauthner & Doucert, 1998; Paliadelis & Cruickshank, 2008).

The voice-centred relational method has four steps of reading in order to identify the following:

1. What is the story and who is listening?
2. Who is speaking?
3. What stories occur about relationships?
4. In which social and cultural frameworks? (Brown & Gilligan, 1992: 21)

Here I randomly chose one transcript as an example of how I analysed and interpret the teacher's stories by using voice-centred relational method.

3.5.2.1 Reading 1: Reading for the Stories and for My Response to the Narrative

The first reading involves searching for the story told, the key images portrayed, the key words and phrases repeated and contradictions identified. The first reading also encouraged me to track my response to what I had heard during the interview process and to what I had listened to and read during the analysis (Mauthner & Doucort, 1998). In this way the analysis does not yield objectivity but rather raises awareness of how the research context might influence the interview conversation, making explicit the relationship between the participants and the researcher as well as the relationship between the interview transcripts and the researcher (Brown & Gilligan, 1992).

Teacher Hu told me a number of stories (see Appendix J), for example, of becoming a College English teacher, of her internship, of her first day of teaching, of classroom teaching, of coping with uncooperative students, of her ways of teaching, of students' reactions to her, of difficulties encountered in teaching, of training, of good moments, of bad moments, of dilemmas while doing research, of how she perceives herself as a teacher, and so on.

During this process I identified contradictions and inconsistencies within the teachers' stories. For example, Teacher Hu's identity as a teacher was bound up with reactions from students as she mentioned that 'the students' performance in class will greatly

impact my feeling. When they do well, I will laugh. When they could not reach my requirements, I feel worried and angry.’ But at the end of the interview, she said that ‘my mood will not be affected by my students’ reactions.’ This was in contradiction to the quotes above showing clearly that her mood was being influenced by students’ reactions. I think her mood was still influenced by her students’ reaction, but when she gained more experience and became more mature she became more rational, not as sentimental as before. She began to analyse the reasons behind those reactions. Additionally, contradictory feelings were identified. Teacher Hu thought she felt proud of being a teacher at a prestigious university while at the same time feeling marginalised by being a general course teacher within such a prestigious university. I learned that I would be better go with the data rather than to try to make it fit where it did not. As Miles and Huberman (1994) point out, if everything fits too neatly it is unlikely to be accurate, which echoes the lovely intractability of the data.

Reading and identifying stories highlight my own understanding and interpretation as a listener and a reader. I found how my experiences influenced my responses during the interview. For example, I had very similar views as Teacher Hu had towards English major undergraduates and Non-English major ones. When she talked about eliciting inspiration generated from communicating with Non-English majors, it immediately reminded me of my experience. I felt that I was able to understand what she meant, therefore I did not ask for more explanations. When she told me the reasons why she felt distressed as an adjunct post holder in Series B, I also had a similar thought and again I did not ask for more explanation. On the one hand, my experience echoed what Jaworski and Coupland (1999) talk about as part of the participants’ community of practice and thus having an insider’s view, allowing me to transcend the private worlds of the speakers. On the other hand these reflections were useful when I was able to show her how her story was told and ask for her feedback.

3.5.2.2 Reading 2: Reading for the voice of the ‘I’

The second reading focuses on how the interviewees speak about themselves (Mauthner & Doucert, 1998). Here I focus on the using of personal pronouns: ‘I’, ‘me’, ‘we’, ‘you’, ‘she’ and ‘they’ in talking about herself which entails identifying the subjective positions held by Teacher Hu as she speaks about being a teacher or positions herself in relation to other people or the wider context. By doing so, it enables the participants to speak for themselves before the researcher speaks of them (Brown & Gilligan, 1992).

The use of ‘I’, ‘we’, ‘they’ and other pronouns plays the role of identity construction (Duszak, 2002). In the exploration of teachers’ professional identity in narrative, it is worthwhile to explore when the participant speaks to a single view (I/we) and when he/she incorporates other viewpoints (they/you) into his/her narrative (Kiernan, 2008). Hence, it is important to deconstruct perspectives within the interview in terms of the depiction of viewpoint.

As shown in the sample of *Pronouns Used by Teacher Hu but Arranged in Poem Format* (see Appendix K), I extracted each ‘I’ phrase from the original transcript and listed them in a sequence as they occurred during the interview. These statements become ‘I’ poems, which follow the logic that runs under these sentences (Brown & Gilligan, 1990). The poems were created mainly from one connected section, but sometimes from different sections if all these sections were talking about the same experience, such as when Teacher Hu talked about her perceptions of her teaching career and the academic activities and challenges she repeatedly mentioned about doing research. This ‘I’ poem was created from different sections. Then I started to deconstruct who ‘I’, ‘We’ and other pronouns represented as Teacher Hu spoke in different identity groups as well as other people or social contexts to which she related herself. I placed those pronouns back into the context to interpret their meanings. For example, Teacher Hu mentioned that ‘I chose a normal university as

an English major student.’ The ‘I’ here means a secondary school student. Within the large categories based on role, there are sub-categories based on feelings and emotions. The same feelings may appear again and again with the different categories, and thus I do not think it is helpful to think of them as smaller categories. For example, when talking about doing research as a university teacher, Teacher Hu felt puzzled; while talking about coping with uncooperative students as a College English teacher, the feeling of being puzzled appeared again. Tracking these phrases also reveals actions and feelings signalling changes in how the speaker changes her perceptions with reference to whom she addresses and how she addresses them. The following categorisation of identity groups show how Teacher Hu posits herself in relation to different social groups which can be seen as constructing a dialogue of similarities and differences between ‘self’ and others. The pronoun ‘we’ is inclusive but generalised while ‘they’ is exclusive and generalised. In the example ‘we are required to do teaching and research’ ‘we’ is generalised university teachers, the group to which Teacher Hu belongs. ‘They are the first batch of students I taught, which gives me the deepest impression. Now, I can still remember everyone’s name.’ ‘They’ is generalised non-English major undergraduates while Teacher Hu is not within this group.

This reading also achieves the purpose of looking for contrapuntal voices by deconstructing the meaning of different pronouns and discovering different voices, the ones aligned with the self and the ones which are distanced or silent (Brown & Gilligan, 1992).

Mauthner and Doucet (1998) argue that what distinguishes VCR from other qualitative analytical approaches such as grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990:177, cited in Mauthner & Doucet, 1998: 130) is that instead of gathering data about ‘what persons do or don’t do in terms of action/interaction’, VCR centres on the ‘person per se’ and the processes of personal reflection and decision making. But at the same time VCR also enables the individual ‘I’ to be located to the relational

context which allows action and interaction to be captured and appreciated. It is possible to link the individual 'I' to the existing theoretical framework in which teachers' professional identity is to be understood. For example, in developing this reading my participant, Teacher Hu, had to take account of professional and institutional influences, which have sometimes meant that she has not been able to develop her preferred professional identity (Day & Gu, 2007). Teacher Hu was keen on teaching. She preferred to develop her professional identity on teaching. However, as a university teacher, Teacher Hu was expected to become both a qualified researcher and excellent teacher.

3.5.2.3 Reading 3: Reading for relationships with others

The third reading centres on how the interviewee speaks about relationships with others and the consequences of these relationships while it is also informed by and interacts with the analysis of the interviewee's identification of self and others in the second reading (Mauthner & Doucort, 1998). I started by picking out the words and sentences Teacher Hu used to speak about her relationships with her students, colleagues, former teachers and family members. Then I started to look for descriptions of the relationships given by the participant to illustrate the way in which she was able to assimilate the reality of teaching - for example her professional relationship with her students and how it evolved as her commitment to spend time to communicate with students in her spare time and shoulder more responsibilities. These relationships can be organised into categories, including professional relationships with students and colleagues. Although all these quotes can be traced back to the original transcript, this step represents a shift from a listener/reader to a researcher. Since the processes of analysis and interpretation were to be interwoven with each other, I drew on Simons' (2009) clarification that analysis refers to those procedures of coding, categorising and sorting through the data while interpretation is a process of meaning making, researcher understanding

and interpreting these codes, themes, categories and thinking about the connection and relationships. This reading emphasises the researcher's interpretation.

Then I moved on to look at the others with whom the participant had built up relationships as a way of searching for different or silenced voices. I started to realise that there were pieces missing from the jigsaw puzzle. For example, Teacher Hu talked a lot about how she wanted to be seen and how her students might see her. But she did not mention anything about how her colleagues might see her or her perceptions towards her colleagues. She did not say anything about the subject matter either.

3.5.2.4 Reading 4: Placing people within the cultural context and social structure

This final reading sets the context for the other readings. It explores the interviewee's experiences within the broader sociocultural context. It considers how the participants interact with and are affected by their particular social contexts (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998). I started to link events mentioned by Teacher Hu to the broader context. For example, Teacher Hu's concept of teaching reflects the student-centred approach which is promoted in English language teaching reform in China. The score from students' end-term evaluation seems important to her and is an integral part of how she values herself as a teacher. This shows how institutional power is embedded in teachers' professional identity.

Although the voice-centred relational method enabled my participants' voices to live, it was time-consuming since I tried to devote the same amount of time and energy to each one of my participants, however I was at the danger of not effectively reducing the data (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998). Therefore, after I finished all the transcripts by using this method, it was necessary and important for me to try to move from the holistic understandings of individual participants to tackling the data set as a whole.

Despite realising that by doing so I would lose much of its complexity, I proceeded to use thematic narrative analysis to break up each transcript into a number of overlapping themes and sub-themes.

3.5.3 Thematic Narrative Analysis

Thematic narrative analysis refers to a method for interpreting texts that have in common a storied form (Riessman, 2008). It is used because it focuses on how informants in an interview bring meaning and sense to their own experiences with an emphasis on the content of a text. It translates the content of ‘what is said’ into thematics based on the themes emerging from the data and developed by the research questions (Riessman, 1993). It focuses more on the sense-making of the researcher than upon the data.

Thematic narrative analysis is similar to grounded theory in terms of adopting an inductive approach to the coding, categorising and identifying of themes emerging from the data, enabling one to explore interesting issues emerging from the data. But grounded theory disaggregates the individual, reducing the person to a series of codes and categories and thus missing out their richness, uniqueness and depth and local, particular and specific contexts and experiences (Riessman, 2008). What distinguishes narrative thematic analysis from grounded theory is that it focuses on individual life stories. My study explores teachers’ professional development stories in order to reveal in the context of Chinese culture how they construct, maintain and develop their professional identities at different stages in their careers. Thus both individual stories and the connections between individual experiences and social contexts are important in my study. Thematic narrative analysis fits this aim.

In conducting the thematic narrative analysis I developed coding categories through the lens of teachers’ professional identity which might reveal how Teacher Hu and other participants perceived themselves as teachers and the teaching profession. This

coding and categorising was done for each individual. Throughout the process I have been open to challenging my assumptions. I have been surprised and confused by some experiences related by the participants. I even realised that the Chinese historical background may influence the teachers' lives but it may not necessarily have direct impact on their professional identities. My understandings have been reconstructed throughout the study, which impact on the process of analysis and interpretation as I make sense of data and draw new meanings from the data. As Charmaz (2006:64) suggests, I used the codes to summarise rather than analyse what I thought teachers were saying (See Appendix L).

Once the initial analysis of coding was completed I went back to each individual transcript and the codes created. I began to look for ways to categorise and analyse the codes, looking for themes and commonalities within each transcript (See Appendix L). For example, 'possible ways she wants to be seen by students', 'self-perception of how the students might see her', 'insights into what the students think is needed or impressed in terms of being a teacher', 'pride in her students', 'reactions from students' and 'desire to make impact' were grouped under 'the importance of teacher-student relationship', which was in turn grouped under 'working with students'. Throughout this process I refined and reduced the codes and applied the coding categories consistently across the data set. Then I looked at all these codes and categories within the groups of early-career, mid-career and late-career teachers. The codes were refined and reduced again. After that, I was able to synthesise the codes and categories within the group of teachers but still with a focus on the individual. Finally, I began to do cross-group analysis looking for themes, contradictions and commonalities across all three groups of teachers in order to find out distinguishing and uniting elements among the three groups of teachers in the processes of their professional identity construction.

There are advantages and disadvantages to using this method (see section 3.4.3.1). The advantage of this method is that, although the interviews with each informant

went differently, each person's story is guided by the same story line and themes generated which allows comparisons within each case (Riessman, 1993; 2008). This method also allows comparison of different cases to see how different story-tellers evaluate the same events or similar experiences. If such narrative perspectives toward one particular event are evident in the narratives of a number of teachers, as Cortazzi (1989) points out, it may reveal cultural patterns that are common to teachers.

Critics of this method point out that the core narratives construct the story which is taken to be a representation of 'what actually happened' (Cortazzi 1989; Patterson, 2008). However, it is argued that 'narratives do not reveal the past, neither are they open to proof but through interpretation they do reveal truths about narrators' experiences and how they want to be understood' (Patterson, 2008: 31). The strict application of thematic narrative analysis will decontextualise the narratives by ignoring historical, cultural and institutional factors. Certain terms such as 'score', 'Series B' only make sense when the context is explained. Therefore it is impossible to make explicit the research context through this method (Riessman, 1993; 2008). Nevertheless, it will be useful when combined with other methods. It may complement other readings to place the people within the cultural context and social structure by looking at transcripts from both individual and cultural/social-oriented perspectives.

3.5.4 Combining a Voice-centred Relational Method with Thematic Narrative Analysis

Since voice-centred relational methods and thematic narrative analysis both have advantages and disadvantages (see section 3.5.2 and 3.5.3), I have made use of the advantages of these two methods by combining them to meet my research purposes. I hope by combining these two data analysis methods, I can maintain differences between the participants, move from the holistic understandings of individual

participants to tackling the data set as a whole and capture the interactive processes between the individual self and the social, cultural and educational contexts. I used four readings as the structure of my analytical chapters. Thus the result of combining Reading 1 with thematic narrative analysis is shown in Chapter 4, the result of combining Reading 2 with thematic narrative analysis is shown in Chapter 5, the result of combining Reading 3 with thematic narrative analysis is shown in Chapter 6 and the result of combining Reading 4 with thematic narrative analysis is shown in Chapter 7.

Constructing Narratives

According to Ezzy (2002: 95), ‘parts of story become significant only as they are placed within the context of the whole narrative.’ Therefore, I used thematic narrative analysis to look at the whole story of each teacher. I have created a narrative for each teacher, and explain in detail how the narratives were constructed.

Looking at stories of individual teachers is important for this research. I took the individual as a whole person with complex lived realities. The stories the individual tells enable me to understand how they are bringing meaning and sense to their experiences. Although the term ‘story’ is often used synonymously with ‘narrative’ (Riessman, 2008), narrative is not only the phenomenon under study, but also the method of study (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990), thus I would like to preserve the distinction between ‘story’ and ‘narrative’. The concept of ‘narrative’ is used differently based on different research aims. For example, narrative can refer to ‘a discrete unit of discourse’ in social linguistics, ‘an entire life story’ in social history and anthropology and includes personal life stories developed over research interviews or therapeutic conversations in psychology and sociology (Riessman, 2008; Squire, 2008). I used the term ‘story’, drawing on Clandinin and Connelly (2000), as the participants’ lived experiences. In order to be consistent with the usage of ‘narrative’ in Chapter 2, Section 2.4.2 The Narrative Construction of Teachers’

Professional Identity, I used 'narrative' as it is used in social sciences, which referred to the texts at two levels that overlap because of its interpretive nature (Riessman, 2008). Namely, on the one hand, I used 'narrative' as oral accounts of teachers which encompass personal stories bringing together past experiences, perceptions and actions in temporally and thematically meaningful constructions (Sørreide, 2007). These accounts are themselves interpretive (Riessman, 2008). On the other hand, I used 'narrative' as my interpretation or the textual representation I gave to these stories was also embedded in the narratives. As Stanley (2008:436) points out, 'narrative' is the 'analytical activities of the researcher in constructing a narrative frame by analysing stories that are linked together in life, involving the researcher's interpretational work in perceiving tacit connections across social phenomena.' Therefore, these interpretive accounts developed by me are stories about stories (Riessman, 2008).

Drawing on stories identified from Reading 1 (see the Reading 1 section), combining Reading 1 with thematic narrative analysis method, this time when I looked at teachers' stories, I looked for what I think to be 'critical events'. According to Webster and Mertova (2007), these 'critical events' are identified by the impact they have on the storyteller which bring with them significant life-changing consequences. I looked for any tensions or contradictions within their telling. I thought of it as an interpretive act, that through my interpretation of teachers' stories I decide what moments or experiences are 'critical'. I acknowledge that my own assumptions and beliefs impact on the decisions I have made in choosing what to include and what will remain overshadowed. Thus I recognise that there are many stories that I could tell, but what I have chosen to include in the following narratives are those stories that I believe to be most valuable and provoking for this research. For example I barely speak of any individual's illness (since the illness might be their private matter and by releasing such information in the current competitive environment, I am afraid it will cause the teachers trouble). I have not included those stories and

remarks which would be harmful or hurtful (as when some of my participating teachers talked about their opinions of their colleagues who were my participants as well) to the other teachers I interviewed either. I intentionally foregrounded the tensions and contradictions that I think illustrate the complex reality of their lived experience.

Teachers' stories are told in 'I' poems generated from the second reading (see Reading 2 Section), which combines longer summaries of the content of the transcript and direct quotes to illustrate the diverse and sometimes conflicting factors which influenced the development of teacher identity along with the participants' professional teaching journeys. The narratives of each individual are guided by the processes they went through in their professional development (becoming a teacher - being a teacher - future development), and therefore illustrate the general pattern that could be found in other interviews.

I have constructed narratives about each teacher (see Chapter 4) and present these before the analysis from other readings in order to foreground the importance I place on the individual as a whole person with complex lived realities. I also want to introduce these teachers and to provide some insights into their experiences and stories in the teaching journey so as to further cast light on the process of their professional identity construction.

Organising Themes

Some overarching themes did emerge across all the participants. Each theme was also explored through the results of Reading 2, Reading 3 and Reading 4 (see Section 3.6.2) to further examine teachers' professional identity construction in detail, and I have used these to frame my three analytical chapters. As a result, 'professional role identities', 'self and others' and 'the teachers' lives in the context of reforms' were identified as main themes. Codes such as 'teacher as manager', 'teacher as professional', 'teacher as acculturator' and 'teacher as researcher' were all

categorised under the theme of ‘professional role identities’. Codes such as ‘working with students’ and ‘working with colleagues’ were categorised under the theme of ‘self and others’. Codes such as ‘reforms’ and ‘university policies’ were categorised under the theme of ‘the teachers’ lives in the socio-cultural context’.

Some themes were found to overlap with one another, for example, the overlapping between the domains of ‘professional role identities’ and ‘self and others’. During the process of data analysis, I realised that the voice of the ‘I’ was also talking about others. The view of others is also a focus on ‘I’. Therefore, although in ‘professional role identities’ I am focused mainly on ‘I’, the teachers partly discuss the ‘I’ in terms of others. Similarly, in ‘self and others’ I focused mainly on ‘I’ in relation to others, but this overlap cannot be entirely disentangled from the view of self as a professional manager, etc. I re-examined all the codes and put them under these three broader themes. During this reordering process, sometimes I was doubtful and some data had to be placed in two or more categories. For example, the score/ students’ evaluation is important to Teacher Hu and is an integral part of how she values herself as a teacher, as she told me that ‘every term, students will give us an evaluation. My score is very high.’ This could be placed in ‘student-teacher relationship’. It also could be positioned in ‘university policies’ due to the university’s requirement that a teacher’s performance be assessed by students’ evaluation. All the teachers’ scores would be ranked. If a teacher’s score falls into the last 20%, he or she would not be able to teach next term and would not apply for the professorial (see Chapter 2, Section 2.3). Thus in this case the same quotes used or mentioned more than once from different perspectives in the following analytical chapters.

3.5.5 Reflections and Rethinking the Teachers’ Grouping Model

A problem encountered in the data collection was my failure to get a balanced number of teachers within each group. I got four early-career, one mid-career and

three late-career teachers (see Section 3.4.3), making it hard for me to make comparisons with such uneven number of teachers within each group. In order to solve this problem, I could have abandoned the idea of having groups but felt that the group distinction was still important. The group differences were shown among participating teachers in most cases. Thus, I decided to keep the group. Then I faced the decisions of either choosing to focus only on early- and late-career teachers, but I still wanted to keep mid-career teachers even with only one teacher because mid-career teachers grew up along with China's 30-year Reform and Opening-up; their professional development is special and quite different from the other two groups due to the influence of the Chinese historical, social, cultural and political context. For instance, they were advised by their teachers to stay at university as teachers for a long period of unchanged professorial activity (being lecturers for more than ten years) (see analytical and discussion chapters). After I decided to keep the only mid-career teacher, I realised that this teacher, who had 21 years' teaching experience, could actually belong to late-middle or early-late career. I could have chosen to group her into the late-career teachers, thus balancing number of teachers or group them into two groups (four for each group): the Series B teachers and the Series A teachers – groups I found could be made according to their employment status. But I chose to stick to the original design of having three groups of teachers and left them as they were. This was not a decision that I took lightly. It was only after I had engaged in an analysis of the interviews, and had looked at issues emerging within case and themes, commonalities and tensions across cases, that I was able to keep these three groups of teachers. Because the only mid-career teacher in most of situations was different from the other three late-career teachers, in those cases, their life stages/age matters. Meanwhile the employment status did contribute to the differences that emerged, but it was decided career stages mattered more than the employment status in most situations (see analytical and discussion chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8). Actually the two options discussed above could not solve the problem; only

tentative comparisons could be made with unbalanced numbers of teachers within each group.

3.5.6 Translation Related Problems

Since this study involves different languages, namely researching in one language and presenting it in another, in the process of translation I am not equally dependent on the precision of linguistic data but on the conceptual meaning of the narrative. I made not only translation-related decisions but also decisions about how to present a culture. One of the major pitfalls of this research is gaining conceptual equivalence or comparability of meaning (Birbili, 2000). Temple (1997) views this as an unsolvable problem because any utterance in any language carries with it a set of assumptions, feelings and values that the speaker may or may not be aware of, but of which the researcher, as an outsider, usually is not. However, in this case since I am a native speaker of the same language and come from the same work place as the participants, it is assumed that I will try my best to eliminate the problem as far as possible, but I also acknowledge that I am not bilingual (English is a foreign language to me) and I am not good at conveying English nuances and avoiding writing sticky sentences in the thesis. While there are obvious difficulties involved when translating, I have had to make a number of decisions based on understandings of the language and context, such as words which exist in one language but not in another, concepts which are not equivalent in different cultures, idiomatic expressions and differences among languages in grammatical and syntactical structures. These decisions, along with factors such as my own autobiography as the researcher-translator and my knowledge of the language and the culture of the people under study, have a direct impact on the validity of the findings of the research and the resulting reports. Therefore, I have to be explicit about the translation-related decisions which were made.

‘Literal’ VS. ‘Free’ Translation

The original data are in Chinese. I did all my analyses based on the Chinese transcripts. Only those experiences related to the interests of the study were selected, translated and presented in English in the *Analysis and Discussion of Findings* part by me to prevent any valuable meanings from being lost in the process of translation. Since I use extensive quotes from the participants' own voices to present my data, one of the major tasks has been in relation to the translation of direct quotes. I used a combination of literal and free translation, although the decisions for either the literal or free one were not easy ones, because there was a tension between readability and authenticity (Birbili, 2000). On the one hand, a literal translation (i.e. translating word-by-word) could perhaps be seen as more closely adequate to what participants have said. However, it could be argued that this cannot make readers understand the foreign mentality better since the readability of the text is low and requires great patience of readers and even ability to understand what is going on (Honig, 1997). On the other hand, although a free translation could enable quotations to read well, editing quotations involves 'the risk of misrepresenting the meaning of the conversational partner' (Rubin & Rubin, 1995:273).

Different Conceptual Meanings

In some cases there is direct lexical equivalence between two languages, but the term or expression which might carry 'emotional connotations' in one language will not necessarily do so in another (Birbili, 2000). An example of such a case is the word 'teacher'. Although, this term implies a similar 'image' in several cultures, it might not be easy for English readers to understand the full implications the word carries for a Chinese student or teacher unless it is accompanied by more 'cultural' information on the connotations that the word 'teacher' has in a Chinese context. In the past was associated with awe and affection, power and authority, but this has slightly changed over time. Its usage can be tracked throughout the literary tradition. In this case only with the help of history can the triangle of interdependence between language, culture and history be analysed. Additionally, in Chinese 'teacher' is used

as a form of address whereas in English Mr/Miss/Ms are used. In order to preserve this cultural value, I use for example Teacher Hu to call the teacher instead of Ms. Hu.

On those occasions where the two languages do not offer direct lexical equivalence efforts were directed towards obtaining conceptual equivalence rather than literally translated equivalence (Temple, 1997). In this case, the expression like ‘Tie fan wan’ could find its lexical equivalent in the expression ‘iron rice bowl’ but it would not present the full meaning of the expression in Chinese where it has a much deeper meaning as a secure job, a stable employment model in the era of the planned economy in China. Another example is the expression ‘the old woman Jiujin’, a character in Chinese literature whose famous saying was ‘each generation is worse than its predecessor’. It is not just an old woman but also represents a person who is conservative and always blindly clinging to the past. For the terms or expressions which were culturally specific, I adopted Venuti’s (1995) foreignisation strategy, which ‘pressured on those (cultural) values to register the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text, sending the reader abroad’ (20) by using the term in Chinese and adding the conceptual interpretation. Having not only ‘a proficient understanding of language’ but also as Frey (1970) points out, an ‘intimate’ knowledge of the culture could facilitate gaining the deeper meanings and concepts. Only then can the researcher demonstrate the full implications that a term or expression carries for the people under study and make sure that the cultural connotations of a word are made explicit to the readers (Birbili, 2000).

Different Grammatical and Syntactical Structures

A different kind of translation problem occurs when sentences in the language of data collection involve grammatical and syntactical structures that do not exist in English. Syntactical style is one of the most difficult features to carry from one language to another (Ercikan, 1998). In this case, the sense of sentences was

translated into English and rules of English structure were applied. However, it may inevitably cause the loss of information (Ervin & Bower, 1952; Bassnett-McGuire, 1980). Although gaining grammatical and syntactical equivalence is important, the more important aim of this research was to convey meanings accurately, namely to achieve a more accurate conceptual interpretation.

The Quality of the Translation

The quality of translation depends on a number of factors, some of which may be beyond the researcher's control. In this study, where the researcher and the translator are the same person, the quality of translation has been influenced by factors such as the autobiography of the research-translator, the researcher's knowledge of the language and the culture of the people under study and the researcher's competence in the language of the writing-up (Vulliamy, 1990). I had professional translator training during undergraduate and postgraduate study and I am a qualified translator in China. When I dealt with meaning-related problems, I used what Ercikan (1998) suggests, namely making constant comparison of two (or more) versions of a translation until ambiguities in meaning were removed. Since all my participants are bilingual, I sent my translations back to them to check the accuracy of meaning conveyed, though they did not give any comments. I always bear in mind that translation-related decisions have a direct impact on the validity of the research.

3.6 Validity

The term validity is problematic due to the naturalistic nature of qualitative research. Hence some would argue that it may not be the proper criterion for evaluating qualitative research (Becker, 1961, Merriam, 1998). I have no space to explore the contested and problematic nature of validity, and can only explain some issues that I think are important to my research.

I find that Lather's (1993) neo-pragmatic validity/Lyotardian paralogy and situated

validity are useful for my study. Neo-pragmatic validity/Lyotardian paralogy focuses on ‘openness to counter-interpretations’, which fosters heterogeneity and refuses closure (Lather, 1993: 679). It suits my acknowledgment of multiple interpretations and understandings of teachers’ experiences in professional identity construction. Situated validity bestows the idea of a ‘view from everywhere’ in contrast with a ‘view from nowhere’, which describes my research, which is situated and specific. I am not intending to provide a ‘god’s eye view’ (Griffiths, 2003). Nevertheless, I find Griffiths and Macleod’s (2008) discussion of validity in relation to auto/biographical research helpful for my study. As Griffiths and Macleod (2008) suggest, researchers still need to pay attention to the extent to which the research is justifiable, transparent and trustworthy.

One issue with life history narratives pointed out by Goodson and Sikes (2001) is that life history narratives are not simply reports of experiences because sense is made during the collaboration between the researcher and participants to construct and represent the life they concern. There are two levels of judgment that need to be addressed: firstly the extent to which we can judge the validity and trustworthiness of these teachers’ stories and secondly, judging my interpretation and representation of teachers’ stories. Truthfulness is important here in order to make judgment about the validity of this research, as maintained by Griffiths and Macleod (2008) when drawing on Williams’ (2002) suggestion that we should focus on truthfulness rather than truth by judging accuracy and sincerity. I need to consider how far I thought teachers were being sincere in what they said. Because it is the teachers’ perceptions that are under consideration, accuracy is less of the issue in this case. If they are being sincere, they are also being accurate. In my study, I am not going to find objective reality in teachers’ lives. What really matters would be how the context and experiences are to be subjectively perceived, interpreted and connected to teachers’ professional identity construction.

Apart from the trustfulness of participants, the trustworthiness of the researcher is an ongoing process (Mishler, 1990; Kvale, 1996), which may be judged:

...the key issue becomes whether the relevant community ...evaluates reported findings as sufficiently trustworthy to rely on them for their own work... [This] is compatible with a growing recognition among mainstream validity theorists of the centrality of interpretation in validation (Mishler, 1990, p417).

That is, the trustworthiness of accounts and inferences drawn from the data (Maxwell, 1992). Therefore, concerns of the trustworthiness in the context of this study throughout the research process beginning with the coherence of the nature of inquiry, the transparency of research methods, analytical approach, the data analysis process and ending with reporting which it is regarded as trustworthy by readers (Riessman, 1993).

In my study I provided a detailed description of how my research process was carried out with detailed information on interviews, transcription, data analysis and the translation process (see Section 3.4). The transcripts of interviews were returned to participants in order to reduce the possibility of misinterpretation or misunderstanding, although they did always agree or did not comment at all. The analysis of data was based on the language of the participants and the representation of findings relied as much as possible on using participants' own voices. The terms used for the main analytical chapters such as 'professional role identities', 'self and others' and 'larger context of teachers' professional identity construction' emerged from the analysis of data and was subjected to examination based on review of relevant literature. I acted reflexively in terms of my actions and in writing about teachers' stories I tried to provide as much contextual information as possible, which includes appropriate cultural, social, historical and personal information shown in the following analytical chapters. In the writing up my readers have to be given a chance to follow the whole process and be able to decide for themselves if the research is valid and reliable.

I make no claims that the findings are generalisable in that way as this study was not designed to enable generalisability to wider populations (Kvale, 1996). Rather, its usefulness lies in developing an in-depth understanding of how a small number of Chinese College English teachers were making sense of their professional identity construction in the Chinese context. With regard to generalisability, Elliott (2005) points out it is whether readers in similar settings with the opportunity to relate to the situation, can evaluate if the information can be transferable. Generalisability in life history narratives usually takes place during the process of developing a theory that not only makes sense of the particular persons or situations studied, but also shows how the same process, in different situations, with different informants, could lead to either the same or different results. Therefore, through telling stories and retelling stories, researchers try either to present echoes from different stories or to provide chances for the audience to find echoes and reconstruct meaning from a number of different lived stories. Generalisability also occurs when the experience described resonates with readers and enables them to find parallels in their own experiences. In this sense, it is not generalisable for a statistical population but it is generalisable to theoretical propositions because the life history narratives not only capture insights into teachers' experiences but also provide a medium for researching the cultural framework within which teachers make sense of their lives (Elliott, 2005).

Hence, the validation of the qualitative data collected in this study is dependent on the definition of truth and the nature of representation. Therefore, as Patton (2002) argues, life history narrative study is not a reflection of facts or document of truth but meanings given from perception and interpretation by the participants and then the researcher which could provide a perspective on reality.

3.7 Ethical Considerations: Researching with Integrity

The British Educational Research Association's (BERA) Revised Ethical Guidelines (BERA, 2011) have been used to approach ethical issues that might occur during the

course of my research. Apart from this, it is important for me to consider the ways in which I am researching with integrity in relation to my moral position and ethical responsibilities as researcher. Drawing on Macfarlane's (2009:45) advice, as a researcher I should try to act and practise in a way that is consistent with and true to 'my self, my values and my identity'. Here I will discuss the issue of informed consent, power and reflexivity in detail.

Informed Consent

All the potential participating teachers were invited to be my participants with an invitation letter sent to them, which outlined the purpose and scope of my study, the reasons why I considered undertaking this kind of research and why their participation was important for the language teaching profession; it also explained that they could withdraw from the research any time they wanted (see Appendix E). For those who did participate, a consent form (see Appendix F) explained what would happen to the data, included a request for permission to tape-record the interviews, and informed potential participants about the intended use of results of my research, which would be disseminated and accessible to policymakers, educators and other readers. This consent form had to be signed by participants before interviewing started.

As confidentiality is a key principle in conducting research (BERA, 2011; Elliott, 2005; Macfarlane, 2009), when transcribing the interviews, I allocated the teachers pseudonyms in order to conceal their identity. However, although confidentiality was indicated, when using in-depth interviewing which is also the constitutive of self, it can be difficult to guarantee (Elliott, 2005). Therefore, I acknowledge the participants' potential unwillingness to release the stories of their experiences in which they have great personal investment. Giving detailed description of the individual's experience with only their name changed, and only brief background information, may not be sufficient to prevent participants' being identified. Therefore,

the degree of anonymity was discussed and negotiated with the participants with regard to specific stories. If they did not wish to be anonymous, some stories would be named with their own name. However, only one teacher claimed that she 'did not care' if she was named. In this study it was problematic because another teacher insisted firmly that I could use any of her stories anonymously. Identifying one participant could then have led to the unwanted identification of others. I explained to the unconcerned teacher that I had an obligation to meet the agreement I had with the other participants, and we came to the agreement that she too would be allocated a pseudonym.

During the whole process of the research, I aimed to treat the teachers with respect (Macfarlane, 2009). I suggested that they choose interview places where they felt relaxed and comfortable. According to our customs, I presented each teacher with a small packet of chocolates and a box of tea after interviews as a way to express my gratitude and respect for their contribution rather than an attempt to force them to participate or to create bias (BERA, 2011).

Moreover, I intended to make my actions transparent and to make clear the process that I had undertaken to bring about informed consent. Thus during data interpretation and analysis I sent them the initial transcripts and findings of the research for their comments. However, I realised that some of them did not care about this, and most of the teachers were happy with the transcript of their interview as well as with the interpretations that I had later given to what they had said.

Issues of Power

Here I drew on the Foucauldian concept of power. It is understood as something that acts and manifests itself in a certain way and is always a case of power relations between people (Foucault, 1977).

As I mentioned earlier, I failed to persuade any teachers who did not know me to take part in my study (see the Rejection and Ignorance section). For teachers who did not take part in the research they plainly exercised their power as I was only a powerless stranger, a research student. Those who accepted, the interview invitation had bestowed on me a level of power. Furthermore, although I was interested in what the participants had to say, whether explicitly or subtly I had brought my interests to the interview, which had arguably endowed a level of control.

When the transcripts of interviews and analysis were returned to participants for comments, the extent to which the participants were allowed to modify them raised the issue of power distribution of among the participants and researcher, though in my case, the participants offered alternative interpretations, and most appeared to be happy with my work and few bothered to make any comments.

Reflexivity

For qualitative researchers, researcher reflexivity is one of the aspects of which researchers should be aware. As Goodson and Sikes (2001) point out, a researcher's background, interest, in short his or her biography, will inevitably influence the deconstructing and interpreting of narratives. Who I am and how I see the world influences my research throughout the process: while interacting with the research participants, analysing the data, presenting the findings and attempting to evaluate them. When analysing and evaluating the data I have obtained I need to take into account possible shortcomings of my research, the challenges encountered, the strategies I found to overcome them, as well as the factors that may have remained in the shadows of my own or my readers' awareness (see Section 3.4).

The Power to Know: From Insider-outsider Perspective

Although neither research undertaken by insiders nor research undertaken by outsiders has the power to know all things (Foster, 1994), I conducted this research

in order to study Chinese College English teachers' professional development stories and to reveal in the context of Chinese culture how teachers, at different stages of their careers, construct, maintain and develop their professional identities. Using life history narrative and focusing on the lives of Chinese College English teachers enabled the teachers' voices to be heard. I am hoping that my research contributes to a more integrated understanding of Chinese College English teachers and my work becomes part of the collective memory of the Chinese College English teachers as well as part of the academic study.

My research participants and I are members of the same cultural and speech community and workplace. Based on my experience I am convinced that the university's acceptance of me as an insider enabled me to access to university easily and the teachers' familiarity with me influenced their willingness to participate and shaped their expectations and responses. I noted that my insider status was being negotiated throughout the course of the interview. Furthermore, the interweaving of my insider and outsider status produced varying degrees of solidarity. Neither is the information acquired through interviews absolute, nor are the interpretations I have made the only ones possible.

Foster (1994) discusses her life history study of Black teachers in 1988. In her research, the willingness of her participants who knew her as an insider influenced them to assist her with her project. In contrast to her case, although my insider status allowed me to gain easy access to the site, during the process of approaching participants, my insider status did not necessarily bring me any advantages and did not minimise the social distance. In my case, the degree of familiarity mattered more (see the Rethinking the Research Plan and Valuing 'Failures' section). Since I had built on already familiar relationships with my participants, my claims to insider status were not tested in the ways that Foster (1994) describes in her research. Each of the participating teachers invited me into their homes to conduct interviews, which seemed to acknowledge my claims of insider status or my familiarity.

When I contacted Teacher Liu and Teacher Wang over the telephone, I could perceive their hesitation and worries, but when we met and talked for a little while, they both seemed pleased and their expectations immediately changed when we met. Throughout the course of the interviews, our familiarity modified their expectations of the interview that was to take place. At the end of the interviews they told me that ‘they really appreciated that I was there to hear their experiences.’

Teacher Ren had previously spoken with a number of other interviewers on different occasions, but she was very pleased to be interviewed by me because I was in the field of English language teaching (ELT). As she said, ‘I have been waiting a long time for somebody from the field of ELT to come and hear my story.’ The micro perspective of insider status, such as the shared background and area, played an important role in this case. Coupled with the intimate relationship between us, the interview was going to be a lot longer.

While I did the work of data analysis, in order to understand fully the meanings being conveyed, I paid attention not only to what was being said but also to how it was said (Riessman, 1993; Gee, 1999). I found that as the interviews progressed, the teachers mainly used Mandarin, but they sometimes included some English words, phrases and expressions. When I closely looked at the content, they usually included me as one of their members in their talks. For example, when Teacher Ma was talking about how she felt of being a College English teacher in the past, she said ‘during that time you were young and had not joined us yet. It is quite different from now, at that time, according to my traditional concept, do not you think as a language teacher, we should teach grammar and train students’ language skills?’ While they were talking to me, they treated me like someone who was familiar with the department and university policies. They frequently mentioned scores, Series and terminology of courses and teaching methods. All of these suggested that my insider status was being negotiated throughout the course of the interview (Foster, 1994).

As Griffiths (1998: 137) argues, ‘no one in educational research is a complete insider or outsider’, and similarly Foster (1994: 132) points out that ‘even members of the same speech and cultural community are differentiated by other equally important characteristics that make the researcher both an insider as well as an outsider.’ My insider and outsider status was intertwined which separated me from my participants. I was learned foreign language at comprehensive universities when I interviewed those who were educated at normal universities. I was majoring in applied linguistics when I interviewed those who were majoring in English language and literature or translation studies. I was a younger person when I talked to older teachers. I was a woman when I interviewed a man. I was a research student when I interviewed early-middle- late-career teachers. These shaped the interviews in some obvious and less obvious ways. Sometimes I was positioned as an outsider on several dimensions simultaneously, for instance the dimension of generation. Because I had lived through the Era of Reform and Development (1989-present), it was easier for me to identify emotionally with the struggles and challenges early-career teachers were facing. When I heard their stories I could hear my own voice in theirs. Although I had read and learned a lot about the political, economic, social and intellectual upheavals during the 50s, 60s and 70s, and heard about them from my parents who experienced them, my emotional responses were not as strong as those I experienced when interviewing teachers of my own age. When I interviewed Teacher Ma, a middle-career teacher, at first I just noted that her perception towards the impact of the Cultural Revolution on her was significantly different from late-career teachers and what we knew from public reports, which was very positive. That is, the Cultural Revolution enabled her to have a group of excellent teachers who were affected by Cultural Revolution and were transferred to her hometown, a small town. I overlooked the importance of her statement. When I looked again at her transcript, I realised that this event had played a vital role in her life, which not only brought her excellent English education but also influenced her choice of major and ways of

teaching in the early stages of her teaching. What I learned from this experience was that my own outsider status in generational disjunction made it difficult for me to perceive easily or understand fully the significance of certain historical events by some of the older teachers whose years I had not experienced. With regard to the dimension of gender, apart from turn-taking patterns noted by Foster (1994), in the interview with the man, the emotional expressions were less intense compared to those conducted with the women, which made the transcript read like a government report rather than a personal narration. I think differences such as generation and gender produced varying degrees of solidarity.

3.8 Summary

This study adopts a life history narrative enquiry to look at Chinese College English teachers' professional identity construction by listening to their voices. The study used face-to-face, in-depth interviews combining topical interviews and narrative interviews. A voice-centred relational method of data analysis was described in detail. The trustworthiness of the research design, validation and ethical considerations were discussed.

Chapter 4 The Teachers' Stories

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results from combining Reading 1, which involves searching for the story told, and my response to the narrative and thematic narrative analysis, which looks at the whole story of each teacher and creates a narrative for each teacher by looking for what I think to be 'critical events' (see Methodology Chapter 3 Section 3.5). Throughout this chapter I am presenting the narratives of each teacher among three groups of Chinese College English Teachers which I have written about. The teachers' stories are presented by 'I' poems, generated from Reading 2, to bring to the fore their voices. The aims of these narratives are to introduce these teachers and to provide some insights into their experiences in their teaching journeys. Before I look more closely at teachers' professional identity construction later in Chapters 5, 6 and 7, these narratives serve to illustrate the complexities of teachers' professional identity construction processes and to introduce the key ideas of the subsequent chapters. These narratives are my interpretation of teachers' stories.

4.2 Early-career Teachers

Four early-career teachers participated in my study. Although their experiences varied, they all entered the Sun Yat-sen University in the same year, 2007. I first met them when I taught on a College English course while I did my MA programme at Sun Yat-sen University. We all taught the same course at the same campus of our university at that time. Our relationship has continued since then.

4.2.1 Teacher Hu

Teacher Hu was one of the early-career College English teachers who had three years' teaching experience at the time when I did my fieldwork in 2010. She was very glad to be one of my interviewees when I invited her to participate in my study.

Throughout the stories Teacher Hu tells me, I see tensions emerge as she begins to negotiate what it means to her to be a Chinese College English teacher. As she talks about her experiences and understanding of becoming and being a College English teacher, stories of disillusion, tension and frustration come to the fore. These conflict with her positive experiences of transformation in her own learning and understanding, and a desire to be an excellent teacher who could make a positive impact on students' future development, have a very close relationship with students and gain support from them.

I am intentionally foregrounding these tensions which are the lived reality of her becoming and being a College English teacher. It shows the complexity of Teacher Hu negotiating, constructing and resisting her own shifting professional identity.

4.2.1.1 Becoming a College English Teacher

According to her interest, Teacher Hu chose to be an English major at a normal university. Apart from subject learning, she also learnt about teaching methodologies in the university and did her placement which enabled her to master the basic skills to become a teacher. After graduation, she continued to pursue her Masters Degree in Applied Linguistics at Sun Yat-sen University. This masters programme was completely subject-based and there were no teaching components or placement opportunities. But Teacher Hu found some part-time jobs as an English teacher. She did lots of teaching practicums before graduation. Through her study and teaching experience, she discovered that she liked the feeling of teaching in the classroom and she was very clear that she was suitable for teaching. These experiences could be

seen as a significant critical event in Teacher Hu's stories of becoming a College English teacher. Through her communication with both non-English major undergraduates and English major ones, she preferred to teach the non-English majors because of the inspirational conversations and depth of their thinking which were more attractive.

I, myself once was an English major;
I have the same background as them;
It is hard for me to elicit inspiration or creativity from them;
On the contrary, when I communicate with non-English majors, sometimes with the help of their professional knowledge, their perspectives could let me learn a lot.

After she was awarded an MA degree, she decided to become a teacher. It was difficult for an MA English major to pursue a teaching career at a prestigious university. Even becoming a College English teacher was competitive because of the increasing number of university graduates. As one of the pro-reform universities to practise personnel system reforms, Sun Yat-sen University changed the personnel system from tenure to appointment. The teachers' position was subdivided into Series A and B. There is no direct personnel relationship between the university and teachers in Series B. It is an adjunct position. Teacher Hu was becoming a College English teacher as a Series B teacher at Sun Yat-sen University.

4.2.1.2 Being a College English Teacher

The most precious moments are from my students

In the beginning, as a novice teacher, everything went well for Teacher Hu. She loved teaching very much. Her scores from students' end-term evaluations were very high. Although she was young, teaching practicum experiences made her more mature than other teachers of the same age. As a novice teacher, she wanted to gain students' trust by showing a native speakers' identity, such as pronunciation,

expression and fluency which highlighted the importance of her language level in terms of her identity.

Her identity as a teacher is bound up with reactions from students. In dealing with uncooperative students, she learnt that some of the students would like to participate, but due to language barriers, they were very passive in class. Her understanding about cooperation changed. She thought that sometimes the cooperation is superficial, such as questions and answers in class. But sometimes the cooperation is support from the bottom of the heart.

I remembered that I had a class which was not very cooperative;
In my class, I required students' participation;
I was very worried about it;
I sent a questionnaire to them;
I was astonished by the feedback;
Now, I have a different understanding about cooperation between me and my students;
I can understand them much better.

I try to control my mood in class;
When they do well, I will laugh;
When they cannot reach my requirements, I feel worried and angry;
When students do not cooperate, in the past I felt very depressed;
I am thinking whether they do not like me, whether they cannot accept my way of teaching;
When I know that it is because they have difficulties in how to use English to express themselves, not the reasons I am guessing;
I will encourage them to participate in class;
In the past, I never called a student's name to ask them to give his or her opinion;
Now I will give them a lot of chances to speak.

Sometimes, she had not been able to develop what Day and Gu (2007) called 'preferred professional identity'. For example, partially influenced by her past experience as a student – that she was always hoping she could participate in the class and she felt that a teacher-dominated class was extremely boring – she wanted to adopt a student-centred approach. She used this approach in her job interview, which gained approval and appreciation from the dean, an experienced expert. This

approval was a huge encouragement to her. She insisted on trialling it in her class. However, some students had got used to the traditional way of teaching and hoped that teachers in the university would still use the same way to teach. They thought that when they listened to others talking, they were not involved. They could learn nothing. Teacher Hu wanted to figure out how she should design and apply this approach to her classes and make this approach more acceptable for students. A teacher's professional identity is affected greatly by what surrounds him/her (Dworet, 1996). The students play a part in whether the idealised concept of teaching could be realised. Moreover, Teacher Hu wants to be a teacher who would be remembered by students, and hopes that her students would keep in touch with her even after their graduation. This indicates that she blurs the lines between personal and professional. However, as a general course teacher, the increasingly alienated teacher-student relationship weakened Teacher Hu's sense of achievement that she always had as a College English teacher.

I am doubt my value;
I do not know where my sense of worth is.

No matter how much they like me at that time, one or two years later we won't keep in touch;
They seldom remember me;
When we come across each other on campus, they seldom say hello to me;
Sometimes I am thinking whether being a secondary school teacher is more worthwhile;
If a teacher loses the treasure of students, I feel he or she will lose his or her value.

This story tells us a bit about her own living contradictions – things she wants to be or believes are worthwhile in conflict with the reality constraints.

Meanwhile, she was struggling with how to cope with changing students. Being needed is part of her expectation of what being a teacher involves, however Teacher Hu noticed that the students who were born after the 1990s were more independent. They seldom sent her emails or text messages. Instead of asking her for help, they

preferred to find out the answers on their own with the help of the internet. The change in students affects how she sees herself as a teacher. This reflects the teacher's view of what the teacher's role is and, in turn, gives insights into identity.

I notice that this year's students are quite different from my former students in 2007;

If one day they do not need me anymore, how could I survive? I am wondering what I could teach you, my students.

4.2.1.3 Future Development

Teacher Hu always wanted to be a teacher. But her future was full of uncertainty and pressure. She was facing a professional dilemma.

I am a little bit puzzled (laughing);

If it is permitted, I hope I could teach;

I am afraid one day, in the near future, they will fire me if I cannot fit their requirements any more.

As a university teacher, Teacher Hu was expected to become both a qualified researcher and excellent teacher. But she only liked teaching. She was facing the dilemma of how to change from a teacher to a researcher.

I am a little bit distressed;

For me, I am keen on teaching, but I do not like to do research;

I heard that abroad, a university teacher could either mainly focus on teaching or research;

But here, what is discouraging is that as a university teacher, I am required to do teaching and research;

I feel there is a dilemma;

If I still want to insist on teaching, I should make a breakthrough in research;

I am puzzled.

I almost have no time to do it;

I do not have the interest.

To do something I do not want to;

If I would like to continue or do what I like, I should do research;

In order to get what I like, I should force myself to do what I do not like.

This is a critical and transformative moment in Teacher Hu's own learning and professional development. She is frustrated by this new role. Being a researcher is not an identity she is choosing to take on. This story has begun to look at some of the tensions and emerging issues which Teacher Hu has and still faces as a College English teacher.

Throughout the stories, Teacher Hu was in the process of gaining-losing-gaining and distance-close-distance with her students. She highlights interesting issues relating to professional identity construction, for instance, identity construction as a teacher was coming from the students. These issues also emerge in other teachers' stories, but they express themselves somewhat differently.

4.2.2 Teacher Sun

Teacher Sun had four years' teaching experience. Before she became a College English teacher, she had worked in a company for a year. After one year working in a private university, she entered Sun Yan-sen University. When I invited her to participate in my study, she was pleased to join in.

Throughout her stories, I see tensions emerge as she begins to negotiate what it means to her to be a Chinese College English teacher.

4.2.2.1 Becoming a College English Teacher

When Teacher Sun was a secondary school student, her English was excellent, thus she chose to be an English major in a comprehensive university. After graduation, she was recommended to be a postgraduate student at Sun Yat-sen University. Both her bachelors and masters programmes were completely subject-based, and there were no teaching component or placement opportunities. To be a teacher was not her first choice but, due to personal reasons, she decided to be a teacher. When facing the

choice of being an English teacher or a College teacher, and whether to be a teacher in top-ranking universities or second-ranking ones, she chose to be a College English teacher as a Series B teacher at Sun Yat-sen University.

I think if I want to become an English teacher;
I had to choose from not very good universities;
If so, I would rather be a College English teacher at a prestigious university.

4.2.2.2 Being a College English Teacher

Not look like a teacher but act like a teacher

Teacher Sun thought she was not a born teacher but a learnt teacher. She was not looking like a teacher. But she should behave and talk like a teacher.

Blurring the professional lines between ‘teaching’ as a job and the personal (friend), Teacher Sun thought her students and she could become close friends, but in reality she found that students treated her differently in class and after class. She thought it was because the students did not see her, or it was out of their expectation that their teacher would say ‘Hi’ to them, thus, when she said ‘Hi’ to them, they did not reply to her.

When I encounter my students on campus;
I say ‘Hi’ to them, but they do not reply to me;
But I keep doing so;
Sometimes I feel a little bit awkward that you are very close to them in daily life,
but when you come to class, they will use a different eye to see you and treat you;
Sometimes I find it is hard for me to shift between my roles.

About a student-centred approach, Teacher Sun felt there was a tension. On the one hand, she hoped the English class could provide a platform for students to present themselves and they could learn through their interests and gain pleasure from learning. They should have deserved this kind of pleasure from kindergarten, primary school and secondary school. She designed some activities and chose some suitable topics which could enable everybody to join in. She hoped that, apart from English

competence, they could bring in other abilities such as maths, inferences, and logics and so on. By doing so, she found that it could arouse students' learning interests. However, on the other hand, her responsibility as a teacher made her feel she should make sure they learned something from her. She felt contradictory. Thus, each semester, she used student-centred activities once or twice. Recognising the changing role of the teacher when faced with differing groups of students, Teacher Sun adopted different methods to teach.

For students from sciences and technology, whose English levels are relatively lower, I will mainly focus on textbooks;

For students from management and business, I will focus on listening and speaking;

I will prepare a lot of activities before class;

I will make some adjustments in class according to their real situation;

Sometimes I randomly choose my way of teaching upon students' reaction.

4.2.2.3 Future Development

Teacher Sun was not very sure about whether she would stay to be a teacher, but she wished that she could continue. She thought it was impossible for her to start a new career at her age in China. In her opinion, her job was full of challenges, which were mainly from the impact of students' expectations and doing research.

On the one hand, Teacher Sun thought students' expectations towards teachers were becoming higher and higher.

I am not a pure language teacher to train students' language skills;

I need to cultivate their personality, quality and appropriate concepts of value.

On the other hand, the challenges were from doing research and pursuing a PhD degree. Teacher Sun thought the whole educational system was changing rapidly. 'As a member of it, whether you can keep up the pace and requirements determines whether you can go on or are laid off. You should improve yourself.' She was under great pressure to do research. She could not understand why every teacher was

required to do both research and teaching. She had doubts about ‘if you teach well and your students like you, why, according to the university’s system, without doing research they thought you have not the value to exist.’

I am under great pressure to do research;
For reform, it is not revolutionary. It is step by step. I could gradually understand, adopt and accept it. I do not know when I am old whether I could fit in or not.

I am required to get a PhD degree;
What I can do is just wait;
If it is not my turn, I can only leave;
Sometimes I doubt how they evaluate a teacher;
I can do nothing about it;
In order to survive, I need to pursue a PhD degree, but the chance is rare;
What I can do now is to focus on my teaching;
I do not know whether I can survive;
I am afraid if this situation lasts long, my passion and ambition will erode.

Throughout Teacher Sun’s stories, students play an important part in her identity construction.

4.2.3 Teacher Guo

Teacher Guo had six years’ teaching experience. After graduation, she had been working as a College English teacher in a university for three years. Then she pursued her masters degree at Sun Yat-sen University. After graduation, she entered Sun Yat-sen University. She was happy to participate in my study when I invited her.

Throughout her stories, I see tensions of student-teacher relationships, idealised teaching and working, concepts of teaching and how other people’s perception towards her emerged as she begins to negotiate what it means to her to be a Chinese College English teacher.

4.2.3.1 Becoming a College English Teacher

Teacher Guo chose to be an English major at a normal university. Apart from subject learning, she also learnt about teaching methodologies in the university and did her placement which enabled her to master some basic skills to be a teacher. At that time, an undergraduate could enter university to be a teacher. Because of her family expectations, she chose to be a College English teacher. Three years later, she decided to pursue her masters degree at Sun Yat-sen University. After graduation, she became a College English teacher as a Series B teacher at Sun Yat-sen University due to the attraction of students' diversity to her.

I was attracted by the diversity of students;
Thus I chose to be a College English teacher.

4.2.3.2 Being a College English Teacher

A strict teacher with majesty

Teacher Guo tried to build a relaxing and equal student-teacher relationship but she realised that there was a power distance between them which was hard to minimise. She realised that a teacher was hard to fit into students' relationships. She had an idea of the teacher as being different from others as she stated that 'it is hard to treat a teacher like an equal ordinary person.'

She perceived that she changed from a teacher who has a close relationship with students to a strict teacher who had majesty. When she was a novice, the age disparity between her and her students was small, their relationship was very close. As time goes by, she becomes much older than her students. There was an age and thinking gap between them.

I am older than my students;
From an empirical and theoretical aspect, I am quite different from my students.

Perhaps it is because I am very strict;

When I have majesty, students have to cooperate.

It is hard for her to realise her preferred identity which was affected by persons around her. Teacher Guo wanted to cultivate students' autonomous learning, but the freshmen thought the greatest function of a classroom teacher was providing information and imparting knowledge.

Teacher Guo was annoyed by other people's perception towards her. Her students always told her she did not look like a teacher. She looked like a person who worked in a company. She told me a story that a university guard did not think she was a teacher.

I remember at the time of the College English Test Band 4;
I was in charge of playing the recorder for the listening part;
When I finished my task, I should invigilate;
I told her I was a teacher and I invigilated;
She could not believe I was a teacher;
It is hard for me to imagine that I have been working as a teacher for four years;
There is still someone who thinks I am not a teacher.

4.2.3.3 Future Development

In viewing her future, Teacher Guo felt despair due to other people's attitude towards teachers, subject matter and professional development.

She thought now people's attitude towards teachers changed from over-respect to disrespect. Now people considered teachers as servants to serve students. She felt sad and puzzled.

In terms of subject matter, Teacher Guo thought one of the challenges came from the improvement of students' English levels: College English was gradually losing its position as a subject area. There was the possibility of it disappearing. Probably, she needs to master particular English for specific purposes.

Furthermore, as an adjunct post holder, she could not apply for a professional title. Without a PhD degree, there would not any chance for her to change to Series A.

I think I have not got a future;
If I pursue a PhD degree, I need to wait and pass the entrance exam;
If I choose to do a PhD somewhere else, I need to quit this job;
Once I leave, it is hard for me to come back;
When I get my PhD, they only enrol teachers who have a degree and a professional title;
I cannot find the way out.

Throughout Teacher Guo's stories, student-teacher relationships also play an important part in her identity construction. How other people see her plays an important role in her identity construction.

4.2.4 Teacher Ding

Teacher Ding had six years' teaching experience. After graduation, she had been working as a College English teacher in a university for three years. Then she pursued her masters degree at a famous university abroad. After graduation, she entered Sun Yat-sen University. When I contacted Teacher Ding, inviting her to be my interviewee, she immediately agreed and explained to me that she knew how hard it was to find the interviewees. That is why she wanted to help.

Throughout Teacher Ding's stories, compromise, uncertainty, change and conflict could be seen.

4.2.4.1 Becoming a College English Teacher

Teacher Ding loves English. She chose to be an English major in a university. She chose to be a College English teacher after graduation because of her interest, formal teachers' influence and the university environment. Three years later, she went abroad to pursue her masters degree. Both her bachelors and masters programmes were completely subject-based and there were no teaching components or placement

opportunities. She had not had any teaching experience before she became a teacher. After graduation, she became a College English teacher as a Series B teacher at Sun Yat-sen University.

I love English;
My English teachers were elegant, who I admired;
I feel that the university campus is like white snow in the early spring, which makes me feel pure and noble;
Combining my interest and love of the university environment, I choose to be a College English teacher.

4.2.4.2 Being a College English Teacher

Outside the System

Teacher Ding thought her beginning period as a College teacher was a combination of a sense of loss and a sense of achievement, tackled with unease and students' love.

Teacher Ding had not thought about being an English teacher because it was impossible for an English major graduate. However, after she worked half a year, she encountered mismatch between the reality and her expectations. She realised that what she had learnt in university and what she wanted to teach were too difficult for students in her former university, thus she wanted to be an English teacher. Her insecurities came from lack of experience and where the teaching journey would take the teacher.

In order to teach them, I should make what I have learnt before as simple as possible;
I am afraid that by doing so, I will forget what I have learnt and my English level will lag behind;
I want to be an English teacher.

According to the requirements, a university teacher should at least have a masters degree. Without this degree, Teacher Ding felt unease and anxiety. Therefore, she decided to go abroad to pursue her masters degree.

After graduation, she entered Sun Yat-sen University. The personnel appointment system made her feel like an outsider and excluded, which brought issues of professional belonging.

I returned from abroad;
I entered a prestigious university;
In my former university, I was within the system;
Although now I am still working in a university;
I am outside the system;
I feel at a loss;
I am wondering about the meaning of my work;
I am here just teaching a lot of courses;
I am under a heavy workload;
I once wavered and considered whether I should change to another university;
But now I have calmed down again, or I have become anesthetised and accepting.

She experienced the changing face of her career from enthusiasm and passion to crisis.

I felt very excited and happy;
I had a great sense of achievement;
I felt that I could control the whole atmosphere very well;
I remember clearly that all the students were looking at me with their respect and appreciation;
At that time, I felt great.

Now I feel a sense of burn-out;
I do not know what I have taught when I finish a semester's courses;
I feel I still have a lot of things I need to teach them, but I have no time to finish them all;
I have seven classes, hundreds of students;
What I could do is just teach them generally;
I feel burn-out, boredom and tired;
I do not know what the future looks like.

I think myself at the time of a novice is not replicable;
I was full of passion and enthusiasm;
I had great longing for my career, life and future;
That is not to say I will not have a great development in my career path and I will not have high achievement in my future;
But now, I always have a sense of crisis;

I feel a sense of crisis;
Under this feeling, I feel my work is meaningless;
Moreover, I feel burn-out plus puzzlement and unease;
The feeling is quite different from when I was a novice.

Pressures coloured the way that Teacher Ding felt about being a teacher. The early enjoyment faded away and turned out to be a sense of burn-out.

4.2.4.3 Future Development

Teacher Ding was struggling with professional pressures which came from the subject matter, a PhD degree and doing research.

Teacher Ding thought the College English Course in her university was relatively vague and general due to time limits. She did not know what she had taught when she finished a semester's courses. Furthermore, for prestigious universities, there is a tendency that College English Courses in these universities will be weakened.

I feel our courses, perhaps in the top 15 universities, will not exist or exist by another form;
Therefore, I feel depressed;
I have doubts about what the meaning is;
I feel a sense of crisis.

She was under pressure to get a professional degree.

I am under the great pressure of a degree;
I should have a PhD degree;
But I could not gain it within a short time.

Moreover, she was facing the pressure of doing research.

The second challenge for me is to do research;
My teaching burden is too heavy;
My competence is limited;
It is hard for me to do it now.

Throughout Teacher Ding's stories, pressures changed how she viewed herself as a College English teacher.

4.2.5 Summary

All the four early-career teachers were excellent students before they became teachers. Teacher Hu and Teacher Guo chose to be English majors at a normal university, while Teacher Sun and Teacher Ding graduated from a comprehensive university. Teacher Guo and Teacher Ding became College English teachers after their undergraduate study, while Teacher Hu and Teacher Sun became College English teachers after their postgraduate study. Teacher Hu, Teacher Guo and Teacher Sun did their masters at Sun Yat-sen University. Four of them entered the Sun Yat-sen University in the same year. Teacher Hu and Teacher Ding loved teaching and always wanted to be teachers.

In viewing what teaching is, to a certain extent, all of them blurred the professional lines between 'teaching' as a job and the personal (friend). All of them thought students played a part in their professional identity construction. Doing research was a great challenge facing all of them. Teacher Ding was the only teacher who felt burn-out.

4.3 Mid-career Teacher

Only one mid-career teacher participated in my study. I first met her when I taught a College English course while I did my MA programme at Sun Yat-sen University. We taught the same course at the same campus of our university at that time. Our relationship has continued since then.

4.3.1 Teacher Ma

Teacher Ma was the only mid-career teacher who participated in my fieldwork. She had 21 years' teaching experience at the time when I did my fieldwork in 2010. She was a senior lecturer. Teacher Ma was pleased to be one of my interviewees when I invited her to participate in my research.

Throughout Teacher Ma's stories, uncertainties and changes could be seen. I have chosen what I regard as critical events for Teacher Ma as she talked about her experiences and understanding of becoming and being a College English teacher.

4.3.1.1 Becoming a College English Teacher

Just a few years of Teacher Ma's primary school study was affected by the Cultural Revolution, which ended soon. She thought the Cultural Revolution had not had much impact on her. But since there was a group of teachers who was affected by the Cultural Revolution and transferred to her hometown, a small town, it would have been impossible for her to have such a brilliant English education.

I was young at that time,
I think the Cultural Revolution did not affect me so much;
Talking about the impact of the Cultural Revolution on me, I think it was my
English teacher in secondary school;
If there was no Cultural Revolution, she would not have been transferred to our
town, I would not have met such a distinguished English teacher.

Her English was excellent, thus she chose to be an English major at Sun Yat-sen University. Both her bachelors and masters programmes were completely subject-based and there were no teaching components or placement opportunities. She had not had any teaching experience before she became a teacher. She graduated in 1989. In the past, all the undergraduates were allocated a job by the government. At the time of her graduation, it was the first or second year that undergraduates should find a job by themselves. She was recommended by her teacher to stay at the same

university to be a College English teacher. Personally, she loves to work with students and the pure environment of university.

I did not choose to be a College English teacher;
I was compelled (laughter);
At that time, I was an English major;
I knew nothing about College English;
I totally do not have any concept;
I think to be an English teacher and College English teacher are the same;
I have not had any idea about the differences between English and College English teachers;
I was an excellent student;
When I graduated, there was a great need for English teachers and College English teachers, thus I could work as a teacher in the same university after graduation;
But that year, the university's requirement changed, only postgraduates could be English teachers, therefore I became a College English teacher;
However, later on I know people have a little bias towards College English teachers.

4.3.1.2 Being a College English Teacher

A learning teacher

Teacher Ma experienced changes from a knowledge transmitter to a learning facilitator, from a pure language teacher to an educator and from a teacher to a researcher.

At the very beginning, everything went well. She followed students' and her interests and adopted her former teacher's way of teaching. She dominated the class and imparted the linguistic knowledge to students. She explained the grammatical rules, new words and language points in the text in great detail. The students took notes in class and after class they were asked to memorise new words and grammatical rules, and finish exercises on what they had learnt that day. In the next class, dictation and answers to the exercises would be done.

Before, I used a teacher-centred way and ignored the interaction;

Thus, I talked a lot and dominated the class;
Now when I recall it;
I feel that way of teaching is easy;
I taught them new words and sentence patterns;
Now I feel the teaching at that time was really very easy (laughter);
At the very beginning, I was affected by my previous teacher;
I transferred my educational experience into my teaching;
I asked my students to memorise the text and dictated the new words.

But later on, she found that this way of teaching did not work. The students lost their interest. Her score was not good. In her class, students sitting in the last few rows were distracted. Some of them were reading other books. The students sitting in the middle were indifferent. Only a few students sitting in the front were in a good state.

I feel my score is not good enough;
When I observe students' reactions,
For me, in my class I want to control the whole class atmosphere;
I hope I can bring all their energy into play;
For several years, almost two or three years, I totally have no idea about how to solve this problem;
At this time, I feel that I do not know how to teach at all;
I am always teaching like that;
Now how could I deal with this problem?
What should I do?

I find this way is not workable;
I have encountered a dilemma;
I feel the relationship between my students and me is very good at the beginning;
I feel I am not as popular as before;
I was once the most popular teacher, I felt very good;
But now I just teach upon my feeling which makes my teaching unmanageable;
I am trying to find out the solution;
Furthermore, maybe the students are changing, but I have not noticed their changes.

Therefore, she began to reflect on her way of teaching and pursue her postgraduate study in the meantime.

At that time, I begin to reflect on myself and my way of teaching;
I could not teach according to my feeling anymore;

I should try to understand my students;
The students after 1997, I feel they belong to another generation;
I feel painful for several years;
I do not know how to teach;
Suddenly the students do not like me and I am not popular anymore;
I feel painful;
Luckily, I go to do my postgraduate study during that time which helps me a lot thereafter;
I learnt teaching methodology, language acquisition and linguistics and so on during that period of time;
I tried to put the theories I learnt into my practice;
I began to pay attention to my students;
I tried to know their needs and adjust myself.

Then, she realised that her former teacher's way of teaching was problematic, who did everything and finished all the tasks herself, therefore it was hard to bring students' active learning into full play. This revelation could be seen as a significant critical event in Teacher Ma's stories of being a College English teacher.

I begin to reflect on my teacher's way of teaching;
I do not know whether I become a little bit rebellious or mature;
I do not know how to say;
I feel my teacher's way of teaching is problematic;
If I follow her to learn, there is no problem for me, but my initiative will never play a role
When I enter the university, if there was no such good teacher like her to teach me;
I felt I could not learn very well;
I was greatly depending on my teacher;
Therefore now I emphasise autonomous learning;
I always tell my students my story;
But before, when I reflected, I did not find any problem about this way of teaching;
I went on to use my teacher's way of teaching, I felt it was good;
Now I do not think so;
I think this way of teaching is good at the initial stage, but later on it will make students dependent on the teacher.

Now she adopted a student-centred approach to teach.

Now I emphasise interaction;
I focus on listening and speaking;

I give students a lot of listening and speaking drills;
I want to make some differences from their secondary school.

Besides changes of teaching methods, she also experienced changes from a pure language teacher to an educator.

Before I am a pure language teacher, I teach vocabulary and grammar;
What I should do is just pure skill training.

But now, I think we should teach them correct concepts of values;
Especially when I am middle-aged;
Before I think it is not a language teacher's responsibility;
But now I think we do not need to teach them this in the form of lecturing;
I find that they barely know what is right or wrong;
I think it is necessary to explore and discuss those issues with them;
I think this is my social responsibility when I reach this age.

Her idea about what being a teacher meant changed. In the past, she thought, as a language teacher, she did not need to know anything related to technology. She could find students to help but, later on, she found that by doing so, her students would look down upon her, thus she began to learn all those techniques and taught her students when they did not know how to do them.

I should improve myself not only in my English, but also in my knowledge from various subjects;
Now I teach English News;
It makes me search materials on-line and then I need to download them;
But under most circumstances, I could not download them;
I find that I become a technician now;
I learn how to transfer among different audio-video modes, such as transferring mp3 into avi;
Oh my god, I could not believe that I have become an expert in this area;
Thus, I feel to be a teacher is hard work;
In the past, when I do not know something related to technology;
I will find a student to help me;
I think it is understandable that I know nothing about it;
But later on, I find it does not work;
I find that, if so, your students will look down upon you;
Now, it becomes I will teach my students when they have technological problems;
Oh, my god. I am not only an English teacher;

I should know the technology;
I feel it is hard work.

Being and becoming an other

Teacher Ma begins to disconnect herself from her colleagues. Implicitly, she locates herself as one who finds out the solutions and knows the reasons, in contrast to her colleagues who do not:

Now I feel that I find the direction;
But a lot of my colleagues still cannot find their direction.

What I am certain of is that I know once I try my best to teach, my score is high and my ranking is in the front;
Once I am relaxed, my ranking would move backwards;
I know how I could strive;
I am very clear about it;
During these years, I find out the solution, but a lot of my colleagues really could not find the way out.

She is different from some of her colleagues who gave up easily. She tries her best to create a cooperative classroom atmosphere.

I like to work with people;
I want to try my best to change my students;
I try all the soft and hard ways.

She is different from her colleagues who teach regardless of the textbooks and do not explain the text at all.

When I talk to my colleagues, I realise that some of them do not explain the text at all...
When I read through the text carefully;
I pick out some points and sentences, they told me that they haven't noticed them before.

They do not explain the text...
Every time what I could do is trying to make a balance;
If this text is simple, I will spend little time on it;
If there are some nice topics in it, I will spend more time on discussion.

Teacher Ma has identified a schism between herself and her colleagues. Within this space, she constructs an identity for herself as a College English teacher. She is at once both self and other.

She believes that there is a negative perception of College English teachers, suggesting that the College English teacher's work is easy and, as a result, feels the work she has done has been devalued.

However, later on I know people have a little bias towards College English teachers;
I know we are perceived as lower than English teachers.

Apart from teaching, Teacher Ma began to do some research. She tried to change from a teacher to a researcher.

Under pressure, I was forced to write some articles;
I chose to write articles related to teaching;
I felt that when I jumped out of my teaching and further objectively thought about it, it would help my teaching as well.

4.3.1.3 Future Development

The good old days, especially her job as 'Tie fan wan' ('iron rice bowl': a secure job, a stable employment) have gone (see my explanation in Chapter 2 subsection of 3.5.6 Different Conceptual Meanings). Teacher Ma felt confused about her future because of the subject matter and changing social status of the teacher.

She felt that the requirement for an English teacher was extremely high. It was not a pure language course anymore. Since the class teaching time had been reduced and autonomous learning time had been increased, language courses should be connected with cultural courses and they should teach listening, speaking, reading, writing, translation, cultures, literature and intercultural communication skills within a limited time.

I do not know what we should do;
I always feel puzzled and I feel a little bit that I could not find the direction;
I feel painful;
When my students make progress, it is said that it is not to my credit;
But when my students fail the exams, it is my fault and I am the person who
should be blamed;
I feel to be a teacher is really hard now.

Additionally, Teacher Ma thought the teacher's status was a puzzle for people in her generation. During the time when she was a student, there was the dignity of the teaching profession. They respected their teachers. But when she became a teacher, the situation was worse year after year. Education became a service industry. The students disrespected their teachers. The students thought now a teacher was like a waiter in a service industry.

4.3.2 Summary

Teacher Ma was an excellent student. She loved teaching and became a College English teacher after her undergraduate study.

Being popular and loved by students keeps coming up even in the mid-career teacher's narratives. Students play an important part in her professional identity construction. She noticed a difference between herself and her colleagues which is important in her professional identity construction.

4.4 Late-career Teachers

Three late-career teachers participated in my study. I first met them on various occasions when I taught a College English course while I did my MA programme at Sun Yat-sen University, and our relationships have continued since then.

4.4.1 Teacher Liu

Teacher Liu had 30 years' teaching experience at the time when I did my fieldwork in 2010. He was an associate professor. I first met him when we were invited to be the judges in a students' presentation competition. Later on, we worked together to guest one foreign visiting scholar for a week. Teacher Liu was pleased to be one of my interviewees when I invited him to participate in my research.

Throughout Teacher Liu's stories, I have chosen what I regard as critical events for him as he talked about his experiences and understanding of becoming and being a College English teacher.

4.4.1.1 Becoming a College English Teacher

Teacher Liu was born in an overseas Chinese family. His secondary school education was affected by the Cultural Revolution. At that time, the English taught was political English in the middle school. He was deprived of education. Because his father was an English teacher, there were lots of English books in his home, thus he read them by himself, which broadened his horizons. In 1977, when a national college entrance examination was restored, he took part in the examination. Under the influence of his father, he chose to go to a normal university as an English major. After graduation, he became a College English teacher. He had been working in various universities before working at Sun Yat-sen University.

During the Cultural Revolution, I read books on my own at home;

When the national college entrance examination was restored, I chose to go to a normal university;

After graduation, naturally I became a university teacher.

4.4.1.2 Being a College English Teacher

Teacher Liu remembered his first day of teaching. He thought his experience was different from a lot of teachers, who thought their time was enough but the material they prepared was insufficient. Thus, they finished all the materials they prepared very quickly with plenty of time left. They were waiting for the bell to ring. His situation was totally opposite.

I prepare a lot for my first day of teaching;
I find I could not finish all the things I prepared within the class time;
When I hear the bell, there are still a lot of unfinished things;
I do not have enough understanding about my students;
I overestimate their ability;
I teach too many things within one class, which were far beyond students' acceptability.

He realised that the students' feedback was not good, thus he adjusted his teaching.

Then gradually I begin to slow down;
In the past I only had three or four classes;
If I teach the same course, I will summarise from the first class's teaching and make improvements in the following class;
I will teach better and better in my following classes;
I will organise a face to face talk with my students after class every two weeks in order to hear their feedback and suggestions and adjust my teaching.

At the initial stage, students played an important part in his professional identity construction. He thought his students made him realise the value of his job. The encouragement and approval from students were his driving force.

I remember sometimes when my class is approaching the end, my students will give me applause;
I am encouraged by my students;
I am becoming more and more confident about my teaching;
When my students get good marks in the exams, I feel it is an achievement of my teaching;
Sometimes I get emails, cards or gifts from my students after their graduation;
Although sometimes I could not remember them;
But from them I feel this job is worthwhile to do, and exceeds the money;

I think that is the best and happiest part of being a teacher;
I know what I teach is useful for them.

Apart from teaching, Teacher Liu tried to do research.

I try to find some common patterns among students' learning;
I feel that I need to summarise and theorise it;
I try to do some experiments in different classes to test certain ways of teaching;
I write articles to discuss questions in teaching;
Gradually I begin to do research.

4.4.1.3 Future Development

Teacher Liu thought that his teaching was changing rapidly, such as from plane to three-dimensions from a single information source to multi-media, therefore, the requirements for the teachers are becoming higher and higher year after year.

I remember an American teacher went to space to teach by spacecraft;
Obviously, our teaching surpasses 'three inches platform' and expands to the globe;
As a teacher, I am facing challenges.

Teacher Liu would like to keep learning and devote himself to an education career as long as he can.

4.4.2 Teacher Ren

Teacher Ren had 31 years' teaching experience at the time when I did my fieldwork in 2010. She was a very famous professor in the College English teaching domain in China. I first met her when I did my masters programme and we had worked closely together during my masters study. She was quite happy to be my participant.

Throughout Teacher Ren's story, it could be seen to be full of twists and turns. When she faced negative reinforcement, she put her agency into full play to prove herself and to show others how excellent she was. She used the metaphor 'when the quietly flowing water encountered a stone in the river, the water splashed even more highly'

to describe her responses. She thought that even if there was no stage for her, she would try to create a stage to perform wonderfully. I have chosen what I regard as critical events for Teacher Ren as she talked about her experiences and understanding of becoming and being a College English teacher.

4.4.2.1 Becoming a College English Teacher

Stories of Migration

Teacher Ren was born in a university teachers' family and grew up on campus. In her primary school, she wrote an essay about her ideal of being a university professor. Though she wrote it very unconsciously, she thought her dream of being a teacher might be sown at that time. According to specific political and historical reasons, she learned Russian in her secondary school. She had an excellent Russia proficiency and wanted to be a diplomat. However, the Cultural Revolution broke her dream in her second year of junior school. She was deprived of education and worked in the countryside and mountain areas as a Chinese educated urban youth. She felt very helpless when she was facing this miserable condition. She did physical labour for half a year in the field and was chosen to be a primary teacher at the age of 19 for two years.

I am hard working and earnest;
They found that I am versatile;
I am good at singing, dancing and playing the accordion;
I am chosen to be a primary teacher.

While I am working in the field and thinking what I can do;
I could not bear it anymore;
I suddenly receive the announcement that I could be a primary teacher next year;
Since then, I have been counting days and waiting;
I am expecting that day could come earlier;
Compared with other people who are doing physical labour in the field, as a teacher, I am more than lucky;
I am very happy;
I am most respected and privileged;

I am fully devoted to teaching;
I teach Chinese, maths, PE, music and drawing in an outdated thatched cottage
with mud walls;
I think it is a tough job for me;
I teach year 1, year 2 and year 3;
I teach those three classes at the same time;
How am I managing to fulfil it?
I use three connected classrooms;
I dig a hole on the wall between these classrooms;
I am teaching in the middle classroom and asking students in other two
classrooms to do exercises;
I could supervise them by looking through holes;
I think those experiences bestow on me the multi-task capability.

I have very naughty pupils, who are not fully concentrating on learning but on
how to play with you;
When I am teaching, they are hiding in a broken desk and making faces in order
to disturb me;
I try to pull them out, but they are holding the leg of the desk tightly;
They are playing hide-and-seek with me and running all over the classroom;
I am chasing after them;
I could not even teach;
I need to figure out how to win the battle of wits with them;
I think I am a superwoman at that time;
When I come back from there, my voice is becoming extremely loud.

I have very dumb students as well;
No matter how hard I try to teach them, they still could not master simple
calculation;
I do not know what I can do;
I learn a lot from an old teacher who only has a primary education background;
I learn how to use some simple ways, such as using ten fingers to do calculation.

Two years later, she was allocated to be a news reporter, the most admirable job, and
became the 'noble' (with a more relaxed job and a higher status compared to
physical labour) among the educated youths.

I have a very good Chinese foundation;
I am writing reports at that time which practises my writing skills.

Another two years later, during the Cultural Revolution, many colleges recruited workers, peasants and soldiers as their students. She was recommended and passed the examinations.

I only have the level of year 2, junior school;
I need to pass the examinations which require the level of year 3, senior school;
I have not learned chemistry, physics, world history, geometry and so on;
I find a local university graduate to teach me;
What a miracle, I pass the examinations with high marks.

However, she encountered troubles in the process of recruitment. At that time, only Sun Yat-sen University, Beijing Foreign Language Studies University and South China Normal University could enrol students who wanted to study English. Her father has been persecuted in the university. The university refused to enrol her. The university in Beijing wanted to recruit the educated youths from Beijing. She did not have any other choice but to go to a not very famous normal university to study as an English major for three years and she began to learn English at the age of 23.

She was selected as a teaching assistant because of her excellency during her university study. Her teachers wanted her to stay there to be a university teacher; however, due to her family background of intellectual instead of working class, she lost the chance and was allocated by the nation to work in the countryside and mountain areas where she worked before she went to the normal university. At that time, due to the China's political situation, the working class background was highlighted. It was true and inevitable among the higher education staff. Instead of taking an admirable job as a public servant, she chose to be a teacher trainer, which she thought was the start of her teaching career. In 1979, thanks to her mother who decided to retire early and give her position to Teacher Ren, she went back to Sun Yan-sen University as a College English teacher and has never left that position.

4.4.2.2 Being a College English Teacher: the classrooms in her life

Being an agent of change

Teacher Ren loves her students and was loved and respected by her students. She has already become an excellent teacher in students' hearts that she wants to be.

At the very beginning, although she taught everything unconsciously, she was on the right track. She focused on teaching and explaining. She was good at attracting students' attention. She could explain vocabulary and text in a vivid way. The students said, if you have not had a chance to attend Teacher Ren's class, that is your most regrettable thing in your university life.

Teacher Ren described herself as a sponge to learn and improve in the teaching post. She grasped every chance to learn. She thought there were many different kinds of classrooms in her life. She could learn from her peers, former teachers, experts, parents and students.

I do not have an outstanding educational background;
I do not have any formal degrees;
I do not have formal qualifications;
I have not had time and chances to pursue a degree;
I learn everything in my teaching post;
I audit and observe lots of excellent teachers' classroom teaching;
I write down all the good points;
When I come back;
I try to use it in my class;
Later on, based on it, I begin to be creative;
I develop my own style.

Due to the impact of the Cultural Revolution, the incomplete Higher Education system in China did not offer any degrees to graduates. Thus Teacher Ren had not have a formal degree.

She thought training events were her turning points. She went on a journey of pilgrimage. In 1986, when she finished her masters course, she got the chance to

attend a five-week summer school abroad, where she experienced an enlightenment in language teaching. In 1990, she went to a university abroad as a visiting scholar for the whole spring term which broadened her horizon. In 1995, she went to five-month teacher training programmes abroad on teaching and testing, which she thought was her perceptual turning point. Those two trainings brought up all the rationales underlying ELT, thus she learnt a lot. She was immersed in a sea of materials and began to theorise her knowledge and practice.

I am culturally, professionally and academically shocked to hear those questions first time;
I have been teaching reading;
I pay great attention to reading in China;
I have never thought about what reading is;
I am really shocked;
Now I think it is not decoding, comprehension and taking facts, figures and checking your understanding;
I think it is a communication between readers and the writer.

I think the relationship between the testers and testees is not about fighting;
I think they are sitting together, diagnosing and helping each other.

In 1997, she went abroad to make a conference presentation. In 1998, she went to a university in Hong Kong to be a three-month co-researcher in material development which she considered as her theoretical turning point. She began to publish journal articles and pilot task-based teaching in her class. During that year, she began to do teacher training all over China.

I am immersing myself in the literature;
I meet with my supervisor once a week to talk about my reading and how I am going to use it;
I master how to write journal articles;
I go to an American educator's lecture on problem-based learning;
I am shocked;
I come across task-based learning later on;
When I come back, I write an article to compare the similarities and differences of these two methods which causes a big stir in China;
I begin to try to use task-based learning in my teaching and get great success.

When she began to trial task-based teaching, her students had some regrets. They loved to listen to her lectures. Now she talked less. They told her they were very happy to be her students, however, they felt regret that she did not talk but let them speak more. To a certain extent, she thought that was a kind of loss for her students. Now for some courses, she tried to combine lectures and workshops.

During her teaching journey, there was once, at the very beginning of the 1990s, when she went back from abroad, she got the chance to work in a worldly-known distinguished enterprise. She was hesitating at that time. However, a primary and secondary school students' reunion woke her up and strengthened her determination to be a teacher. Some of her former classmates who were successful businessmen thought the life in the university was boring. Comparing to the income of them, the salary of a university teacher was extremely low. In this job it is hard for her to put her talents into full play.

I find I am different from them in dressing and income;
I am a teacher who belongs to the poor and lower middle class;
I am a campus nun who does not need to deal with complex social relations and communications;
I give them my first published book;
They told me that I have spiritual works which could pass down for generations, which wakes me up;
I suddenly realise the meaning and value of my job;
From then on, I decide to take teaching as my life-long career;
I finally find my value.

Apart from teaching, she tried to become a researcher.

I learned a lot once I was in a group to compile an applied linguistic dictionary;
From my supervisor, I learned a lot;
I revised my writing more than 20 times before I gave it to my supervisor;
After his supervision, I revised it more than 10 times;
When I read the final version, I find that it is totally different from my first draft;
I keep trying until I am on the right track.

Flying against the wind

When she faced negative stimuli, such as when other people looked down upon her due to her educational background, she wanted to try hard to prove herself. She became the most popular teacher among students and received a lot of awards. She told me a story that when she applied for a professorship, she failed three times.

When I applied for the first time, I published lots of textbooks. But they told me textbooks did not count;
I needed to have projects;
I began to apply for projects;
When I had projects, they told me projects did not count;
I needed to have journal articles;
I wrote journal articles;
I published ten journal articles that year;
I had not realised the impact of those journal articles;
I began to be famous that year;
When I look back now;
I think I would like to thank all my enemies.

4.4.2.3 Future Development

She felt that she was a little bit like ‘the old woman Jiujiu’ (a person who is conservative and always blindly clinging to the past, here means those who could not bear the bad behaviour of students in the new generation) (see my explanation in Chapter 2 subsection of 3.5.6 Different Conceptual Meanings) and she noticed the change in students, who now challenged the teacher’s authority. Now, when they did not agree with each other, her students would argue with her. Once when they discussed the topic of security, her students made a presentation which was entertaining. When she made comments, she told them it was not just a matter of fun, and they did not agree.

My students now dare to argue with me in class;
When we discussed the topic of security, I said to them, security is a serious social issue;

I need your serious thinking about what happened, why it is happened and how to handle it;
I tried to convince them;
I showed them with examples.

Soon Teacher Ren will retire and she would like to write books and do teacher training all over China.

4.4.3 Teacher Wang

Teacher Wang had 31 years' teaching experience at the time when I did my fieldwork in 2010. She was an associate professor. I first met her when I did my masters programme and she was one of my first-year board and dissertation examiners.

From Teacher Wang's stories, I have chosen what I regard as critical events for Teacher Wang as she talked about her experiences and understanding of becoming and being a College English teacher.

4.4.3.1 Becoming a College English Teacher

She grew up in a small town. When she graduated from junior school, the Cultural Revolution began. She was deprived of education and worked in the countryside and mountain areas as a Chinese educated urban youth. During that period, she worked as a broadcaster.

During the Cultural Revolution, many colleges recruited workers, peasants and soldiers as their students. She was recommended, passed the examinations and went to Sun Yat-sen University to study as an English major for three-and-a-half years and she began to learn English in the university. After graduation, as an excellent student, her teachers would have liked her to stay in the university, but there was no recruitment quota, thus she was allocated to work in a factory while waiting for the

quota. A year later, she went back to Sun Yat-sen University as a College English teacher.

In my teachers' eyes, I was suitable to be a teacher;
Without a recruitment quota, deliberately I went back to a factory in my town, which I could use as an excuse that my major did not match what I was doing, thus when I got the quota, I could easily leave;
After not very long, I went back to Sun Yat-sen University and have been a College English teacher since then.

4.4.3.2 Being a College English Teacher

Teacher Wang had not had any teaching experience. At the very beginning, she imitated her former teachers' way of teaching. She thought even now she still used a traditional way of teaching, just adding more questions and answers.

She went abroad to pursue her masters degree in 1989, which would mean a great step forward in her academic career and professional development. She thought her learning in America brought her chances. She noticed that teaching in China emphasised textbook knowledge but, in America, they focused on students' performance. Before she went to America, she taught intensive reading by teaching new vocabulary, explaining the text and doing exercises. After she went to America, she thought treating text as reading comprehension was essential.

I change my way of teaching;
I ask my students to read the text first and try to understand the meaning and grasp the information;
Then I ask them to master the vocabulary and sentence pattern;
After I use this way, I find that in the students' evaluation my score is high.

She found that students liked situational teaching, but she thought that within the limited course time, in order to finish lots of content, she could not use it for every unit. She could just pick out one or two topics in which to do it.

Recently, she felt puzzled about her score in the students' evaluation. In the past, her score was above 90 but now she always got 86.

I think the students' evaluation is very interesting;
I know the teacher who gets the highest score only teaches vocabulary;
I think if a teacher just teaches vocabulary they could not help to cultivate students' language capability;
I do not know the criteria of evaluating a teacher;
I think some teachers want to gain high scores, they do something they should not do in order to please students, for example, some teachers tell students their own stories in class.

Apart from teaching, she began to do a little research.

After I went to America;
What I learned broadened my scope;
I knew what could be researched;
I tried to do a little;
But to be honest, I did not do much.

4.4.3.3 Future Development

Teacher Wang will retire soon, but she wants to continue until she cannot do it anymore.

4.4.4 Summary

The social changes affected the educational system which, in turn, influenced or had impact on professional identity. The different family backgrounds of these three late-career teachers brought them different experiences. Social events affected the late-career teachers' lives a lot and affected their teacher's professional identity (see Chapter 6 and Chapter 7). Although outside the classroom, the students' reactions had an impact on them, in the process of gaining in experience and expertise, late-career teachers were becoming less dependent on students' feedback and evaluation and relied more on their own.

4.5 Summary

Through each of the teachers' stories I have looked for what I believe to be critical events which relate to their becoming and being Chinese College English teachers. The way in which those teachers understand the nature of their job as College English teachers appears to differ and this influences the extent to which they value the core part of their work as College English teachers. I am going to explore the underlying themes and issues in relation to teachers' professional identity construction in the following analytical chapters.

Chapter 5 Professional Role Identities

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I introduced my participating teachers and provided some insights into their experiences in their teaching journeys, which may cast light on their professional identity construction by combining Reading 1 and thematic narrative analysis. This chapter presents the results from combining Reading 2, in which I focus on the use of personal pronouns in order to investigate how the teachers speak about themselves, and thematic narrative analysis, in which I developed coding categories through the lens of teachers' professional identities (see Methodology Chapter 3 Section 3.5). The use of pronouns serves the role of identity construction (Duszak, 2002), thus this chapter examines professional identity through the lens of what they do (their professional role identity), which enables me to investigate how teachers construct and reconstruct their views of their roles as Chinese College English teachers and themselves in relation to their students, colleagues and their context. In this chapter, I mainly focus on 'I', and investigate the impact from a personal-micro level, but the teachers partly discuss the 'I' in terms of others.

As the Taxonomy of Chinese College English Teachers' Professional Role Identity in Table 5.1 shows, a total of 21 main professional role identities emerged from the data and these were further divided into four major role identity clusters of 'teacher as manager', 'teacher as professional', 'teacher as acculturator' and 'teacher as researcher'. Some of these major identities contain sub-identities (Mishler, 1999): teacher as manager has nine sub-identities, teacher as professional has five sub-identities and teacher as acculturator has three sub-identities. Though there were differences among teachers from early-, mid- and late-career in relation to role identity, for most roles they shared lots of similarities, thus I chose to present the

findings by role identities rather than by the three career-stage groups, but this does not mean I am not focusing on groups: I am presenting data according to the sequence of early-career, mid-career and late-career teachers.

Category	Definition
Teacher as Manager	Attempt to control everything that happens in classroom
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoter • Motivator • Presenter • Problem-solver • Guardian • Trainer • Organiser • Enabler • Arbitrator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A seller of learning of English; selling a particular teaching method • Motivates students to learn; keeps students on task • Delivers information • Solves problems • Guarantees the safety in the classroom • Trains students' language skills and competence; ways of learning • Organises activities; controls classroom interaction dynamics • Handles multi-tasks in the classroom • Offers feedback (positive & negative) in the classroom
Teacher as Professional	Teachers dedicated to their work
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborator • Learner • Knowledgeable • Educator • Director 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works with students/colleagues • Continuously seeks knowledge • Knowledgeable about subject matter, teaching and life • A sense of a teacher being more; a desire to make an impact • Shoulders more administrative duties
Teacher as Acculturator	Helps students get accustomed to life outside class
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socialiser • Advisor • Care provider 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socialises with students; attends functions outside class with students • Offers advice to students on matters related to living in another country/culture • Caring for students
Teacher as Researcher	Doing research

Table 5.1 Taxonomy of Chinese College English Teachers' Professional Role Identity (Informed by Farrell, 2011)

5.2 Teacher as Manager

Teacher as manager was identified as a role, with nine sub-identities, where the teacher is the person trying to manage what happens within the classroom. According

to Teacher Guo (Early-career, Series B) and Teacher Ren (Late-career, Series A), it was a new role for them. As Teacher Ren (Late-career, Series A) mentioned, ‘As a university teacher in China, we did not need to do classroom management. Our students were trained how to behave in the classroom since kindergarten. They would never argue or make trouble in your class. If they did not like your class, they would rather read other books or sleep at most.’ But with the implementation of communicative language teaching, they were given this new role. Apart from their previous sub-identities – as promoter, motivator, problem-solver and guardian – they needed to develop new sub-identities – as organiser, enabler, and arbitrator – and bestow new meanings on being a presenter and trainer. No matter which career stage they were at, they all could equally become promoters, motivators, problem-solvers and so on; however, some of the mid- and late-career teachers’ stories showed the repertoire of some of these roles, namely teacher as presenter and teacher as trainer.

Promoter

Teacher as promoter is a role used to indicate when a teacher is a seller of learning English and also sells a particular teaching method or is even a representative of the institution and themselves as teachers. No matter which career stages teachers are at, they all could be promoters. Firstly, teacher as promoter is a language teacher role for selling the learning of English, which accompanies the nature of this job, thus all the teachers have this role. More importantly, as non-native speakers, their language competence plays a very important role in the initial stage of their teaching, especially for some of the early-career teachers because, unlike teachers in any other subject, as language teachers, apart from the content of teaching, the language that teachers use in class is itself a part of teaching. Gaining native-speaker identity is a way to get credit. As Teacher Hu (Early-career, Series B) noted, ‘capture them by fluent English expressions...they hope your oral English is good’. Similarly, Teacher Ding (Early-career, Series B) described ‘attracting students by pronunciation and intonation’. None of the other teachers mentioned this, probably because with their

gaining of experience, the pronunciation and intonation as a first impression were becoming less important later on. Secondly, promoter was also used in relation to their teaching methods. Due to the context of English language teaching (ELT) reform, although all the early-career teachers used a student-centred way of teaching at the time of their beginning to teach, they needed to make their students accept this way of teaching. For example, Teacher Hu (Early-career, Series B) talked about how she had to convince some of her students that a student-centred way of teaching was good for them and that they could learn better through learning by doing, and not just from a teacher's lecturing. Similarly, Teacher Guo (Early-career, Series B) encountered students' reluctance when she tried to cultivate students' autonomous learning abilities, she had to persuade them. As for mid- and late-career teachers, since they had experienced a change of teaching method from teacher-centred to student-centred, Teacher Ma (Mid-career, Series A) tried to combine these two methods; however, some of them insisted on promoting a teacher-centred method, like Teacher Liu (Late-career, Series A) and Teacher Wang (Late-career, Series A). But Teacher Ren (Late-career, Series A) was an advocate of a student-centred way of teaching. In order to implement the new way of teaching successfully, she said, 'I had an integrated procedure with theories, practice, reflection, feedback and summary when I tried to use task-based learning' (see Chapter 7). Thirdly, teacher as promoter as a teacher role for representing the institution came up in Teacher Sun's (Early-career, Series B) talking, as she noted that 'the students' impressions of English courses or the university are upon you.' Fourthly, Teacher as promoter was a teacher role for representing themselves as a teacher because what they did actually portrayed what kind of teachers they were. As I mentioned earlier, Teacher Hu (Early-career, Series B) and Teacher Ding (Early-career, Series B) were teachers with excellent pronunciation and intonation. Teacher Hu (Early-career, Series B) and Teacher Ren (Late-career, Series A) were teachers who used a student-centred way of teaching. Teacher Liu (Late-career, Series A) and Teacher Wang (Late-career,

Series A) were teachers who insisted in using a teacher-centred method of teaching, and Teacher Sun (Early-career, Series B), Teacher Guo (Early-career, Series B), Teacher Ding (Early-career, Series B) and Teacher Ma (Mid-career, Series A) were teachers who tried to combine both methods (I will explore this further in Chapter 7).

Motivator

Teacher as motivator suggests a role where the teacher motivates students to learn or keeps students on task. Regardless of their career stages, all the teachers used their time to communicate with students in order to motivate them to learn, although different teachers used different techniques, such as Teacher Ding (Early-career, Series B), who provided her students with extra knowledge. ‘Sometimes, I will add some extra things such as the National Geographic or videos related to the topic of our textbook in order to arouse students’ learning interest.’ Sometimes, she used praise or encouraging words to motivate them. Teacher Sun (Early-career, Series B) and Teacher Wang (Late-career, Series A) used role-play activities to cultivate students’ interest. Teacher Ma (Mid-career, Series A) changed her methods of teaching. Teacher Liu (Late-career, Series A) said, ‘Interest is the best teacher. I tried my best to let my students love my class. Once they know it will have benefit for their future, they are willing to learn.’ Teacher Ren (Late-career, Series A) provided extra support and suggestions to students during the preparation stage of their presentation to keep them on task, and she used tasks to let students learn by doing.

Presenter

Teacher as presenter suggests a role where the teacher delivers information. All the teachers mentioned this role. But Teacher Ma (Mid-career, Series A) and Teacher Ren (Late-career, Series A) noticed the change (this change will be discussed in Chapter 7). On the one hand, the requirement of this role was heightened, in that to be a presenter was multi-dimensional; as Teacher Ma (Mid-career, Series A) noted, in the past, she was just a pure language teacher to deliver information which would

train students in listening, reading, writing and speaking skills, but now, apart from that skill training, she needed to include literature, culture and intercultural communication, values and so on (this is interwoven with the role of teacher as a trainer: see Trainer section). On the other hand, the importance of this role was weakened. As Teacher Ren (Late-career, Series A) mentioned:

Our tradition is imparting knowledge. We give our students lots of input. But now we pay attention to their output. The whole process of learning should start from input to intake and then to output. From the output, the students notice what they lack, what they need, what they must do and what they want and then they can more purposefully input. Now I begin from output. I ask my students to put out what they have been put in before. They have already learned English for twelve years before they enter the university. They have had enough input. When I ask them to output, they suddenly realise they still cannot express or communicate in English. Then they can more purposefully input what they are lacking. It is self-driven not forced.

Problem-solver

Teacher as problem-solver suggests a role where the teacher solves problems. Teachers are facing various problems, for example, Teacher Hu (Early-career, Series B) noted how to cooperate with students, Teacher Ma (Mid-career, Series A) mentioned how to draw students' attention and Teacher Ren (Late-career, Series A) commented on how to apply innovative teaching methods, and so on. They needed to tackle these problems as problem-solvers. As Teacher Ma (Mid-career, Series A) said, 'Teaching is very interesting. I am willing to do this job because I can find a lot of problems and I am willing to think about these problems. I have a lot of questions about teaching for which I could not find out the answers. Now I am struggling and feeling painful...I do not know how to solve this problem. Perhaps all my life is to solve problems and then I will retire (laughter).'

Guardian

Teacher as guardian is where a teacher guarantees the students' safety in the classroom. It is only illustrated in Teacher Ma's (Mid-career, Series A) story of

protecting her students when she was a novice. She told me that, ‘One day, when I was teaching, there was a mental patient coming to school and staring at us through the window. At that time, the age disparity between me and my students was very small and there were lots of boys in my class. But I had a strong feeling that I had to protect my students. I felt a huge responsibility on my shoulders. I called the police and tried to handle the mental patient.’ There is no evidence in other teachers’ stories, probably because, as university students are adult learners, the teachers’ role as guardian is less important than this role for primary and secondary teachers.

Trainer

The role of teacher as trainer suggests a role where teachers train students in language skills and competence and ways of learning. All the teachers mentioned the importance of skill drilling and ways of learning. Now, the role of teacher as a trainer is bestowed with a new meaning, of training students’ ways of learning. For example, on the role of teacher as a trainer, Teacher Hu (Early-career, Series B) said, ‘Basic language drilling is considered as an important part in our teaching...I hope my students can use language to express themselves freely and confidently.’ Teacher Sun (Early-career, Series B) said she always emphasised the skills and helped students to master the language. Teacher Guo mentioned she wanted to teach students how to use English. Teacher Ding (Early-career, Series B) said that she hoped she could help her students to improve their listening, reading, speaking and writing skills. Teacher Ma (Mid-career, Series A) perceived changes in the role (these changes will be discussed in Chapter 7). ‘Before I was a pure language teacher, I taught vocabulary and grammar. According to my traditional concept, don’t you think as a language teacher, we should teach these? It is as easy as letting them master vocabulary and grammar and practice listening, reading, writing and speaking skills. What I should do is just pure skill training.’ But now skill training is just a part of her duties, she also needs to pay attention to cultural and moral education. She highlights ways of learning. Similarly, Teacher Ren (Late-career, Series A) also

noted the changes. Before she taught all the rules and usage, such as lexis, grammar and syntax, now she taught ways of learning. Although Teacher Liu (Late-career, Series A) and Teacher Wang (Late-career, Series A) insisted on using the traditional way of teaching (see chapter 7), they did emphasise the importance of skill training.

Organiser

Teacher as organiser is where a teacher organises activities or controls classroom interaction dynamics. It is a new role that teachers need to develop, accompanied by changing teaching methods from teacher-centred to student-centred, where more interaction needs to be involved. Thus, a teacher needs to become an organiser. All teachers from different stages of careers agreed that, with the trial implementation of communicative language teaching, their classroom management skills needed to be developed. As Teacher Ren (Late-career, Series A) pointed out, a ‘student-centred method of teaching requires us to be an organiser of various activities which we seldom did in the past.’ But there is no further evidence to show exactly what teachers did.

Enabler

Teacher as enabler is where a teacher handles multi-tasks in the classroom. It is a new role related to communicative language teaching, where the interactions become multi-dimensional. As Teacher Ren (Late-career, Series A) said, ‘When students were making presentations, I needed to observe, take notes, write comments and cooperate with them.’ There is no evidence in other teachers’ stories.

Arbitrator

Teacher as arbitrator is where a teacher offers feedback, both positive and negative in the classroom. It is a new role teachers need to develop due to more activities, cooperative tasks and presentations being carried out. All the teachers from different career stages mentioned that they need to give instant feedback after students

finished those tasks. As Teacher Ren (Later-career, Series A) pointed out, ‘Giving instant feedback requires a teacher to have great competence, all of us need to practice how to do it more.’ There is no further evidence to explain this role in detail.

5.3 Teacher as Professional

The role of teacher as professional was identified where the teacher is seen as one who is dedicated to the work. It has five sub-identities: teacher as collaborator, learner, knowledgeable, educator and director.

Collaborator

Teacher as collaborator is where a teacher works with students/colleagues. When working with students, the relationship between teacher and students was important for all the participating teachers. Whilst working with colleagues as collaborators, Early-career, Series B teachers sometimes discussed teaching problems with some of their close colleagues. For example, Teacher Hu said, ‘Sometimes I discussed teaching problems with some of my close colleagues, but usually I tried to find out solutions alone’ (see Chapter 6). Teacher Ren (Late-career, Series A) mentioned the difficulty of team building:

A textbook has eight units. Eight teachers work in a group. Each of us makes PowerPoint slides for a unit and then we share. The one who makes good PowerPoint slides is not happy because she/he shares her/his good stuff but gets nothing in return.

Like Teacher Ren, Teacher Wang (Late-career, Series A) also mentioned the difficulty of team building. Once they tried to plan a lesson as a group of teachers which could not last long. ‘Within the group, it is hard to establish the balance. Some good teachers always criticise the work of those not so good ones. It always ends up in a quarrel. It is hard for us to get things done.’ She told me that, ‘One of my colleagues shared my idea with other teachers. In the end that teacher was praised for this innovative idea which was not hers in the first place.’ So she decided to keep

some things to herself so that she could have an edge over the others. She thought they were lacking in communication. They were striving alone. Since this role talks about the relationship with others, it will be explored in Chapter 6 in detail.

Learner

Teacher as learner is where a teacher continuously seeks knowledge. All the teachers mentioned on-going learning throughout their careers. For example, Teacher Hu (Early-career, Series B) mentioned that she learned from various sources such as from her students, colleagues, former teacher and her own experience. 'If in my students' talking, they mention something I do not know (laughing). After class, I will go home to check it. I will learn something new...I observe other teachers' classes online and I learned a lot.' Teacher Sun (Early-career, Series B) mentioned that from her students she learned a lot. 'Some students are good at designing, some of them are good at techniques. They know how to design software. Once they wrote a program and put all the students' names in. When they need to pick out one to answer the questions, they just press the button. Then a name jumps out.' She also learned from other teachers' experiences. 'When I hear some of my colleagues talk about their sense of burn-out, they become not very responsible. I will use their story as a warning for me.' Teacher Guo (Early-career, Series B) said that she used activities learned from former teachers and teacher training in her class, and Teacher Ding (Early-career, Series B) learned from her colleagues how to divide her students into groups. Teacher Ma (Mid-career, Series A) mentioned that, in order to cope with the changing needs of students, she needs to extend her knowledge in various subjects not just English. 'Your students are changing. You have to change in order to catch up with their pace. I should improve myself, not only my English, but also my knowledge from various subjects.' Additionally, with the development of IT, all the Series A teachers needed to learn how to use IT skills as a tool for teaching and learning. As Teacher Ma (Mid-career, Series A) said:

Nowadays, the introduction of new technology into teaching compels me to learn more. Now I teach English News. It makes me search materials on-line and then I need to download them. But under most circumstances, I could not download them. You should learn this technology, how to download it. Then you should compile it. You should learn how to use that software to compile it. Now we become technicians. I find that I become a technician now. I learn how to transfer between different audio-video modes, such as transferring MP3 into AVI. Oh my god, I could not believe that I have become an expert in this area. Thus I feel to be a teacher is hard work. You should learn every day. You should learn with your students. You'd better learn before them. In the past, when I did not know something related to technology, I would find a student to help me. I thought it was understandable that I know nothing about it. But later on, I find it is not workable. If so, your students will look down upon you. Now, it has become that I will teach my students when they have technological problems. It is a process. My students always ask me how to deal with this audio clip. I will teach them. Oh, my god. I am not only an English teacher, I should know the technology. I feel it is a hard work. It is interesting that I am interested in technology.

Teacher Liu mentioned (Late-career, Series A):

With the introduction of modern teaching technology, our teaching is not using a piece of chalk any more. We use multimedia in our teaching now. It is a great challenge for me. I need to learn how to make PowerPoint slides.

Teacher Ren (Late-career, Series A) and Teacher Wang (Late-career, Series A) also described their experiences in learning how to use a computer, internet and multimedia for the first time when they went aboard. They needed to update their skills and knowledge to keep up with the times. Teacher Ren (Late-career, Series A) described herself as a sponge to learn and improve in the teaching post. She grasped every chance to learn. She thought there were many different kinds of classrooms in her life. She learned from her colleagues, former teachers, experts, parents and students.

Knowledgeable

Teacher as knowledgeable suggests a role for a teacher as being knowledgeable about subject matter, teaching and life. All of the teachers tried to pursue this role.

As Teacher Hu (Early-career, Series B) said, ‘Master professional knowledge and skills... Provide students with wisdom about learning and living.’ Teacher Sun (Early-career, Series B) pointed out that, ‘to be a teacher should be knowledge.’ Teacher Guo (Early-career, Series B) noted that, ‘Great knowledge makes a teacher’. Teacher Ding (Early-career, Series B) said, ‘The most important thing about being a teacher is having profound knowledge.’ Teacher Ma (Mid-career, Series A) said, ‘To have scholarly knowledge and talent is very important for a teacher.’ Teacher Liu (Late-career, Series A) said that ‘he tried to be knowledgeable.’ Teacher Ren (Late-career, Series A) said, ‘Knowledge is power but I think to know how to use knowledge is more powerful than just having knowledge.’ Teacher Wang (Late-career, Series A) mentioned ‘having a wider range of knowledge.’

Educator

Teacher as educator is where a teacher has a sense of a teacher being more or has a desire to make an impact. Educator was used as a teacher talked about having a huge responsibility which goes outside the classroom and relates to providing moral and social development and leadership. All the early-career teachers wanted to have this role. The mid-career teacher noted that her sense of becoming an educator was strengthened, and late-career teachers told me about what they did in having the role of educator. It is a role unique to more experienced teachers. As Teacher Hu (Early-career, Series B) mentioned, ‘I should teach my students an attitude towards life.’ Teacher Sun (Early-career, Series B) said, ‘I want to cultivate students’ good qualities and teach them correct concepts and values.’ Teacher Guo (Early-career, Series B) noted that, ‘Great knowledge makes a teacher; moral integrity makes a model. A teacher should have professional knowledge and set up a moral model for students.’ Teacher Ding (Early-career, Series B) said, ‘I hope my students will remember me when they recall their university life. I hope I am a teacher who can help in their growth and help them form correct values. They could learn real things from me.’ Teacher Ma (Mid-career, Series A) noticed that her sense of being an

educator was becoming stronger and stronger, especially when she reached middle age. 'I need to teach them correct values and let them know positive information. I found that when we discussed certain topics, my students could not distinguish what is right and what is wrong, such as pursuit of money, getting married for the money and so on. It is worthwhile to discuss and explore with them.' Teacher Liu (Late-career, Series A) said he 'tries to enable his students to have integrated personalities and become moral nobles.' Teacher Ren (Late-career, Series A) mentioned, 'My teaching would let them know a kind of attitude towards life and how to deal with people.' Teacher Wang (Late-career, Series A) perceived that 'teaching students the kind of attitudes towards life is crucial.'

Meanwhile, educator was also used related to a teacher who wants to make an impact. As Teacher Hu (Early-career, Series B) mentioned:

A teacher's personality will impact on students. I hope I can play an active role in their character formation. They do not need to remember me, but my personality could bring them positive effects in their future work and life. I think that is great... Educating a child will benefit a family. I totally agree with it. I feel my responsibility. I am proud that I am an influential person. What I say and what I do could influence at least hundreds of students every year. I have the power of discourse to affect them.

Teacher Sun (Early-career, Series B) hoped her students would remember one or two of her sayings which were helpful for them for their whole lives. She hoped her class could be helpful for students' development, which could cultivate appropriate values and personalities. 'If my class could play a positive role in my students' development, it is enough...my words and deeds would impact on my students' concept of values.'

Teacher Ma (Mid-career, Series A) said, 'I am a good person. I could bring a positive effect on my students.' Teacher Ren (Late-career, Series A) mentioned that, 'It takes one hundred years to educate a person. It could influence several generations. To teach a student could benefit a family, radiate to a society and influence a world...A teacher could influence a student's whole life.'

Director

Teacher as director is where a teacher has more administrative duties. When a teacher changes from a novice to being more experienced, this teacher will shoulder more non-teaching duties as Teacher Ren (Late-career, Series A) and Teacher Wang (Late-career, Series A) mentioned being a director or a dean to observe and organise the faculty's activities. It is a role unique to more experienced teachers.

5.4 Teacher as Acculturator

Teacher as acculturator is used to identify a role where the teacher is seen as one who helps students get accustomed to life outside class. It is a role unique to language teachers with three sub-identities as: teacher as socialiser, advisor and care provider.

Socialiser

Teacher as socialiser is where a teacher socialises with students or attends functions outside class with students. As Teacher Sun (Early-career, Series B), Teacher Ding (Early-career, Series B), Teacher Ma (Mid-career, Series A), Teacher Ren (Late-career, Series A) and Teacher Wang (Late-career, Series A) said, they could invite students to their home or go out with them. They enjoyed being with them. Teacher Ren sometimes cooked for her students and, at the end of each semester, she held a party with her students. They carefully chose videos and newspapers to help students arouse their cultural awareness.

Advisor

Teacher as advisor is where the teacher offers advice to students on matters related to living in another country/culture. All the teachers mentioned this point. Teacher Ma (Mid-career, Series A), for example, said, 'One of my students even told me he had fallen in love with a girl who just sat opposite to him in the library and asked me for suggestions.' All the teachers mentioned that their students asked for their

suggestions about how to choose universities abroad and tips for living there when they got a chance to go abroad.

Care provider

Teacher as care provider is where the teacher offers care for students. All the teachers mentioned that they cared about their students. Teacher Ren (Late-career, Series A), for example, said she ‘used her spare time to teach some of underachieving students in her class and helped them make great improvement.’ Teacher Wang (Late-career, Series A) mentioned that she bought lots of books for her students from poor areas.

5.5 Teacher as Researcher

Teacher as researcher is where the teacher is required to do research. It is a role unique to university teachers. It will be explored in Chapter 7. It is a role that all the teachers took up in the process of their professional development. None of the early career, Series B teachers was comfortable with this role. For example, as Teacher Hu (Early-career, Series B) noted:

I am a little bit distressed. For me, I am keen on teaching, but I do not like to do research. I heard that abroad a university teacher could either mainly focus on teaching or research. But here, what is discouraging is that, as a university teacher, I am required to do teaching and research. I feel there is a dilemma. If I still want to insist on teaching, I should make a breakthrough in research. If not, my future development will encounter a dilemma. I am puzzled....My teaching burden is heavy. I almost have no time to do it. I do not have the interest...Research. To do something I do not want to. If I would like to continue or do what I like, I should do research. In order to get what I like, I should force myself to do what I do not like.

Echoing Teacher Hu (Early-career, Series B), Teacher Sun (Early-career, Series B) said:

The conflict between teaching and research makes me feel puzzled. Someone could teach well, but could not do research well. Someone could do research well,

but could not teach well. Why should every teacher be required to do research and teaching? I can do nothing about it. What I can do now is focus on my teaching. I do not know whether I can survive. I am afraid if this situation lasts long, my passion and ambition will erode. It is so disappointing.

Teacher Guo (Early-career, Series B) mentioned that, 'To do research is the greatest challenge for me. It is hard for me to theorise what I know and what I do.' Similarly, Teacher Ding (Early-career, Series B) said, 'The second challenge for me is to do research. My teaching burden is too heavy. My competence is limited. It is hard for me to do it now.'

Teacher Ma (Mid-career, Series A) said she forced herself to write some articles and to do some research on some of her topics of interest related to teaching and education.

Teacher Liu (Late-career, Series A) mentioned that, 'I try to summarise practical things into theories. I try to use different methods to teach different classes. I try to do research.'

Teacher Ren (Late-career, Series A) became a successful researcher. She told me that she was influenced by her parents' spirit of researching and rigorous attitude. 'My mom likes to investigate everything. For example, when our door bell was broken, she explored how it worked and tried to fix it. It taught me a kind of researching attitude. My father taught me to become a rigorous person. When he was 80 years old, he met his PhD students. At the meeting, he asked his students whether there was a dot in the Chinese character Bo, to let them know they should pay attention to the details and to be rigorous.' Personally, she liked thinking and writing and had curiosity. She was an indefatigable person. She mentioned that, 'If you could give me a stage to let me perform, I would definitely give you a superb performance. If there is no any stage for me, I will build one and give you a terrific performance.' She used all her spare time to do research. She actively attended seminars, lectures and training. She read lots of books and articles. She revised her articles for more

than 30 times and realised that her first drafts were totally illogical and unfocused. Gradually, she became a researcher.

Teacher Wang (Late-career, Series A) said that she tried to investigate her teaching and did some research.

5.6 Summary and Discussion

In this chapter, I presented the coding categories emerging from participating teachers' narratives in order to explore the ways in which teachers constructed or reconstructed their professional identities through the lens of their roles. Teacher as acculturator might be unique to language teachers, which echoes with Duff and Uchida's (1997) and Farell's (2011) findings. Teachers occupied the role of subject teacher first and then became the educator, having pedagogical roles, which started from a desire to make an impact. This is also supported by Beijaard, et al. (2000), who argues that there is a continuum in gaining the role as subject teacher and their pedagogical roles. My findings also showed that teacher as researcher might be unique to university teachers and teacher as educator and director might be unique to more experienced teachers. Teacher as guardian might be somewhat weakened in the university context. The overall finding among these teachers was that there were several roles which had variations among them due to their personal experiences, such as teacher as promoter, presenter and trainer and so on. This showed that when they responded to contextual imperatives, their role identities might be reshaped through their work experience (Davies & Harré, 2001). Teachers also had other roles than roles that related to students, such as teacher as researcher and teacher as director. Moreover, no matter which career stages they were at, they could all be the manager, professional, acculturator and researcher; however, the role of researcher was a great challenge for early-career teachers and they wanted to gain a native-speaker identity; and some of mid- and late-career teachers' stories showed the

repertoire of some of these roles, such as teacher as presenter, teacher as trainer and so on.

Predetermined or Individually Constructed Roles

For the role identities listed above, the question is whether these roles have been predetermined or individually constructed by the teachers. That is, whether teachers fit into these roles by following pre-existing patterns, or individually negotiate these roles over time through interactions. To use the term adopted by Zurcher (1983: 14), predetermined roles emphasise the impact of ‘historical factors, power distributions and cultural values on role enactment’, while individually constructed roles are ‘shaped by interactions in specific social settings’. Namely, the difference between them could be seen as ready-made roles versus individually created roles (Farrell, 2011).

Teacher as researcher can be seen as an institutionally predetermined role. Not all the teachers had this role or felt comfortable with this role. This role is what makes university professionals unique as teachers and there may not be a similar benchmark for teachers of primary and secondary schools.

Moreover, the predetermined roles are changing. For example, Confucius believed in the good nature of human beings and, therefore, that a teacher’s job was to set a good example which the students could imitate and even compete with to realise their good nature which echoes Carr’s (1993) philosophical approach, paternalism. Ames and Hall (1987) suggest that there is a modelling relationship between the teacher and the conveyed principles in the sense that the teacher strives to communicate with students through actions and modelling to give credentials to what is to be taught. Additionally, traditional teachers in China were ‘ba zhe shou jiao’ – ‘teaching by holding one’s hand’ (Gardner, 1989). As for my participants, Confucius’ doctrines were constantly referenced as preferred ways of thinking about teaching or as a model of teaching to be challenged. My participants mentioned that Confucius’

prescribed roles for teachers might place teachers in a more teacher-centred position in the classroom as teachers are considered to be role models with authority. This echoes Søreide's (2007) findings that the prescribed roles are in flux and will change with time and context.

Teacher as promoter, guardian, knowledgeable, socialiser, advisor and care provider can be considered as socially predetermined roles, as teachers agreed that these roles are part of their job as College English teachers. Teacher as acculturator with teacher as socialiser, adviser and care provider supports Duff and Uchida's (1997: 476) findings about language teachers as cultural workers to 'socialise students into new cultural/linguistic practices and help them make new intercultural, cognitive, social and affective connections.' This role is what makes language teachers unique as teachers and there may not be a similar benchmark for teachers of other subjects. Even so, when they take up these predetermined roles, they add an individual flavour to the predetermined meanings of these roles, such as teacher as promoter and teacher as socialiser, adviser and care provider (see Section 5.2 and Section 5.4).

Furthermore, I agree with Farrell (2011) that it is difficult to distinguish predetermined roles and individually constructed roles through interaction, and there is a continuum of predetermined roles at one end and individually constructed roles at the other end, with some roles falling in between. For example, teacher as collaborator, learner and educator can be seen as examples of roles that can be considered as roles that fall in between, roles which are socially predetermined, but are individually constructed because teachers actively seek out situations in which they can collaborate and situations in which they can develop themselves further as teachers and educators. Teacher as organiser, problem-solver, trainer, enabler, motivator, presenter and arbitrator are also examples of roles that fall in between, which are predetermined but are individually constructed because each teacher negotiates these roles in their own ways. Teacher as director is an example of a role that falls in between, which is predetermined but is individually constructed because

each teacher tries their best to show they can take roles rather than teaching. Therefore, I think that no matter whether they are predetermined roles or individually constructed roles, teachers individually construct all their roles.

Constructing Individually Constructed Roles and Predetermined Roles: An Internalised Process

According to Cohen (2008: 81), the lens of role identity ‘highlights the tension between received expectations and individual negotiation that is at the heart of teacher identity.’ Therefore, the realisation of both predetermined and individually constructed roles is a self-internalised process, which needs continuous negotiation through interactions in specific social settings. By ‘self-internalised process’ I mean the process whereby teachers have to construct all their roles individually.

The variations within the role, such as teacher as promoter, presenter and trainer, and so on, (see Section 5.2) the evidence which shows that role identity construction has an internalised process. During this internalised process, some of the roles, such as teacher as researcher, teacher as educator and so on, could not be realised immediately; there is a trajectory for teachers to have this role eventually.

Moreover, those predetermined roles could be considered as an ideal teacher self, which was very evident in all the early-career teachers’ stories.

Early-career Teachers

Idealised ‘self’ as a university teacher vs. Current ‘self’ as a university teacher

The ‘I’ phrases, with verbs such as, ‘I want to be’ or, ‘We were required’ or, ‘I hope’ or, ‘I will,’ distinguish the kind of teacher early-career teachers wanted to be or which they were expected to become and the kind of teacher they were at the moment of speaking. For example, Teacher Hu, saw Teacher as researcher as the idealised university teacher who ‘should do teaching and research at the same time’

but encounters the reality that ‘I am keen on teaching, but I do not like to do research. I feel there is a dilemma. If I still want to insist on teaching, I should make a breakthrough in research. If not, my future development will encounter a dilemma. My teaching burden is heavy. I almost have no time to do it. I do not have the interest.’ Under the professional and institutional influences, Teacher Hu could not develop her preferred identity. Like Teacher Hu, this role identity of teacher as researcher bothered all the early-career teachers. Apart from this, Teacher as acculturator enables Teacher Sun to get close to her students in daily life. However, she noticed that her students treated her differently when they came to class which made her feel that ‘it is hard for me to shift my roles,’ and it echoed Teacher Guo’s talking about the power distance between teacher and students. Similarly, Teacher as motivator required teachers to motivate students to learn. Thus Teacher Ding needed to ‘make what I have learnt before as simple as possible in order to make them understand.’ This reality mismatches her early-career expectation that she has not realised that the level of non-English major students is low in her former university. She worried that if she kept down the level of the content of teaching, she would forget what she had learnt and her English level would regress. Thus, she wanted to become an English teacher half a year later. Teacher Sun, Teacher Guo and Teacher Ding’s narratives show that students play an important role in how teachers view themselves as teachers (see Chapter 6). Three years later, she began postgraduate study and entered Sun Yat-sen University. This time, she faced the reality of, ‘In my former university, I was within the system. Although now I am still in a university, I am outside the system. It is an adjunct and temporary position.’ She felt at a loss and she wanted to be within the system and wondered about the meaning of her work. The employment status shown in Teacher as Professional raises the issue of professional belonging which would affect teachers’ perceptions of their professional identity (see Chapter 7).

Idealised concept of teaching vs. Working concept of teaching

As teacher as promoter in relation to teaching methods, the idealised concept of teaching refers to the kind of teaching Teacher Hu felt that she felt was expected, either by her superior or by herself, to pursue. For example, on one hand, both she and other teachers expected her to interact with her students and adopt a student-centred approach. On the other hand, some students had become used to a traditional way of teaching and hoped teachers in the university would still use the same way to teach. They thought that when they listened to others' talking, they were not involved. They could learn nothing. Teacher Hu wanted to figure out how she should design and apply a student-centred approach to her classes and make it more acceptable for students. The people surrounding her played a part in whether the idealised concept of teaching could be realised. Similarly, when cultivating students' autonomous learning, Teacher Guo encountered students' reluctance. Teacher Sun hoped students could learn through their interest and gain pleasure from learning. However, her responsibility as a teacher made her focus more on imparting knowledge. Teacher Sun and Teacher Ding both tried to combine a teacher-centred and a student-centred approach.

As Davies and Harré (2001) point out, all workplaces or situations provide individuals with several narrative resources for identity construction. Early-career teachers faced the challenges of negotiating their professional identity as teachers. On the one hand, beginning teachers expressed their intention to resist the pressures of the work situation and realise the ideals which they had formed. On the other hand, teachers might adopt coping strategies when they responded to contextual imperatives or their conceptions of ideals might be reshaped through their work experience. I think teachers' resistance or hesitation in accepting predetermined roles (I will explore further in Chapter 7) such as student-centred teaching, the teacher and researcher dilemma, or compromising their own ideal selves as teachers, provided a chance to consider different understandings of teaching and education where students' and teachers' well-being could be emphasised.

Although mid- and late-career teachers seldom talked about idealising themselves as teachers as early-career teachers did, they quite often talked about what they were as teachers: in their minds there were still certain ideal roles for them to pursue with initiatives. Some of them, like Teacher Ren (Late-career, Series A), adopted a student-centred approach before it became a predetermined role by the reform. Probably, in the process of gaining experiences, teachers were becoming more and more confident in constructing and negotiating their individually constructed roles.

Mid-career Teacher

Analysing the teachers' professional role identities also helped to illustrate the ways in which they were able to accommodate new experiences and enrich their initial conceptions with which they entered teaching. For example, Teacher Ma (Mid-career, Series A) in my study first occupied the role of subject teacher. But, later on, she was also aware of their pedagogical roles as educators, moral role models, advisors, or care providers which went beyond simply imparting subject content knowledge, and she gradually took on the role of educator.

Later-career Teachers

Although Teacher Liu (Late-career, Series A) did mention that his idealised self as an English teacher encountered the actual self of being a College English teacher, he tried his best to compose a College English teacher's own wonderful music. Teacher Ren said she 'had already become what she wanted to become.' Her idealised identity matched with her actual identity. Moreover, as Teacher Ren (Late-career, Series A) and Teacher Wang took up new responsibilities as directors, the process of identity construction was further complicated because they were no longer just passing through cooperating teachers' classrooms.

Furthermore, this internalised process also shows how teachers make their agency come into full play. As Giddens (1991: 68) argues, 'the ideal self is a key part of self-

identity' as 'it forms a channel of positive aspirations in terms of which the narrative of self-identity is worked out'. This leads to the centrality of the 'self' in a relational process of learning to teach, which I explore in the following chapter.

Chapter 6 Self and Others: The Looking-Glass Self

6.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I have explored teachers' professional identity construction through the lens of their professional role identities by combining Reading 2 and thematic narrative analysis. Every participating teacher has his or her own way of forming relationships with students, their own theory of teaching and perceptions of the best way to teach based on their past experience in forming those relationships. This chapter goes on to present the results from combining Reading 3, in which I looked at how teachers spoke about their relationships with others (such as their students, colleagues, former teachers, family members and so on) and thematic narrative analysis, in which I developed coding categories through the lens of teachers' professional identities (see Methodology Chapter 3 Section 3.5). It explores teachers' professional identity construction of the relational context of teaching by focusing on how teachers talked about themselves in relation to others, such as significant others, their students and colleagues – which, according to Mauthner and Doucet (1998), may enable more private values and ways of being to be explored. Here I am focusing mainly on 'I' in relation to others, but this overlaps with the previous chapter which cannot be entirely disentangled from the view of self as a collaborator, as an educator, etc. (see Chapter 5).

6.2 The Construction of Teachers' Professional Identity as a Self-Mirroring

Borrowing Cooley's (1902) term, 'the looking-glass self,' which refers to people shaping their self-concepts based on social interactions with others (cited in Cooley, 1983), the interactions with people around them, especially their former teachers, students and colleagues determined how the participating teachers saw themselves as teachers. I use 'the looking-glass self' as a mirror metaphor. In this sense, their

former teachers, students and colleagues were like mirrors, from whom they perceived themselves as teachers. Therefore, I interpret the teachers' professional identity construction as a self-mirroring process.

6.2.1 From the Influence of Former Teachers

Except for Teacher Sun (Early-career, Series B), who thought she was not influenced by her former teacher because she did not intend to be a teacher and was not educated in any teaching-related subject or university, all the other participating teachers talked about the influences of their previous teachers on them. Teachers of the earlier generation, as mirrors, were significant others in the development of professional moral codes and their reflexive selves as teachers.

First of all, their former teachers influenced their perceptions of the teacher-student relationship. From them, they learned what kind of teacher-student relationship they would like to build up with their students. For example, the close relationship Teacher Hu (Early-career, Series B) had with her secondary school teacher fostered her thoughts about what kind of teacher she wanted to become. She mentioned that, 'I want to teach them with my heart.' Similarly, Teacher Ding (Early-career, Series B) admired her English teachers at university who were elegant and knowledgeable, thus she wanted to become a teacher like them. Additionally, the relationship she had with her teachers had an impact on what kind of relationship she wanted to build up with her students:

I remember my English teacher at university. Her truthfulness and care towards students really touched me. We laughed and cried together and that got deep into my memory. I clearly remember one of my classmates got sick, my teacher sent her to the hospital and took care of her till her recovery. Thus I want to be a teacher like her and I also want to be a teacher who can communicate with students with the heart.

Echoing them, the care Teacher Ren's (Late-career, Series A) former teacher gave to the poor and under-achieving students had greatly impacted on how she treated her students:

I saw my former teacher invited them to her house. To give them love first, then give them extra supervision. I want to become the kind of teacher who respects the students for who they are and I want to make all my students feel loved.

Secondly, their former teachers influenced their ways of teaching. From them, they mirrored their teaching methods. As Teacher Guo (Early-career, Series B) mentioned, 'I got inspiration from my formal teachers and imitated their ways of teaching which I thought was good for my students.' Also Teacher Guo, Teacher Ma (Mid-career, Series A), Teacher Liu (Late-career, Series A) and Teacher Wang (Late-career, Series A) noted that, when they were novices, they used their former teachers' teaching methods in their teaching. For example, Teacher Ma (Mid-career, Series A), at very beginning of her teaching, based on her personal learning experience, took her former secondary school teacher as a role model and adopted her way of teaching which she thought was good:

My secondary school teacher emphasised the importance of dictation and recitation of texts. She taught me like this and I learned quite well by using this method, thus I follow this routine to teach my students. I ask my students to memorise the text and new words. Then I give them dictations.

Teacher Liu (Late-career, Series A) mentioned that, 'I tried to copy my former teachers' ways of teaching at the very beginning of my teaching.' Teacher Wang (Late-career, Series A) also said that, 'I learned from my former teachers and tried to use their ways of teaching when I began to teach.'

Thirdly, on the one hand, their former teachers had an impact on what kind of classroom teaching atmosphere they would like to achieve. For example, Teacher Ren's (Late-career, Series A) primary teacher was an ideal teacher for her. Even today, she still remembers her vivid lessons. 'She could explain a text vividly. In her

class, when she cried, we cried with her; when she laughed, we laughed as well.’ The charm of her former teacher’s teaching had greatly attracted her, thus she wanted her classes to achieve the same effect. On the other hand, the impact of the earlier teaching generation might have mirrored negative examples. For example, Teacher Ren also talked about two types of teachers she disliked and would never become:

A substitute teacher in my primary school did not know how to deal with naughty pupils. She chose to do nothing but looked at the window. She thought by doing so, her pupils would calm down autonomously. But it turned out to be an even worse and uncontrolled situation. I think this teacher was extremely incapable. She did not try to solve the problem but just let it be... Another teacher I disliked was a teacher who always taught us by hiding his face behind textbooks and never had eye contact and communication with us. I keep telling myself that I will not become such a kind of teacher.

All these examples show how teachers emotionally and ideologically connected to their former teachers. Their former teachers mirrored their current selves as teachers or what kind of teacher they would like to become. Their beliefs, values and pedagogical ideas were inherited from their teachers, who cared for their students, who gave their students a sense of respect, and who did not hide their feelings and standpoints from their students. Thus, in the initial stage of professional identity construction, it may be in fact a heritage. The heritage here I refer to the participating teachers’ learning from their former teachers.

If teaching or the construction of teacher’s self is a heritage, then I am wondering whether the educational reforms are sustaining the heritage or endangering it (I discuss this further in Chapter 7).

6.2.2 From Working with Students: The Importance of the Student-teacher Relationship

For my participating teachers, regardless of the stages of their careers or employment status, the importance of the student-teacher relationship played a vital role in

determining how they saw themselves as teachers. In other words, they were mirroring themselves in their interaction with students. For all of them, having strong and close ties with students, being able to communicate with them, or being friends were very important. They treasured the time when their students came to talk to them. They all regarded the most rewarding time in their work as being spent getting along with students, listening to them and helping them to solve their problems. The student-teacher relationship was shown in their talking about the reactions from students, the evaluation from students, their pride in students and their desire to make an impact, all of which were important to them and were integral parts of how they valued themselves as teachers.

6.2.2.1 The Importance of Students' Reactions

Identity as a teacher is bound up with reactions from students and interaction with them both in and outside the classroom.

Firstly, in the classroom, students' reactions and interactions play an important role in how teachers view themselves as teachers, through imagining how students see them, imagining the judgements the students make about them and creating their self-identities with respect to the comments from students (Cooley, 1983).

Early-career Teachers

For example, when Teacher Hu (Early-career, Series B) talked about the first lesson she taught, she focused on her consciousness of how the students might see her, how she wanted to be seen by them, and her knowledge of what the students think is needed or will be impressed by a teacher:

I thought I should capture them by fluent English expressions. I should let them trust me though I am young. Under their critical eyes, I finished my self-introduction and course induction. From their faces I knew they admired me (laughing). Later on, when I had established my position in their hearts, they became more and more cooperative.

She thought good oral English was essential for an English teacher. She wanted to have the identity of native-speaker:

I think our students have an expectation of us as English teachers. For example, they hope your oral English is good. If not, you need a long time to establish trust with your students.

Similar goals were evidenced in Teacher Ding's (Early-career, Series B) story.

She was interested and involved in students' performance, as she said:

The students' performance in class will have a great impact on my feelings. When they do well, I will laugh, when they cannot reach my requirements, I feel worry and anger.

Teacher Sun (Early-career, Series B) thought to remember the student's name, which was very important to her, and would enable her to build trust with her students. 'I think if a teacher can know the student's name, it is very important for the students. It is a sense of recognition for them. They will know you care about them.'

Echoing Teacher Hu, Teacher Sun cared about students' reactions:

Sometimes when I am tired, I am not in the good mood. But when I go to class, when I see students learn something new, especially if I am the first person who tells them, when I see their eyes are lighting up, I suddenly feel I could do anything for them. From my students, I could know my value... From my students' response to me, I know I can teach very well. Sometimes I care too much about the students' reactions. When they like me, I feel happy. But I cannot avoid it, that some students have their own ideas, they do not like my class.

Similarly, Teacher Guo (Early-career, Series B) said:

When we cooperate well in class, I feel very happy. For example, once there was a text about social problems, we discussed about high house prices. The students' thinking is deep. Sometimes when I notice their changes, I feel very pleased. When students make a good presentation, I feel very excited.

Teacher Hu, Teacher Sun and Teacher Guo were interested in the students' performance and their emotions were closely subject to students' performance.

Mid-career Teacher

Unlike early-career teachers, who emphasised their emotional attachment to students' behaviour in class, mid-and late-career teachers used it as their driving force to make improvements. For example, Teacher Ma (Mid-career, Series A) used her students' feedback and classroom reactions as a source of reflection that had an impact at a personal level as well as a source of motivation to improve her teaching practice and to establish future professional plans:

From the students' evaluation, I felt my score was not good enough. When I observed students' reactions, in my class the students sitting in the last few rows were all distracted. They could not fully focus. For me, in my class I wanted to control the whole class atmosphere, I hoped I could bring all their energy into play. But the students in the last rows were reading other books. They did not have any feeling about my class. The students sitting in the middle were indifferent. Only a few students sitting at the front were in a good state. This situation lasted a long period of time. It was really bad. For several years, almost two or three years, I totally had no idea about how to solve this problem. At that time, I felt that I did not know how to teach at all. I was always teaching like that. My former teachers taught me like that. It was always good for me to teach like that. Now how could I deal with this problem? What should I do?

Furthermore, the interaction with students enabled Teacher Ma to gain a deeper understanding of herself as a teacher. She knew that she liked to work with students.

Late-career Teachers

Teacher Liu (Late-career, Series A) thought the students' approval was an encouragement for him:

I remember sometimes when my class is approaching the end, my students will give me applause. I feel appreciated. At the very beginning, I am lacking of confidence towards my teaching. The encouragement from students and approval from them are my driving force.

Gaining in experience, teachers seem to have been moving from being emotionally attached to students' classroom reactions to rationally rethinking their teaching. In

the construction of teachers' professional identity process, teachers seem to grow from being passively influenced by students' responses to actively working out the solutions.

Secondly, outside the classroom, the students' reactions impacted on all the participating teachers as well, regardless of their career stages.

Early-career Teachers

As Teacher Hu (Early-career, Series B) said:

The most precious ones are from my students. I gain their support. Their letters and words are the driving force of my teaching. I remember that I had a class. I was not their teacher when they were freshmen. They had not formed good habits of learning when they were freshmen. Their learning was very passive. At first when I took charge of this class, I experienced a tough time. I tried very hard to change their old habits. I put all my energy into it. Out of my expectations, at the end of the term, they sent me an email, everyone wrote me a sentence. I was touched and burst into tears. I read that letter several times.

The tears that filled her eyes towards the end of this extract are a sign of how deeply Teacher Hu's students had touched her life.

She repeatedly told me about her students' compliments to her, such as:

They tell me I teach them a kind of attitude towards life. I am touched. I know they could learn something from me... Sometimes they send me text messages. They write about my influence on them. They send me emails to tell me that my class has given them a good memory.

These comments and attitudes from her students sustained Teacher Hu's motivation to improve continuously as a professional.

For Teacher Hu, to be loved by her students at the very beginning brought her a great sense of achievement. Teacher Sun (Early-career, Series B) thought the the willingness of her students to communicate with her after class is quite important for her. This seemed to her the students treated her as their friends. She hoped that they

could say ‘hi’ to her when they met on campus. Teacher Guo (Early-career, Series B) felt touched when her received students greetings several years’ after their graduation. Teacher Ding (Early-career, Series B), who wants to be able to communicate with her students from the bottom of her heart, encountered the reality of the large amount of students she taught and the reality of teaching across the campus which hindered her in establishing the kind of professional relationship she expected. ‘Teaching across different campuses makes it harder for students who want to visit and talk to me. They can only communicate with me through emails.’ She thought that even if the students could only communicate with her through emails, she still felt touched and it showed students’ trust in her. When students have achievements they would like to share with her, it makes her very happy and gives her a sense of achievement.

This is also mirrored from Teacher Ma (Mid-career, Series A) and Teacher Liu (Late-career, Series A), Teacher Ren (Late-career, Series A) and Teacher Wang’s (Late-career, Series A) stories as follows:

Mid-career Teacher

For Teacher Ma (Mid-career, Series A), the students’ trust in her is very important to her. Some of her students shared their personal lives with her.

When my students know my birthday, they send me lots of greetings and wishes. It is really touching. They trust me. One of my students even told me he had fallen love with a girl who just sit opposite to him in the library and asked me about suggestions. That is quite interesting.

Later-career Teachers

Teacher Liu (Late-career, Series A) said:

When my students get good marks in the exams, I feel it is an achievement of my teaching. When I teach the selective courses, every time my class is fully booked by students. Some of my students send me postcards, emails or call me after their graduation. Sometimes I cannot remember them. But from them I feel this job is worthwhile to do. It exceeds money. It is the best and happiest part of being a

teacher. I know what I teach is useful for them. It is a great encouragement for me to move on. It is the rewards this job gives me.

Teacher Ren (Late-career, Series A) told me some of her students came back to visit her 20 years after their graduation. It seldom happened to a general course teacher. When it was her birthday, Chinese New Year or teacher's day, she used the cards from students to decorate the living room and felt very happy. She thought a card from students, which described a teacher with students sitting on a magic mattress and flying in the sea of knowledge, is a reflection of her as a teacher which made a deep impression on her.

Teacher Wang (Late-career, Series A) was quite happy when she received students compliment about her teaching and when her students came to visit her at her home.

From students' reactions, teachers mirror themselves as teachers.

6.2.2.2 The Importance of Students' Evaluation

The importance of evaluation from students is an integral part of how they value themselves as teachers. I include both individually and institutionally designed evaluations, such as the questionnaires teachers used to collect students' opinions, and scores from students' end-term evaluations under the category of 'evaluation'.

Early-career Teachers

The desire for feedback seemed important for early-career teachers. Because by doing so, they could capture insights from students and knew how their teaching was going/being received. For example, as Teacher Hu (Early-career, Series B) mentioned:

I remember that I had a class which was not very cooperative. In my class, I required students' participation. But this class did not cooperate with me. I was very worried about it. I sent a questionnaire to them. I was astonished by the feedback. They told me that actually they are very glad to participate and cooperate, but due to some language barriers, they could not be active in class.

Now, I had a different understanding about cooperation between me and my students. Sometimes, the cooperation is superficial, such as questions and answers in class. Sometimes, the cooperation is support from the bottom of my heart. I could understand them much better.

Similarly, Teacher Sun used some of her time after class to listen to her students' feedback and then adjusted her ways of teaching based on her students' comments. To get students' feedback, Teacher Guo used questionnaires at the beginning and end of each term, on-line forums and informal talks with her students. Based on the information gathered, she changed her ways of teaching. Teacher Ding used emails to communicate and get to know students' ideas which would help her adjust her teaching.

Moreover, although Teacher Sun, Teacher Guo and Teacher Ding did not mention the institutional evaluation, the score was important to Teacher Hu and was an integral part of how she valued herself as a teacher; she referred to this on several occasions throughout the interview. She thought it reflected that her ways of teaching were accepted by her students:

Every term, students give us an evaluation. My score is very high...But from their evaluation, my score is higher than 2007. Therefore, I think they accept me, but their way of expressing it is different.

Feedback and evaluation from students were positive reinforcement for their further contribution in work. In return, the relationship established between teacher and students became the source of reinforcing and sustaining teachers' commitment. For example, Teacher Hu (Early-career, Series B) used her spare time to talk to students:

When I receive students' emails, I will find a time to talk to them face to face. I think if you can talk to them, especially if a university teacher would like to talk with students, they will be appreciated. Through the communication with students, we can help them know their drawbacks and make changes. They will have great encouragement.

Apart from that, she even sacrificed her personal life to her career. She told me that, 'I won't get married until I can bring my students into the national final speaking competition.'

Mid-career Teacher

Although none of mid-and-late-career teachers mentioned the desire for feedback, one of them (Teacher Ma) did mention that scores as a part of students' evaluation are important to them in terms of informing their teaching. As Teacher Ma (Mid-career, Series A) said:

From the students' evaluation, I feel my score is not good enough.....What I am certain of is that I know once I try my best to teach, my score is high and my ranking is in the front. Once I am relaxed, my ranking would move backward. I know how I could strive. I am very clear about it.

The students' evaluations serve as reinforcement for her contribution with her work.

Late-career Teachers

Unlike the early-career teachers and Teacher Ma (Mid-career, Series A), Teacher Liu (Late-career, Series A), Teacher Ren (Late-career, Series A) and Teacher Wang's (Late-career, Series A) ways of teaching were not based on students' feedback; they tried to teach what they thought was right for them even when the score became lower. For example, as Teacher Wang (Late-career, Series A) noted:

I think reading comprehension is the most important thing. To get information is crucial, then to master vocabulary and sentence pattern. My way of teaching could not gain all the students' approval. They won't give me a very high score. No matter what, I think that is what I should do.

Teacher Ren, as a teaching reform pioneer, was always confident in her teaching and always got the highest scores in the students' end-term evaluations. The scores did not matter to her at all.

Is teachers' professional identity construction a continuum of desire for feedback and evaluation at one end and belief in oneself at the other end? In the process of gaining

in experience and expertise, teachers seem to become less dependent on students' feedback and evaluation and rely more on their own.

6.2.2.3 Pride in Students

Pride in their students is an integral part of how they value themselves as teachers, which is evident in all the participating teachers' stories. Pride here is beyond pride in scores though it includes it.

Early-career Teachers

Teacher Hu (Early-career, Series B), for example is proud of her students:

Good moments (laughing), our university is a prestigious university in China. We have excellent students from all parts of the country. Our students are very good and clever [...] Sometimes under my supervision [smiles and chuckles] and sometimes it is students' own creativity make me laughing in the class [...] I always feel speechless. I do not know how to express my feeling [...] it is hard for me to find the appropriate words [...] Sometimes I am laughing until I burst into tears. I am laughing not because their performance is funny, it is because I am proud of them, they are amazing. They are my treasure in my life (laughing).

The continuous pauses while Teacher Hu was telling this story show that she was deeply touched by these moments. Even the smiles and the chuckling that are present in these excerpts show that these were precious experiences for the formation of her professional identity as a teacher.

Teacher Sun (Early-career, Series B) is proud of her students' presentations:

Once my students designed a game called 'Finding out the Killer', which involved all of their classmates in participate in it. I was surprised by their organisational and motivating skills. I thought it could not be achieved by the teacher. They could use fluent English to finish the tasks. Some of them acted as robbers, all their classmates were allocated different roles to cooperate with them. Some of them even acted as victims who wanted to escape from the window but were shot death by one of the robbers and hung in the window for nearly ten minutes. They tried to use their logical reasoning to find out the killers. They learned through doing it with joy.

Teacher Guo (Early-career, Series B) was quite happy to find out students' changes in how to express their points logically and how to use information to make persuasive arguments.

Teacher Ding (Early-career, Series B) pointed out that she is proud of her students' improvement:

When I saw my students overcame their fears and uncertainties to finish their presentations by using English, I was so pleased to witness their growth.

Mid-career-Teacher

Teacher Ma (Mid-career, Series A) is proud of her students, who can combine their subject knowledge into English learning, such as when they designed some animations in their presentation.

Late-career Teachers

Teacher Liu (Late-career, Series A) was pleased to know his students got high marks in the CET4.

Teacher Ren (Late-career, Series A) talked about her experience of teaching underachieving students. Their English level was not good enough compared to students in other departments. Two years later, those students' CET 4 average score ranked No. 2 in the whole university. She felt so proud of them.

Teacher Wang (Late-career, Series A) was proud of her students' active thinking, wide range of interests and in-depth knowledge shown in their group activities.

All these gave them a sense of achievement, which were precious experiences for the formation of their teacher's professional identity.

6.2.2.4 Desire to Make an Impact

The desire to make an impact is an integral part of how they value themselves as teachers which was shown in all the participating teachers' stories about their roles as educators (see Chapter 5, also see my comment about disentanglement in the introduction Section 6.1). However, this disentanglement was not about the previous mentioned the importance of students' reactions and evaluations and pride in students. It is because those sections focus on how the students' comments were used to reflect their teachers' selves, which in turn may impact on teachers' professional identity construction. The desire to make an impact focuses on teachers, which could link to teachers' roles that would affect students' development. As Ho (1995) suggests, being a teacher means taking on a set of roles assumed by educational authorities, by students, by colleagues and by social expectations.

6.2.2.5 The Blurring of Professional Lines between Teaching as a Job and the Personal (Friend)

The blurring of professional lines between teaching as a job and the personal (friend) was evident in all the early-career teachers' narratives. For example, Teacher Hu (Early-career, Series B) wants to become a teacher who 'could be remembered by students... even after their graduation, we (the teacher and students) could still keep in touch' but she encounters the reality that as a general course teacher, 'no matter how much they like me at that time, one or two years later we won't get in touch. They seldom remember me. When I walk on campus, we come across each other, they seldom say hello to me.' Similarly, Teacher Sun (Early-career, Series B) thought she and her students could become close friends but in reality she found that students treated her differently in class and after class, which confused her:

When I encounter my students on campus, I say 'hi' to them, but they do not reply to me. Maybe they do not see me or it is out of their expectation that their teacher will say hi to them. But I still insist on doing so. Sometimes I feel a little bit awkward that you are very close with them in daily life, but when you come to

class, they will use a different eye to see you and treat you. Sometimes I find it is hard for me to shift my roles.

Nias's (1989) findings suggest that more experienced teachers tended to incorporate professional identities into their self-image as persons. Not only the more experienced teachers, but all the teachers in my study, provide evidence that teaching is an occupation where the person cannot be easily separated from the craft.

6.2.3 From Working with Colleagues

Apart from mirroring themselves in the interaction with students, all the participating teachers also mirrored themselves from working with their colleagues. Interestingly, an 'othering' process was identified. Although Renold (2004) uses the term 'othering' as a way of conceptualising the processes by which hegemonic identities are produced and maintained, I borrowed her term 'othering' and use it here to mean a way of conceptualising the process by which teachers identify their differences or uniqueness when they work with their colleagues. That is, this othering process on the one hand, is more of an individuating process, but on the other hand, it also a process of placing the self to the position of others.

6.2.3.1 Othering: Transformation of the Self, Knowledge and Practice

Although my participating teachers seldom talked about how their colleagues perceived themselves, and how they expected to be seen by their colleagues, as they did when they talked about working with students, I found that when teachers talked about how they perceived their colleagues, they were actually talking about themselves. They not only used others to mirror themselves, but also used others to identify their differences or uniqueness among their colleagues. The mid-and-late career teachers had all spoken of themselves as teachers, yet simultaneously dissociated themselves from other colleagues. As Lawler (2008: 2) suggests, 'identity hinges on an apparently paradoxical combination of sameness and difference.'

For example, as Teacher Ma (Mid-career, Series A) said:

Now I feel that I find the direction. But a lot of my colleagues still could not find their directions. What I mean by I find the direction is not to say my teaching is good, but I am sure what and in which way I am going to teach. I feel it is workable. I have already made a decision that I would like to teach so. However, lots of my colleagues do not understand why their scores fell behind. They are struggling and feeling painful. They are wondering why they are so unpopular among students. I am trying my best to teach, why do the students not like me and my way of teaching? They do not know the reasons. What I am certain of is that I know once I try my best to teach, my score is high and my ranking is in the front. Once I am relaxed, my ranking would move backwards. I know how I could strive. I am very clear about it. During these years, I find out the solution. But a lot of my colleagues really could not find the way out. Therefore, I think to be a teacher is really a miserable thing. It is not just that you try your best and then you can do it well. I notice our colleagues, they put all their energies into it, they try their best to prepare and teach well in class. If our classrooms are near, when they teach, in my classroom I can hear their voices clearly. But their scores are still not very high. They cannot find the way out.

Teacher Ma located herself by identifying others (colleagues). When she faced a teaching dilemma, she realised that her colleagues were as puzzled as she was. Though she once saw herself as one of them, now she described herself as being a different. Though she found out the solutions, lots of them still could not find their way out. Unlike her colleagues, who do not know the reasons and are wondering why their scores fall behind, why they are so unpopular among students, she knows what she can do in order to make improvements. She is no longer the same as many of her colleagues who just put all their energy into teaching which she thought was not enough.

She also talked about:

Some of my colleagues are not very outgoing. When they cannot find the solution, they give up. I like to work with people, I want to try my best to change my students. I try all the soft and hard ways.

She was different from some of her colleagues who gave up easily. She tried her best to create a cooperative classroom atmosphere.

She noted that:

When I talk to my colleagues, I realise that some of them do not explain the text at all. They teach regardless of the textbook. I am thinking of what we should do with the textbook. Nowadays, what is the meaning of the textbook? I do not know now. I am a little bit puzzled. Do we still need a textbook? If we have a textbook, at least you should guarantee your students could understand the contents in it. If they have problems, you should explain it to them. When I read through the text carefully, I pick out some points and sentences. My colleagues told me that they haven't noticed them before. They do not explain the text. I feel nowadays teachers have lots of variations. What do they teach in class? I am a very traditional teacher. I am very rigid teacher.

She was different from those who teach regardless of the textbooks and do not explain the text at all. She realised that although she has lots of questions and uncertain points, she had to work it out by herself and to do what she believed was right for her:

I will explain the text according to the syllabus. Then I will let them practise listening. But when I teach the text, I feel painful. I do not know how I should teach. If you explain new words and grammar, the students will lose their interest. But should I teach text? If yes, to what extent? To spend how much time? Or should I discard it? I have a lot of questions. Therefore, every time what I could do is try to make a balance. If this text is simple, I will spend little time on it. If there are some nice topics in it, I will spend more time on discussion. It is more flexible now.

Doing what was right for her had been an important step for Teacher Ma in being able to become and to be the teacher she wanted to be.

On the one hand, Teacher Ren (Late-career, Series A) was different herself from some of her colleagues. As being a director, she had chances to observe some of the young teachers' classes:

The class starts at 9:30 am, the teacher goes to the teacher's restroom at 9:00 am and just begins to look at the text. The whole book she uses looks like a totally new one without any highlights and notes.

She thought that, as an experienced teacher, she still needed to prepare very carefully.

She once observed a young teacher's class, whose oral English is excellent:

After class, I asked the students' feelings. They said the teacher's English is wonderful. Then I asked them what you've learnt and how's your English, can you use it to express your ideas as your teacher did? They said no. I talked to this teacher about why she spoke so fast regardless of the students' reactions and found out that she was afraid she could not maintain her English level. But how about the students?

Teacher Ren thought a good teacher should witness both students' growth and her own development.

On the other hand, showing her difference with her colleagues, Teacher Ren also used other teachers' experience as a mirror to herself:

Those teachers who always get bad scores, they do not know the reasons. They say they are working hard, responsible and strict, but the students are not appreciative. I think they are too strict to the students without any encouragement which will make students lose their confidence. I use it as a mirror to warn myself that I could not treat my students like this. If you do not love your students, how could you be loved by them? If your class could not touch you, how could you use it to touch your students?

This example showed that, from others, she saw herself, the differences between other teachers and herself, and what kind of teacher she preferred and chose to be.

Teacher Wang (Late-career, Series A) talked about how she viewed her colleagues to indicate what she thought a teacher should do:

Some teachers want to gain high scores. They do something they should not do to please students. Some teachers tell students their own stories in class. The students feel it is interesting and give you a high score. But is it useful? There is nothing left after finishing the class. Some teachers promise their students to let them pass. By doing so, it cultivates students' laziness. To loosen the restrictions

for students is not what a responsible teacher should do. I notice that the teacher who gets the highest score only teaches vocabulary. It looks like you teach a new word and the students learn a new word and memorise it. But I think this kind of memory is temporary. If they do not use it, they will forget it. A lot of students tell me they have learnt English for several years, but they only remember several words, they could not use English to communicate. I think only teaching vocabulary could not strength students' language competence. They will forget that word later on if they have no chance to use it.

It showed that she was different from those teachers.

None of early-career teachers mentioned this point, and only mid- and late-career teachers did so. Is professional identity construction a process from knowing the sameness to identifying differences within the group? From mid- and late-career teachers' narratives above, it showed that they were differentiate themselves from their colleagues to gain their individualities.

6.2.3.2 Loss of Social Binding and Support from the Professional Community

There was no mention of support from the professional collective, which probably implies the absence or deficiency of the professional collective in the local teaching profession. Teachers are left alone to deal with the problem they are facing in the workplace, though there are increasing demands on their performance and workload. The collective is decaying. Whereas, in the past, the teachers all moved to a common destination, building up a collective during the process of progressive movement, nowadays everyone is seeking ways to sustain one's survival in a highly competitive environment.

Early-career Teachers

For example, Teacher Hu (Early-career, Series B) told me that when she encountered problems, she always tried to find solutions on her own. But sometimes she discussed her teaching problems with some of her close colleagues. She said she would like to go to observe other teachers' lessons, but 'it is hard to for me to go. We

always have the class at the same time. The majority of teachers do not like us to observe their classes.’

Teacher Sun (Early-career, Series B) said, when she talked with colleagues, they seldom discussed their problems related to teaching. She thought, ‘It is not because they do not want to tell you, it is because they do not want you to feel they are acting as a teacher who always knows more than you.’ But sometimes, she discussed teaching problems with colleagues who were the same age as her. Likewise, Teacher Hu also mentioned that teachers did not like her to observe their classes. Thus she said, ‘I feel pity that sometimes I do not have any sense of belonging to a community. I feel the communication is just between me, as an individual, and students as a group. I feel I get some big shoes to fill. The students’ impressions towards English courses or the university are upon you.’

Teacher Guo (Early-career, Series B) sometimes discussed with her colleagues how to work with students from different subject disciplines.

Teacher Ding (Early-career, Series B) tried to figure out all her problems on her own and sometimes she talked to her colleagues, and she thought through communication she could gain some enlightenment or same kind of psychological support from them.

Mid-Career Teacher

Teacher Ma (Mid-career, Series A) seldom went to observe her colleagues’ classes because they did not like others to observe.

Late-career Teachers

Teacher Liu (Late-career, Series A) mentioned why he thought teachers did not like others observing their classes. ‘They are afraid you benefit from their teaching and will surpass them.’

Teacher Ren (Late-career, Series A) thought that the colleagues were competitors:

The conflict of interests exists among us. Everything has its quota. The power is centralised. Our leadership and authority is top-down. Under this institutional culture, won't you agree that the relationship between colleagues is either you or me, live or die? Absolutely yes, it is. Such as if you and I go to apply for a professorship, but there is only a quota of one. Every year we only have a 5% quota for Excellency which is linked to our salary. Everyone thinks they are excellent. Who will get it? They are all severe battles.

She also mentioned the difficulties associated with team building:

A textbook has eight units. Eight teachers work in a group. Each of us makes a PowerPoint slide for a unit and then we share. The one who makes good PowerPoint slides is not happy because she/he shares her/his good stuff but gets nothing in return.

Teacher Wang (Late-career, Series A) found it difficult to understand the extent to which she should open up to her colleagues at the very beginning of her teaching. She told me that, 'one of my colleagues shared her idea with other teachers and it was used by another teacher. In the end that teacher was praised for this innovative idea which was not hers in the first place.' So she decided to keep something to herself so that she could have an edge over the others. She thought they were lacking in communication. They were striving alone. Like Teacher Ren, Teacher Wang also mentioned the difficulties associated with team building. Once a group of teachers tried to plan a lesson together, 'within the group, it is hard to establish the balance. Some good teachers always criticise the work of those not so good ones. It always ends up in a quarrel. It is hard for us to get things done.' She noticed that the communication between teachers is lacking. They need to strive alone.

The examples showed that when teachers encounter difficulties, they seldom sought help. None of them talked about the actual and mutual support between people, needless to say, a platform for emotional sharing and reflection on the self. Problems were kept to themselves. Everyone is held responsible for his or her own problems, successes or failures. Identity construction is an independent and lonely journey kept to oneself. The ever-increasing workload draws teachers away from having time to

reflect and to spend with friends and families. The education system has been transformed into a highly competitive environment. Competition makes the formation of authentic relationships particularly challenging, and bonding among teachers seems to be more like a dream. My data, to a certain extent, reflect the complex nature of collegial relations discussed by Hargreaves (1994). It agrees with Nias' (1989: 136) findings on staffroom politics, which is novice teachers 'wanting to know more about other teachers' routines, habits and ways of behaving. Not surprisingly, it was therefore to their colleagues that they most often looked in their first appointments, for examples of craft skill and knowledge in action.'

6.2.4 From Others' Perceptions

Coldron and Smith (1999: 712) point out that, 'being a teacher is a matter of being seen as a teacher by himself or herself and by others.' Namely, other people's perceptions of teachers also affect how they view themselves as teachers.

For example, Teacher Guo (Early-career, Series B) was confused by how other people saw her:

I remembered at the time of the College English Test Band 4, I was in charge of playing the recorder for the listening part. When I finished my task, I would invigilate. In order to guarantee the exam could go on smoothly, only students and teachers could enter the building. On my way to the classroom, a guard shouted at me, 'What are you doing here? You are not allowed to stay here.' I tell her I am a teacher and I will invigilate. She orders me to leave. She could not believe I was a teacher. It is hard for me to believe I have been a teacher for four years, there is still someone who thinks I am not a teacher. Some of my students think I work in a company. That is so strange for me. I am wondering why I am not looking like a teacher in some people's eyes.

She wanted recognition from other people.

Teacher Ren (Late-career, Series A) told me that because she had not have an outstanding educational background, she was always looked down upon by others. She wanted to try hard to prove herself:

I went to the UK for a teacher training course. There were five teachers from the mainland of China. They were ten years younger than me. We learned how to use the computer there. They were young thus they learned quicker than me. At the end of the course, each of us needed to make a presentation. They were young and had graduated from prestigious universities. They did not know my actual level, but from my educational background and age, they looked down upon me. But my presentation shocked them. I made a figure to show the relationship between the testers and testees. They were not fighting. They sat together and helped each other to diagnosis. My presentation earned my supervisors' high praise.

In a classmates' reunion, her former classmates view of her made her choose teaching as her career:

At the very beginning of the 1990s, we had a primary and secondary school classmates' get-together. We had not met for a long time. Some of them worked in the big companies. I found I was different from them in dressing and income. I was a teacher who belonged to the poor and lower middle class. I was a campus nun who did not need to deal with complex social relations and communications. When I gave them my first book, they told me that I have spiritual works which could pass down for generations, which woke me up. I suddenly realised the meaning and value of my job. From then on, I decided to take teaching as my life-long career. I finally found my value.

Her neighbour, a teacher in the geography department, tells her how much he envies her because she has classes to teach, which makes her realise to have classes to teach is an admirable thing. There are problems left over by history. In comprehensive universities, some teachers in certain disciplines have not had any classes to teach all the year round. They entered the university to be a teacher during the time of planned economy in China, and the university could not fire them (see chapter 7).

How they view themselves as teachers also was affected by other people's perceptions. Those other people's perceptions serve as mirrors, from which they saw themselves. Therefore, the teachers' professional identity construction may be as a self-mirroring.

6.4 Summary and Discussion

In this chapter, I borrowed Cooley's (1902) term, 'the looking-glass self' and used it as a mirror metaphor to investigate teachers' professional identity construction through the lens of self and others relationship in the relational context.

In addition to the findings which emerge from Chapter 5, teacher as collaborate, this chapters finds the interactions with people around the participating teachers determined how they saw themselves as teachers. It reveals that those 'others', such as former teachers, students and colleagues, were like mirrors. From their perceptions, they viewed themselves as teachers. Therefore, the teachers' professional identity construction may understand as a self-mirroring. The self-mirroring also echoes Kelchtermans' (1993) findings that how teachers perceive themselves in relation to other's expectations serves as an evaluative dimension in their professional identity construction. My participants' narratives suggested that how they perceived themselves as teachers through their professional relationships and pedagogical practices in the classroom or university in a personal way in terms of their own principles and preferences. This reflected the contextualised in the process of professional identity construction (Wetherell, 1996).

In my study, the initial stage of professional identity construction may be in fact a heritage supported Sugrue's (1997) argument that the cultural archetypes of teachers or models encountered in their learning experiences and schooling, which have supported their construction of themselves as teachers. Moreover, regardless of their different employment statuses and different stages of their careers, the importance of the student-teacher relationship played a vital role in determining how they saw themselves as teachers.

Though this relational dimension of identity construction as mentioned by McNally (2006) might need to be understood in a different manner in the Chinese context,

Confucianism is, in its essence, an ethical regulation system that governs human relationships (Ho, 1995). For example, the self in Confucius cultures is defined as ‘the relational self’ in the sense that Confucius teaches his students to be constantly aware of the social presences of other human beings. In this sense, Ho (1995) suggests that this relational self is more related to the concept of collective identity, where individual identity is to be defined by membership in the reference group, the capability to match the attributes of the said group and the text to which he/she could fulfil the obligations and responsibilities of being a member. Therefore, the importance of relationships lies not in the sense that they constantly reshape the individual’s sense of identity in respecting individual’s perceptions, sentiments or needs; rather, it emphasises the proper conduct and the prescribed roles to be assumed by the individuals in a relationship between, for example, teacher and students. Even if that is the case, due to the internalised process of role identities construction (see Chapter 5), I argue that teachers themselves are the decision-makers, and that their lives are in their own hands. They determine their own ways to work with students and colleagues (see Section 6.2.2 and Section 6.2.4). During this process, their emotions are involved.

Emotional Passage in the Identity Construction

When participating teachers, regardless of their career stages and employment status, talked about themselves in relation to others, emotion was accompanied by. Teaching is a profession deeply filled with values and emotion. Teachers, in their relationships with their students, placed a lot of emphasis on their emotions and on what they considered valuable or desirable for the well-being and flourishing of their students.

Nias (1996) conducted an empirical study of the significance of emotional involvement in the teachers’ professional identity construction. He investigated the personal interactions and relationships between teachers and others in the school.

The findings confirm the existence of ‘emotional labour’ as described by Hoshchild (1983), on service occupations. Teachers’ emotional labour, which requires the coordination of the mind, feelings and the self, has become the professional norm or moral code of the profession. That is, the willingness to invest the self and one’s emotions in the teaching process is proof of a teacher’s fulfilment of professional standards and one’s commitment to the career. My findings also provide evidences to support the existence of ‘emotional labour’.

Hargreaves (1998) builds on the notion of emotional involvement of teachers in work by proposing three emotional representations: emotional practice, emotional understanding and moral purposes. Considering the various aspects of emotional involvement, my teacher participants did demonstrate various aspects of emotional involvement in their work.

Apart from the emotional bonding, the findings also show that the forms of self-conscious emotions could link to the assessment system of the self as agony and even guilt or pride towards the self. There are other expressions of self-conscious emotions in Chinese Culture which were embedded in teachers’ narratives. Teachers rarely used straightforward expressions such as, ‘I feel guilt’ or, ‘I am feeling proud of myself’; rather, they expressed their self and identity in those conditions as an extreme worry, nervousness or even fear. Though each teacher had a different experience in their teaching journey, they were feeling stressed in the competitive workplace towards their own selves (see Section 6.2.3.2). Conversely, when the teachers became well aligned according to their reflective appraisal system, a strong sense of pride emerged from their characters (see Section 6.2.2.3). For example, Teacher Ren (Late-career, Series A) had been working hard to prove herself as being both an excellent teacher and a qualified researcher and trialled and promoted tasked-based teaching, and could not hide her pride towards all the success she had initiated. The origin of her pride was found in the actualisation of her goals, but the success and appreciation has also added to her self-worth and self-identification. As Teacher

Ren said, 'What actually makes a difference is that you know it but I can do it.' All these support the argument that emotions as glues or signals that connect self, experiences and the meanings attributed to the experiences by the former (Scheff, 1997; Haviland-Jones & Kahlbaugh, 2000), which imply the significance of emotions in the dynamic process of identity construction. When teachers' core values were being threatened or challenged, affliction seemed to be the personal meaning given by teachers to their interpretative evaluation of their lived experiences. Similarly, when a teacher like Teacher Ren finds the self and social world well aligned, the emotional glue or signal that links the two together is pride. However, the concept of glue or signal has not explained the role of emotions in the identity passage adequately. As Ricoeur (1992) points out, without an ethical consideration, narratives are never completed. Professional core values are only part of an ethical consideration. Broadly speaking, this ethical consideration reflects an evaluative concern of a sense of good. The moral code, values, beliefs or ideals held by teachers were their targets to pursuit which exist in their cognitive mind (I), but emotions are the evaluative account made by the teacher (Me) when these cognitive ideals are weighed against the real world experiences. In another words, emotions provide an evaluative account with reference to the ethical consideration in self through narration.

The findings of the present study supported the argument that self-conscious emotions emerge as the representation of the self that is in dialectical interaction with the external world. This representation of 'Me' gives meaning to the social experiences, directly shaping the identity and guiding it in construction and reconstruction.

In the next chapter, I will place teachers' experiences within the broader sociocultural context and consider how the teachers interact with, and are affected by, their particular social contexts.

Chapter 7 Teachers' Lives in a Context of Educational Reforms

7.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I have tried to explore teachers' professional identity construction in the relational context of teaching by focusing on how teachers talked about themselves in relation to others, and the consequences of these relationships which are also informed by, and interact with, the analysis of the teachers' identification of self and others. Teachers are subject to the influence of students and colleagues at a micro-meso level. This chapter presents the results from combining Reading 4, in which I tried to link events mentioned by participating teachers to the broader context with respect to exploring how the participants interact with, and are affected by, their particular social contexts, and thematic narrative analysis, in which I developed coding categories through the lens of teachers' professional identities (see Methodology Chapter 3 Section 3.5). It investigates the impact from a macro-meso level, the context of educational reforms both at the national level and university level (see Chapter 2 which outlines the macro and meso context enveloping the work-lives of teachers). Individuals are bound by the force of the macro context. The meso context, as the mediation, facilitates the enactment of such forces on individuals. Therefore, the impact of educational reforms on teachers is the consequence of the interwoven macro-meso context as a whole.

7.2 The Macro Context

The macro context gives a picture of the landscape and inevitably has an impact on teachers' lives. This section will explore this impact on teachers through the Chinese culture of learning and teaching, the historical overview of the changes of teachers' social status, the College English Teachers' position, and the impact of various

educational reforms on the development of Chinese College English teachers' work lives.

7.2.1 The Chinese Culture of Learning and Teaching

The culture of learning, in Cortazzi and Jin's (1996b) term, refers to cultural traditions of the community or society in which the educational activities take place, which plays a crucial role in forming understanding of what it means to be a teacher or a learner.

Learning is regarded as a virtue, as written in Analects (XIX) that virtue is in such a process that 'there is learning extensively, and having a firm and sincere aim; inquiring with earnestness, and reflecting with self-application.' Confucius encourages his students to take on the life-long journey of learning and self-cultivation.

The intrinsic value placed by Confucius on learning is that one should 'cultivate himself, then regulate the family, then govern the state, and finally lead the world into peace' (The Great Learning). The Confucius culture concerns individuals' places in society in relation to their significant others. As Ho (1995) argues, the danger of this way of thinking lies in a sense that the conceptualisation of prescribed role-identities might override individual personalities, experience and aspirations. When Confucius' emphasis on a moral sense of obligation and duty to family and the state are reinterpreted and reinforced by centralised feudal government, an individual's sense of self largely lies in relationships with others and recognition from the state, which leads to the loss of self (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996b; Jiang, 2003). As Callan (1988) argues, a self-governing and centralised society may constrain its individual members. Moreover, prescribed by the state, the purposes of learning as taking charge of family and the state have shaped the instrumental values of learning in Chinese society (Jiang, 2003).

The focus of Confucius' teaching, argues Shim (2008), is laid on character building rather than knowledge seeking. As Confucius says (Analects, 6:20; 15:33), 'One who loves the good is better than one who knows it, and one who enjoys it is better than one who loves it...when one comes to knowledge but does not sustain it through Ren (love or the ideal conduct), he is sure to lose it.' As a result, learners need to make an effort to realise their ideal state by practising the knowledge he or she had acquired from teachers, by living in accordance with it and by demonstrating it to the young. 'Great knowledge makes a teacher; moral integrity makes a model. A teacher should have professional knowledge and set up a moral model for students,' was a view shared by all of my participants as what they considered to be the qualities of a teacher.

7.2.2 The Changes in Teachers' Social Status in China

With significant social and educational changes, Chinese teachers' social status underwent ups and downs. This section will examine the changes in teachers' social status from a historical perspective in order to build up a larger picture of teachers' personal and professional lives under social, cultural, historical and political influences, though some of these go beyond what my research findings could confirm.

In ancient China, schools existed in the form of old-style private schools known as 'Sishu'. Education at that time was small-scale, scattered and unequal, with the aim of cultivating the state's management candidates. Teachers at that time were attached to their employers, thus their social status was commonly low (Mao, 1984). Confucius was a great moral educator at that time, whose influence throughout Chinese history and beyond was called 'sang jia zhi quan' (a homeless dog) when he was travelling across different states selling his vision of government, even though it is quite adequate as a description of his whole life of wandering (Huang, 2013). However, under the impact of feudal ethics, teachers were respected by people. As

the saying goes, 'Even if someone is your teacher for only a day, you should regard him like your father for the rest of your life', the teacher-student relationship was unequal and hierarchical in that students respected and obeyed teachers, while the teachers were in the dominant position and could even physically and psychologically punish students. Therefore, although the teachers' social status was low, in the teacher-student relationship, they were always in the superior position. Later on, with the establishment of the imperial examination in the Sui (581-617) and Tang (618-907) dynasties to select the best potential candidates to serve the imperial government, candidates called the main examiner 'teacher' and once they passed the examination, they were considered as the main examiner's student (Ren & Xue, 2003), which further secured the teachers' superior position in the teacher-student relationship.

In the late Qing dynasty (around 1901-1911), with the emergence of capitalism, a modern sense of schools with classes for teaching emerged, whilst a modern sense of teachers came about (Mao, 1984). Teachers not only taught 'The Four Books' (The Great Learning, The Doctrine of the Mean, The Confucian Analects, and The Works of Mencius) and 'the Five Classics' (The Book of Songs, The Book of History, The Book of Changes, The Book of Rites and The Spring and Autumn Annals), but also taught scientific and cultural knowledge as well as the skills for making a living (Wang, 1985). Education had received great attention, thus the social status of teachers improved a lot and was relatively higher than the feudal society. But the teacher-student relationship carried on as before.

During the Republic of China (1912 -1949), the social status of teachers greatly improved and some of the teachers engaged in national politics and were elected as Members of Parliament, though the teacher-student relationship stayed the same (Wang, 1985). Although during the period of the Japanese invasion, in order to reinforce its control, the Japanese enforced an enslaving education, they highlighted

the importance of education, thus the teachers' social status at that period of time was not low (Wu & Zhang, 2007).

In 1949, the dictatorship of the proletariat was established as the founding principle, when the People's Republic of China was founded (Lin, 1993). In the communist political system, most Chinese people were categorised into two major groups, namely the 'people' and 'class enemies' according to property ownership and economic status, political affiliation before 1949 and political beliefs over time (Mao, 1949). The 'people' was composed of workers, peasants, urban petty bourgeoisie and national bourgeoisie, and the 'class enemies' included rich farmers, landlords, and capitalists who had affiliated with Guomindang during this period, traitors, spies and those who, in the socialist stage, regardless of their class background had raised doubts about the system or had taken action against the CPC (Mao, 1949).

As I mentioned in Chapter 2, the history of China from 1949-1977 is dominated by the conflict for power between two factions (radicals and moderates), in the CPC (Tsang, 2000). Liao Shaoqi, as the representative of moderates, thought intellectuals belonged to the working class in 1932 (Liu, 1988), however Mao thought teachers, together with writers, journalists, artists, and scientists, were categorised as an intermediate group wavering between the 'working class' and the 'class enemies'. They were called 'intellectuals that could be re-educated' due to their bourgeois or intellectual family background and the education they received under the Guomindang regime (Lin, 1993). When Mao took charge, teachers were thus thrown into a vulnerable position, with their political trustworthiness doubted. This contradicted their expected social function of giving training, and instruction in the communist spirit to the young generation (Paine, 1991). Distrust brought them during the decades to experience great ups and downs in their social status.

With the best hope of the new system, most of teachers actively participated in the thought-reform movement, hoping to shorten the distance between them and the

working class. In 1957, the Anti-Rightist Movement started, and about a million outspoken teachers and other intellectuals were officially labelled as 'rightists' (Lin, 1993). Most of them were no longer allowed to teach and were sent to do physical labour in remote areas, suffering extremely inhumane treatment both physically and psychologically. After this event, teachers became cautious. Self-defence became the top priority when they were to give opinions on certain issues (Lin, 1993).

After 1962, the government's educational policies began a shift of emphasis from academic excellence to political reliability under the impact of Mao's class struggle. Students were urged to be both 'red and expert' (Lin, 1993). A good class origin became the priority to become 'red and expert.' Students who were not from the working class were deprived of having higher education (Rosen, 1982). Many students challenged their teachers' political reliability in the classroom.

In 1966, a new political movement, the Cultural Revolution, took place, which plunged many teachers into life-threatening disaster. Teachers became the 'class enemies' and were attacked by the Red Guards, who were secondary school and college students. Some of them were even tortured to death. Some of them were sent to a re-education camp. As a part of manual labour practices, educated youths were sent to rural China for re-education and learning from the 'real proletariat', which further challenged teachers' authority. In the late stage of the Cultural Revolution, when schools were reopened, a lot of political study sessions were organised for teachers.

In 1978, when Deng Xiaoping took the leadership and launched the Opening-up policies, teachers were re-categorised as 'a part of the working class', finally achieving an equal political status with the working class (Deng, 1994). The government had tried to improve teachers' social status by recognising the importance of teachers' work, by improving their living conditions, by fixing a National 'Teachers' Day', by praising teachers' excellent teaching, and by using

media to urge all members in the society to respect teachers. Meanwhile, with the restoration of a national college entrance examination, academic excellence was re-emphasised thus, gradually, order in the classroom was restored. Teachers were respected by students again (Sun, 1996). Since then, teachers' social status has improved gradually. With the implementation of reforms, teachers gained more autonomy in the classrooms. However, as Lin (1993) points out, teachers still have great fear in giving their personal views in teaching, which inevitably hampers their ability to challenge students to think independently and reflectively.

With the influence of western theories of human rights and equalities, the Compulsory Education Law (1992) and the Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Minors (2006) were launched to protect juveniles in order to form new teacher-student relationships of students who respect teachers and teachers who care for students.

Recently, China has constructed 'a particular kind of market economy that increasingly incorporates neoliberal elements interdigitated with authoritarian centralised control' (Harvey, 2005: 120). Education is only one of the key sectors under the wave of reform. Universities have become entrepreneurial education institutions run by the business model of the commercial world. Parents and students have become consumers who are given the token of choice. This phenomenon is called the era of performativity in education by Ball (2001, 2003).

This macro context impacts on how teachers perceive their social status. Some teachers perceived there were some changes in their social status, some teachers did not. Early-career, Series B teachers: Teacher Hu and Teacher Guo and Mid-career, Series A teacher: Teacher Ma mentioned this point in their narratives, but Series B teachers: Teacher Sun and Teacher Ding and Late-career, Series A teachers: Teacher Liu, Teacher Ren and Teacher Wang did not mention it.

Teacher Hu (Early-career, Series B) disagreed with the current thought that teachers' social status had changed.

I think the current thought about the relationship between students and teachers is changing, that is, that the students are gods and they do not respect their teachers, is a misunderstanding. I think, though the time is changing, no matter which time these students belong to, if you can let them know you are hardworking and responsible, they will cooperate.

On the contrary, Teacher Guo (Early-career, Series B) perceived the people's changing attitude towards teachers from over-respect to disrespect. She noticed the change to the teacher's social status. Now people considered teachers as servants to serve students. She felt sad and puzzled.

Similarly, Teacher Ma (Mid-career, Series A) also described that the teacher's status was a puzzle for people in her generation:

I read an on-line report about a story that a teacher knelt to his students. The students thought, now a teacher is like a waiter in a service industry. It puzzled me a lot. During the time when I was a student, there was the dignity of the teaching profession. We respected our teachers. But when I became a teacher, the situation was worse year after year. The students more and more disrespected us. Regardless of disrespect, we even became servants. Our status decreased to such an extent. Education became a service industry.

7.2.3 The College English Teachers' Position in China

The College English Teachers' marginal position is a historical problem in China.

Before 1949, foreign language education in China highlighted the importance of literature, thus only those who taught foreign literature belonged to English major teachers (Hu, 2009). At that time, many excellent teachers were College English teachers.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, at the very beginning stage of the founding of the People's Republic of China, due to the close relationship with the Soviet Union, the

importance of Russian was highlighted. Thus, students learned Russian in the universities as their foreign language. In the 1960s, with the adjustment of foreign language teaching in the universities, many Russian teachers changed to teach College English (Wang, 2008). However, the College English still has not gained enough attention and was in the marginalised position among other subjects.

In the early 1980s, with the development of the reform and opening-up, more and more people knew the importance of English learning, thus the College English course was becoming more and more important.

In 1999, with the enrolment expansion in Higher Education, the number of students increased dramatically and higher education gradually moved to the stage of mass education. However, the number of teachers could not match the increasing number of students, which heightened the College English teachers' workload (Wang, 2008).

Compared with English teachers, due to the nature of the College English course, the position of College English teachers was still lower than that of English teachers.

Teacher Sun (Early-career, Series B) said that if she wanted to be an English teacher, she should choose an average university. If she chose an outstanding university, she could only be a College English teacher.

Teacher Ma (Mid-career, Series A) talked about how, at the time of her graduation, only postgraduates could be English teachers, therefore she became a College English teacher. However, later on, she knew that people were biased towards College English teachers, and thought their status was lower than that of English teachers.

As Teacher Ren (Late-career, Series A) mentioned, 'In China, it seems that it forms a pattern that only those whose English is excellent could be English teachers. Those without outstanding qualifications, and the experience of studying abroad, could only teach College English. We, as College English teachers, were looked down upon.'

All these responses demonstrate College English teachings' marginalised position in the university. People had bias and always looked down upon the College English teachers.

7.2.4 The Reforms: Challenges to the Teaching Paradigm

The reforms contribute to the complexity of teachers' lives. As reforms bring changes to what should be considered as good teaching practice and challenges to the traditional working order. Those in turn have impact on teachers' perceptions, attitudes and actions. This section will analyse the impact of various reforms on the development of Chinese College English teachers' perspectives with respect to aspects of pedagogical perspectives and technology.

On Pedagogical Perspectives

This section is primarily concerned with the development of teachers' perspectives with respect to aspects of pedagogy. The term pedagogy is understood in simplified terms adopted by Tickle (2001) as the principles and methods of teaching with which teachers carry out teaching and learning activities with students.

Pedagogical perspectives are shaped by a set of beliefs and ideas concerning teaching and educational ideologies. They are partially derived from common-sense knowledge which emerges indiscriminately through the pressure of social constraints (Schütz, 1972). They are developed through the process of teacher socialisation. This means that they will be influenced not only by the pedagogies of teachers from teachers' own school experiences but also the pedagogies of teachers on school experiences. Moreover, the pedagogical cultures of the schools in which teachers are working will also exert a subtle influence. Pedagogy is a social construction and teachers do not simply draw on pedagogies which exist independently of them (Calderhead & Shorrock, 1997; Tickle, 2001).

In the 20th century in China, university education also adopted what Lave and Wenger (1991) describe as a master-apprentice concept, with lecturers and tutors being the experts and students being the learners. However, the English Language Teaching Reform in China highlighted the student-teacher interaction in the curriculum which signifies the change of teaching methods from teacher monologue and repetition of knowledge to dialogue and co-construction of knowledge between teacher and students (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Even though the reform specified new theoretical instructions for basic education, university education or pre-service education continued to use the master-apprentice approach, which brought challenges to teachers (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996b).

Influenced by the context of reform, the construction of teachers' professional identity did not appear to be a stable or a passive process as teachers also rely on new experiences, events, new relationships with students and the wider school community. The evolving formulations did not replace their existing identities but instead appeared to add other dimensions to them.

Under the impact of the English Language Teaching Reform, most teachers tried to use a student-centred way of teaching (as I mentioned in Chapter 5, Section 5.2). This shift in the conception of teaching has not only had a great impact on the teacher's role in general, and his or her knowledge and skills in particular, but also has great impact on students, who play a part in whether this concept of teaching could be realised. In this process, they all encountered difficulties.

Early-career Teachers

Partially influenced by her past experience as a student (that she was always hoping she could participate in the class and she felt that a teacher-dominated class was extremely boring) Teacher Hu (Early-career, Series B) wanted to adopt a student-centred approach. She used this approach in her job interview which gained approval and appreciation from the dean, an experienced expert. This approval was a huge

encouragement to her. She insisted on trialling it in her class. However, some students had got used to the traditional way of teaching and hoped teachers in the university would still use the same way to teach. They thought that when they listened to others' talking, they were not involved. They could learn nothing. Teacher Hu wanted to figure out how she could design and apply a student-centred method to her classes and make it more acceptable for students. Similarly, Teacher Guo (Early-career, Series B) wanted to cultivate students' autonomous learning, but she encountered students' reluctance. The freshmen thought the greatest function of a classroom teacher was providing information and imparting knowledge.

The communicative language teaching (hereafter CLT) has more student-centred conceptions of teaching with greater emphasis on learning and less on teaching, which implies a teacher must be more of a facilitator of learning and less of a transmitter of knowledge. It challenges teachers' traditional views. Their original role as transmitter of knowledge always pulls them back, thus they try to make a combination of these two roles.

When discussing student-centred approach, Teacher Sun (Early-career, Series B) reported that she felt there was a tension. On the one hand, she hoped English classes could provide a platform for students to present themselves and they could learn through their interests and gain pleasure from learning. They should have experienced this kind of pleasure from kindergarten, primary school and secondary school. She designed some activities and chose some suitable topics which could enable everybody to join in. She hoped that, apart from English competence, they could bring in other abilities such as maths, inferences, and logics and so on. By doing so, she found that it could arouse students' learning interests. However, on the other hand, her responsibility as a teacher made her feel she should make sure they learned something from her. She felt the tensions. Thus, each semester, she used student-centred activities once or twice. Like Teacher Sun, Teacher Ding (Early-career, Series B) tried to provide her students with more new knowledge in various

forms, such as audio, video, multi-media and give them more chances to widen and present their talents.

Mid-career Teacher

Teacher Ma (Mid-career, Series A) changed her way of teaching from a teacher-centred one to a student-centred one. In the past, she followed students' and her own interests and adopted her former teacher's way of teaching. She dominated the class and imparted linguistic knowledge to students. She explained the grammatical rules, new words and language points in the text in great detail. The students took notes in class and after class they were asked to memorise new words, grammatical rules and finish exercises on what they had learnt that day. She felt teaching at that time was very easy. But later on, she found that this way of teaching did not work. The students lost their interest gradually. Therefore, she began to reflect on her way of teaching and pursue her postgraduate study in the meantime. Then, she realised that her former teacher's way of teaching was problematic. Her teacher did everything and finished all the tasks on her own. It was hard to bring students' active learning into full play. Thus, now she adopted a student-centred approach to teaching and emphasised interaction.

But her ideology about what a teacher should do also made her try to combine these two ways of teaching, like Teacher Sun (Early-career, Series B) and Teacher Ding (Early-career, Series B).

Cultural changes could not take place automatically, there are problems to be endured. What Teacher Ma pointed out was the problem in curriculum development faced by all teachers now, such as lack of time, mismatch between teaching methods and assessment...if the reform has to be successful in the future, school administrators and teachers have to explore new ways to tackle the various practical problems in reality.

Late-career Teachers

On the contrary, Teacher Liu (Late-career, Series A) and Teacher Wang (Late-career, Series A) were the teachers who insisted on using the traditional way of teaching. Teacher Liu thought the traditional way of teaching was the best way to help students to get high scores in the exams. Teacher Wang found that, even if students liked situational teaching, she thought within the limited course time, in order to finish lots of content, she could not use it for every unit. She could just pick out one or two topics to do it.

Teacher Ren (Late-career, Series A) is the most outstanding example who successfully implements the curriculum reform in the university. Having gained insights from training, she began to trial task-based learning in 1998, much earlier than the reform began (see Chapter 4, Section 4.4.2.2, p 135).

Teachers need to make a lot of adjustments under the reform, not only about their pedagogic competence, but also their teacher identity as authority figures are being challenged.

Teacher Ren mentioned that she realised that her position, as a subject specialist, was challenged by her students after she implemented task-based learning:

After students' presentations, I gave them my comments. But they were not totally agreed with me. They stood up and argued with me in class. Out of my expectation, I have been a teacher for nearly thirty years, I have never encountered such a situation that students dared to argue with their teacher. They made a presentation on security. What they did was just for fun. It was entertaining, not what I am expecting them to do. Security is a serious social issue. I am expecting their thoughts. I am expecting their serious thinking such as what happened and how to handle it. It is not just a matter of fun. They stood up and said we were optimistic. I told them optimistic is a kind of attitude, but I want to hear your thoughts, your strategies and your handling ways, where are they? They were asking why not fun? I told them fun is OK, but how about after fun? Suppose you were faced with a terrorist, you were faced with a threatening or any unexpected, sudden natural or human disaster, your security is threatened. What would you do?

I also showed them an example from another class. They were speechless. It is a great challenge to me, I need to convince them.

On Technology

In the information age, teachers need to acquire IT skills as a tool for teaching and learning. The new technology in teaching brings challenges to mid- and late-career, teachers. As Teacher Ma (Mid-career, Series A) said that with the using of new technology in teaching, her had to learn more, such as how to search materials on-line, download, compile as well as how to transfer between different audio-video modes (see Chapter 4, Section 4.3.1.2, p 124).

Teacher Liu (Late-career, Series A) mentioned:

With the introduction of modern teaching technology, our teaching is not using a piece of chalk any more. We use multimedia in our teaching now. It is a great challenge for me. I need to learn how to make PowerPoint slides.

Teacher Ren (Late-career, Series A) and Teacher Wang (Late-career, Series A) also described their experiences in learning how to use a computer, internet and multimedia for the first time when they went abroad. They needed to update their skills and knowledge to keep up with the times.

Early-career, Series B teachers did not mention this, probably because they were relatively young compared to Series A teachers, and they had grown up with the development of technology. To them, it is not new stuff.

7.3 The Interwoven Macro-meso Context

With reference to the supportive evidence from this research, the meso context has an impact no less than that of the macro context on teachers' lives, primarily due to the fact that the university, relative to the social context, is more intimate for teachers. The mediating effect of the meso context, especially the overall university culture which includes the school traditions and organisational relationship among

colleagues, has an impact on the implementation of reform. The impact of reforms on teachers' lives should thus be the consequences developed by interwoven interaction between the meso and the macro context.

The University Policies: Challenges to the Teaching Paradigm

Apart from the nationwide reforms, as one of the pro-reform universities, the university policies also add challenges for teachers.

On Qualification and Employment Status

Early-career Teachers

All the Early-career teachers experienced a common threat towards their teachers' professional identity, an insecurity of identity, or were in danger of losing the identity once they failed to meet the qualification standard (the PhD degree and doing research) set by the university personnel system and the requirement of reform by the university. All of them have to pursue a PhD degree and become qualified researchers, which brings them a lot of pressure. In their situations, their teachers' professional identities needed to be sustained with much effort. Their professional identity has to be granted by authority, subject to continual revision, being valid until further notice.

Teacher Hu (Early-career, Series B) used the word 'prestigious' to describe her university. She did not point out explicitly about her qualification as a teacher who had no PhD degree, however the uncertainty and pressure coming from doing research were greatly associated with her qualification (see Chapter 4, Section 4.2.1.3). Moreover, her employment status as a Series B teacher made her feel worried.

The qualification and employment status are intertwined with each other, which has a great impact on Teacher Sun's (Early-career, Series B) future development as well.

She was under the great pressure of doing research and required to have a PhD degree (see Chapter 4, Section 4.2.2.3).

When Teacher Guo got her masters degree at a famous university she changed to a prestigious university to be a teacher. She told me that, as a Series B teacher, she could not apply for the professional title. Moreover, without having a PhD degree, it is impossible for her to transfer to Series A. It seems to be a dead end for her (see Chapter 4, Section 4.2.3.3).

The qualification troubled Teacher Ding twice. When she became a teacher after graduation with a bachelor's degree, she felt anxious. 'Due to the requirement, to work in the university as a teacher, we should at least have a masters degree. Without this degree, I feel a little bit uneasy and anxious.' Thus, three years' later, she went abroad to pursue her masters degree. Later on, she changed to a better university to be a teacher. This time, without a PhD degree, the similar feeling haunted her again. Teacher Ding, without a PhD degree, felt stressed. As a Series B teacher, she had a lack of professional belonging (see Chapter 4, Section 4.2.4.2 and Section 4.2.4.3).

Mid-career Teacher

Teacher Ma (Mid-career, Series A) did not display any concerns about her qualification and employment status. The reason might be that, as a Series A teacher, her position is relatively more stable than Series B. At the time of my data collection, she had just successfully got the professional title of seminar lecturer, which meant she had just passed a threshold and she had plenty of time to prepare for the next one.

Late-career Teachers

There are teachers who may choose to fulfil all those changes proactively, not merely for compromise or survival, but as a strategy or reaction to sustain pride in their own selves. Different from all Early-career teachers, Teacher Ren (Late-career, Series A) faced the problem of qualifications positively. She was very open about the fact that

she did not have formal qualifications. During the Cultural Revolution, many colleges recruited workers, peasants and soldiers as their students. She was recommended and passed the examinations. Due to troubles encountered in the process of recruitment, she had to go to a university that was not a very famous normal one. She worked hard and became an excellent student. Without any formal qualifications, Teacher Ren described herself as a ‘sponge to learn’ and make improvements in the teaching post. She grasped every chance to learn. Sometimes, she learned from failures, such as her story about how she became a professor (see Chapter 4, Section 4.4.2.2).

Teacher Liu (Late-career, Series A) did not mention anything about his qualification and employment status. It might be because he had changed university several times, that the qualification requirement for late-career teachers are not as high as for the Early-career teachers, and as a Series A teacher who will retire soon, those things were no longer his concern.

Teacher Wang (Late-career, Series A) mentioned that, without a masters degree, it took her more than ten years to become a lecturer after she finished a masters course for full-time teachers. She went to America to pursue a masters degree. She felt very pleased to have had this experience that not all the teachers had had. After she came back from America, she became the director of studies and deputy director of the College English teaching division. ‘It looks like I became more experienced, lots of teachers would come to me and ask me about my opinions.’

On Subject Matters

The current reforms and forthcoming reforms bring pressure to teachers.

Teacher Guo (Early-career, Series B) thought:

With the improvement of students’ English ability, College English is gradually losing its position as a subject area. There is a tendency for it to disappear because everyone knows English and can use English. As a College English teacher, the

future of our professional development is vague. Probably, I need to master English for specific purposes in order to survive.

Echoing Teacher Guo, Teacher Ding (Early-career, Series B) thought the College English Course in her university was relatively vague and general due to time limits. She did not know what she had taught when she finished a semester's courses. She felt she still had a lot of things she needed to teach students, but she had no time to finish them all. For her, she had seven classes, hundreds of students. What she could do was just teach them generally. Additionally, the forthcoming reforms brought her feelings of uncertainty.

But now, my job always brings me a sense of crisis. Both our staff meetings and national requirements for prestigious universities mention a tendency that College English Course in these universities will be weakened. I feel a sense of crisis. Under this feeling, I feel my work is meaningless... I feel our courses, perhaps in the top 15 universities, will not exist or exist in another form. Maybe the credit for this course will reduce. The importance of it is decreasing. Therefore, I feel depressed. I doubt what the meaning is. I feel a sense of crisis.

Teacher Ma (Mid-career, Series A) said:

Now the requirement for a College English teacher is extremely high. Before I was a pure language teacher, I taught vocabulary and grammar. According to my traditional concept, don't you think as a language teacher, we should teach these? It is as easy as letting them master vocabulary and grammar and practise listening, reading, writing and speaking skills. What I should do is just pure skill training. But now the requirement for an English teacher is extremely high. It is not a pure language course any more. I do not know what we should do. I always feel puzzled and I feel a little bit that I cannot find the direction. What should we do? I feel painful. Our class time is reduced and we give our students more time to learn on their own. We should teach them listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation within such a limited time. When my students make progress, it is said that is not to my credit. But when my students fail the exams, it is my fault and I am the person who should be blamed. Now language courses should be connected with cultural courses. We should listen, speak and practise at the same time. We should teach intercultural communication skills. We should teach cultures. We should teach literature. It is really puzzling. I feel to be a teacher is really hard now. To be an English teacher is very difficult. Our university does not have a

clear position for us. Our students are not clear about our requirements. Quite often, we do not know what we should do.

Early-career, Series B teachers, Teacher Hu and Teacher Sun, and Late-career, Series A teachers, Teacher Liu, Teacher Ren and Teacher Wang, did not mention this. For those teachers in Early-career, Series B who did not mention this point, it might be because they needed to face lots of challenges; they did not have the energy to worry about the forthcoming ones. For those teachers in Series A who did not talk about this, it might be because they would retire soon, and so it was not their concern anymore.

7.4 The Redefined Profession

The previous sections of this chapter outline the macro and meso context enveloping the teachers' work lives. The cultural context is challenged by the direct consequence of the emerging impact of the globalised economy that requires a flexible labour force, which includes both teachers and the students they teach, who one day will become the human resources of the society. Thus, competitiveness at individual and national level has intensified. Education has been influenced by guiding ideologies in the macro context. Teachers who fail to perform in accordance to the rules of the game are putting their job security at risk. Teachers' professional identities have been severely challenged in such an atmosphere. They have to adjust themselves because the teaching profession has been redefined.

7.4.1 Reskilling and Multiskilling

As mentioned above, the new paradigm in teaching and learning brought by the curriculum reforms had made knowledge in the old paradigm expire. Teacher Ma's (Mid-career, Series A) talk on the latest development in technology used in the English News Course is a good illustration of reskilling. Nowadays, with the development of science and technology and flows of information on the internet, the

time that information stays fresh and valid becomes brief. The curriculum reforms on the subjects' content have become more frequent. Teachers have to face this challenge by upgrading their knowledge and finding ways to develop their skills. Sub-identities such as those identified in Chapter 5 – teacher as organiser, teacher as enabler and teacher as arbitrator – which are embedded in the implementation of a student-centred way of teaching, those new roles bring the task of reskilling for teachers at different stages of their careers.

To meet the new requirements for reskilling, or to tackle the problem of job insecurity, teachers now need to be multi-skilled. Being a specialist in only one area or subject – most probably the subject they studied at university – is now outdated. Teacher Guo (Early-career, Series B) wants to learn other subjects and tries to combine her major English with those subjects.

There are other aspects of reskilling. In all the Series B teachers' narratives, they discussed the need to become a researcher. In addition, Teacher Ren (Late-career, Series A) talked how she became a teacher educator.

7.4.2 Flexibility and Adaptability

Reskilling and multiskilling require a highly flexible and adaptable workforce. Flexibility here is discussed in terms of teachers' personal lives, which refers to the absence of constraints from other personal needs and family.

All the teachers had to sustain their job security by pursuing qualifications or continuously training. All the teachers committed a large amount of their spare time to work. Their actual working hours were hard to calculate. Teacher Ren (Late-career, Series A) even spent her holiday time on her research.

7.4.3 Collegiality and the Competitive Jungle

According to mid- and late-career teachers, collegiality has been one of the most treasured elements. The curriculum reforms promoted a collaborative culture in universities, which defines successful universities as those working like learning organisations, which is in contradiction to the competitive culture embedded in the global economy, in which improvements are consequences of keen competition in the market. Such a contradiction makes the actualisation of a spirit of learning organisation, which highlights professional collaboration and mutual trust among members, an ideal that could hardly be achieved.

Members of universities are competing for scarce resources, such as awards or professional titles (See Chapter 6 Relationship with Colleagues Section). Each individual is fighting actively for their survival. The pressure to win, or at least not to lose, in the competitive jungle may isolate teachers from the mutual support and connections they used to cling to.

7.5 Summary and Discussion

In this chapter, I explored teachers' professional identity construction in a context of educational reforms. The findings supported what Rodgers and Scott (2008) points out that in the process of internalising and socialising into the new norms which was brought by the English Language Teaching Reform or institutional level personnel system reform might endanger the personal dimension of identity. My participating teachers' stories provided examples for Coldron and Smith's (1999) claim of tensions and structure in the context of reforms. Moreover, this also provided evidence to show the importance of agency in this process of identity construction (Day, et al., 2005).

My study showed that in the identity construction process, there was always a gap between what teachers were expected to become (i.e. designated identity) and how

the teacher identified himself or herself (i.e. actual identity) (Sfard & Pusak, 2005). To close this gap, the teachers used different positioning strategies based on the situational meanings she or he derived from the context. The interplay between the self and the situation thus creates a process of making and remaking the identity, with the aim of closing the gap between the designated and the actual identities.

Competing identities in a ‘new working order’

The reforms aim to build up a certain kind of ‘new working order’ (Liu & Xu, 2011). Teachers need to gain the designated identities and make changes: during this process, competing identities would emerge.

Generated from my data, there are two different situations. The first one is that in order to gain the designated identities, teachers need to give up their previous identities. The competing identities may appear at the transitional stage which echoes Liu and Xu’s (2011) findings. For example, under the impact of curriculum reforms, all the teachers were designated as communicative ones, but they used to be traditional ones. At the transitional stage, teachers (Early-career, Series B: Teacher Sun, Teacher Guo and Teacher Ding and Mid-career, Series A: Teacher Ma) live with two competing identities: a traditional one and a communicative one. The second situation is that in order to gain the designated identities, teachers do not need to give up their previous identities; the competing identities could also be the final products. The uneven competing identities may appear at the transitional stage. For example, due to the university level reform on qualifications (doing research), all teachers were designated as both teachers and researchers. Thus teachers need to live with competing identities: a teacher and a researcher (see Chapter 5). At the transitional stage, teachers (Mid-career, Series A: Teacher Ma and Late-career, Series A: Teacher Liu and Teacher Wang) live with the competing identities: mainly teacher and a little bit researcher.

Identity shifting as the reconciliation of competing identities

As in the first situation discussed in the previous paragraphs, under the impact of curriculum reforms, the institutional culture gives all the teachers freedom to be eclectic practitioners. Early-career teachers Teacher Guo, Teacher Ding and Teacher Sun adopted the rule of games as their survival strategy and did what they were told to do. They forced themselves to accept the new identity. On the surface, the gap between the designated identity and the actual identity seemed to be closed, but in reality it still existed. They still felt that as teachers they needed to transmit knowledge to their students. In actual practice, they would consciously or unconsciously switch back to the traditional way of teaching. In the end, they tried to combine them.

Because of her experience, and approval from her superior, Teacher Hu was an advocate of a student-centred approach. From the start, her actual identity matched her designated identity.

Mid-career teacher, Teacher Ma was seen as a traditionalist. Nevertheless, such an identity did not prevent her transforming herself into a communicative teacher. As an active participant, she was willing to make changes. She tried to involve more interactive activities in her teaching, however, like Teacher Sun, Teacher Guo and Teacher Ding, she tried to combine these two.

Although Teacher Liu (Late-career, Series A) and Teacher Wang (Late-career, Series A) viewed themselves as resistant traditionalists who stuck to the traditional way of teaching, they had to use the new methods occasionally. They were passive followers who would preserve their traditional identity. For them, to narrow the gap between incongruent identities still had a long way to go.

Teacher Ren (Late-career, Series A) as a pioneer successfully changed herself from a traditionalist to a communicative teacher. Her training experience enabled her to identify more with the new curriculum and hence narrow the gap between the competing identities.

As in the second situation discussed in the previous section, under the impact of the university level reform on qualifications (doing research), all the Early-career teachers: Teacher Hu, Teacher Sun, Teacher Guo and Teacher Ding felt stressed and lost when they needed to become a researcher. At present, they all stick to their identity as teachers. Their actual identity does not match their designated identity. Due to lot of constraints (such as a PhD degree, employment status and so on), to construct the designated identity as researchers is still a tough task for them.

Mid-career teacher, Teacher Ma and Late-career teachers Teacher Liu and Teacher Wang adopted the rules of the game and forced themselves to do a little bit of research. But their actual identity as teachers are still their main roles.

Late-career teacher Teacher Ren's family influence and personal interest in doing research enabled her to become the only one who fitted well with both her role as teacher and researcher, and to find a balance between those two competing identities.

Both of these two situations show that when a teacher's actual identity matches his or her designated identity, she or he is more likely to engage in the social practices. When a teacher's identity change fails to make the designated and the actual identities converge, she or he is either in the transition or is less likely to engage in the change practice.

Identity or Identification: Inclusion and Exclusion for Professional Development

What the teachers faced was not only a conflict in teachers' professional identity, but also a continuous struggle to sustain the endangered identity that had become so fragile and insecure. All the Early-career teachers faced the issue of how to sustain their teaching career with all their energy and effort. Therefore, to be in search of identification is what teachers may need to face. According to Bauman (2001), identification is a never-ending, always incomplete and open-ended activity, in

which people have no choice but to strive to meet the new standards and norms. Acquiring a professional qualification (PhD degree), learning to do research or getting well prepared for the forthcoming reform might be a wise way to seek identification and acceptance.

The reform is transforming teachers' lives with new standards and requirements. Teachers need to make changes in order to compromise or survive.

When teachers fail to maintain their identity, or just cannot gain identification, burn-out would be the expected consequence. For example, for Teacher Ding (Early-career, Series B), pressure coloured the way she viewed herself as a teacher. She experienced the changing face of her career from enthusiasm and passion to crises. She felt burn-out.

What really matters is whether maintaining identity or gaining identification will lead to inclusion in, or exclusion from, the teaching community, and how that affects teachers' professional development.

All the Series B teachers were in the community, but they were marginalised and excluded from it in terms of employment status. They had to seek for their professional development by seeking for identification in such a constraining context. They started by being inducted into the community (being university teachers), but their full participation was interrupted as a result of an endangered identity.

Chapter 8 Discussion and Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

This study has been concerned with Chinese College English teachers' perceptions of their professional development experiences. The study hypothesises that the professional identity construction of these teachers may be influenced by the Chinese historical background that their professional development may be a microcosm of Chinese history of education. Mainly informed by theoretical themes and concepts in relation to professional identity and life history narrative studies in the western English language literature, this study explores the subjective perceptions and understandings as narrated by Chinese College English teachers. The participants in this study consisted of eight Chinese College English teachers at different career stages from Sun Yat-sen University, China. In-depth interviews that combined both narrative interviews and topical interviews were conducted. A voice-centred relational method of data analysis, combined with thematic narrative analysis, was employed, which embraced the interpretive framework of live history narrative studies and enabled teachers' voices to be heard, as well as focusing on teachers' narrative selves in a relational context in which they lived and worked. The purposes of the present chapter are threefold. Firstly, it serves to bring together the findings and draws out the main points in relation to the research questions and the previous literature. Secondly, it attempts to raise issues concerning implications for policy-making, teacher education and teachers' practices. Thirdly, it reflects on the limitations of this study in relation to its methodology and methods, data collection and analysis, findings and suggestions for future research.

8.2 Answers to Research Questions

This section aims to discuss the link between the previous literature reviewed in Chapter 2 and my findings, in the context of my overarching research question:

How do teachers, at different stages of their careers, construct, maintain and develop their professional identities in the context of Chinese culture?

In answering this question, the following sub-questions are addressed:

1. What processes did the Chinese College English teachers go through in coming to identify themselves as professionals?
2. How did these processes in Chinese College English teachers' professional identity construction come about?
3. Were there any differences emerging in Chinese College English teachers' professional identity construction? If yes, why? / If no, why not?

From Readings 2, 3 and 4 and the thematic narrative analysis, three themes – role identities, relationships and context – emerged from my data, each of which concerns itself with perspectives on teachers' professional identity construction which have already been identified. Thus, I intend to use them as the vehicle by which to focus my answers. I also use them as a way of drawing on a discussion of the literature. The findings around each theme in turn serve as a way of establishing answers to the questions. Since the sub-questions interweave with each other, I am not going to answer them separately.

Ultimately, the intention was to reveal insights into how teachers construct, maintain and develop their professional identities at different stages of their careers and to explore how far China's educational changes over the past sixty years (1949-2009) have impacted on Chinese College English teachers' professional identity construction.

Complexities of Teachers' Professional Identity Construction

Participating teachers' stories illustrated the complexity of the experiences of Chinese College English teachers. Their experiences have shown the dynamic nature of teachers' professional identity construction in times of educational changes. Their stories illustrated how the broader sociocultural and political context shaped teachers' professional identity and how teachers played out their agency throughout the process of their professional identity construction (see Chapter 4).

The findings showed that, no matter which career stages they were at, they were all capable of taking on the roles of manager, professional, acculturator and researcher. The construction of role identities was a self-internalised process, which needed continuous negotiation through interactions in specific social settings (see Chapter 5).

From the differences between teachers at different career stages, my study also revealed that teachers' professional identity construction was a process of self-mirroring based on their understanding of how others (especially students and colleagues) perceived them. On the one hand, when working with students, regardless of their different employment statuses and different stages of their careers, the importance of the student-teacher relationship played a vital role in determining how they saw themselves as teachers. The student-teacher relationship was shown in their talking about the reactions from students, the evaluation from students, their pride in students and desire to make an impact, which were important to them and were integral parts of how they valued themselves as teachers. From the differences between teachers at different career stages, life stage/age and employment statuses, I found that, in the process of gaining in experience, teachers were moving from being emotionally attached to students' classroom reactions to rationally rethinking one's teaching, from being passively influenced by students' responses to actively working out the solutions, and from being greatly dependent on feedback and evaluation to relying more on their own. On the other hand, when working with their colleagues, they not only knew who they were and what kind of teacher they preferred to be, but also disassociated themselves from their colleagues to show their uniqueness. The

teachers' lived experiences showed that there were two steps in the self-mirroring process: the individual recognises who she or he was, and the individual identified her or his uniqueness. Since the second step only appeared in the mid- and late-career teachers' stories, the first and second steps appeared to be in a sequence. The interaction with people around them, especially their students and colleagues, determined how the teachers saw themselves. In this sense, their students and colleagues were like mirrors, from which they perceived themselves (see Chapter 6). Moreover, if I took the self-mirroring process of identity construction as learning, this finding echoes Smith's (2005) concept of informal learning, which refers to the lifelong process in which people learn from everyday experience.

The findings revealed that in the process of gaining the designated identities, teachers needed to make changes. During this process, competing identities would emerge either at the transitional stage or at the final stage (see Chapter 7).

Since I have briefly recapped my findings, now I am going to discuss my findings in relation to Wenger's (1998) framework (the review of Wenger's (1998) framework, see Chapter 2 Section Teachers' Professional Identity as Contextual). Where I find Wenger's (1998) theoretical framework of identity formation useful is that it entails a dual process of identification and negotiability which, in a way, supports my findings. By identification, he refers to the process in which identities are developed with experiences and available materials as the self invests to build associations and differentiations. It is not solely in relational terms with people, but also with 'the constituents of their social existence including other participants, social configurations, categories, enterprises, actions, artefacts, and so forth' (192), a definition that goes beyond what my research findings could evidence. Nevertheless, his three modes of belonging – namely engagement, imagination and alignment – as the resources of identification could be useful in explaining the common influences I summarised at the beginning of this discussion section.

Wenger's (1998) three processes of identification were evident in my participants' narratives. First of all, engagement involves investment: in my case, in what teachers do as well as in teachers' relationships with others in the communities of practice (Wenger, 1998). As in the process of self-mirroring, my participants' narratives concerning how they viewed themselves as teachers in relation to their students and colleagues, and how they reflected on, or even adjusted to, what they perceived to be preferable ways of teaching were the evidences of engagement (see Chapter 6).

Secondly, imagination goes beyond engagement in practice or ways of thinking and involves the connections to the wider world view across history and the social landscape (Wenger, 1998). As Wenger (1998:177) argues, imagination can work by both 'association' and 'opposition', thus defining identities both by connecting or disconnecting with the context. In my understanding this could support the way in which prior perceptions of teachers, for example, the 'heritage' from former teachers in my study, were challenged as they encountered specific issues in classrooms (see Chapter 6). The lack of verbal definition of concepts or images produced by the process of imagination might result in a lack of understanding of the prescribed approaches to teaching brought forward by educational changes such as curriculum reform. But, as Wenger (1998) argues, this process could work with engagement. The imagination was identified when prior perceptions of teachers in my study were challenged as they encountered specific issues in classrooms. For example, their preferred identity (being friends with students) in the self-mirroring process (see Chapter 6) encountered the reality of the power distance between them; and their predetermined roles (see Chapter 5), such as the role of teachers as knowledge transmitters, encountered the changing role as learning facilitators. In this sense, the imagination may be both heritage and self-mirroring.

Thirdly, alignment refers to the process of going along with the group, during which participants in a community connect to the identity of a larger group either willingly or submissively (Wenger, 1998). Wenger (1998) points out that alignment involves

power and therefore it is often achieved through a complex interplay of compliance and allegiance. For example, my participants could conform to institutional requirements or a particular method of teaching due to the pressure of the workplace or as a result of positive alignment; or they could disagree with the wider principles such as teaching and doing research at the same time promoted by the university.

At this point, alignment is where negotiability comes into play, which refers to the negotiation of meaning produced or defined by the above three process of identification (Wenger, 1998). The negotiation of meaning occurs continuously through different stages or modes of identification. Their processes of negotiation of meaning are more likely to be operated within what they believe to be true or right rather than what may actually be true even if this ultimate truth does exist. However, as Wenger (1998) points out, identity formation is always an on-going process of identification and negotiation of meaning, where internal and external struggles take place, thus, the external influences of power and structure should not be neglected. Alignment was revealed when teachers were required to gain the communicative teachers' identity which was favoured by the community, and when teachers were required to do teaching and research. But teachers may have their different understandings of these requirements, and that is where negotiability comes into play. The negotiability occurs through different stages or modes of identification, such as when participants hold different ideas from their students and colleagues; in the imagination when there is a gap between the designated identity and actual identity (see Chapter 6) and when the realisation of both predetermined and individually constructed roles happen (see Chapter 5); and in alignment when internal and external struggles take place (see Chapter 7). This proves Beijaard et al.'s (2004) conception of professional identity construction as an on-going process of interpretation and re-interpretation.

In the process of identification, Tsui (2007: 674) notes the recognition of teachers' competence as 'an important source of identity construction.' Furthermore,

competence is inseparable from membership (Wenger, 1998). Early-career, Series B teachers, Teacher Hu's and Teacher Ding's stories show that they possessed the competence of being language teachers by having good oral English, the native-speakers' identity. All the Early-career, Series B teachers were marginalised and excluded in terms of employment status, their full participation was interrupted as a result of an endangered identity. To be fully recognised as a member of the community, having a PhD degree and doing research were essential for them to demonstrate that they possessed the professional competence valued by the institution. The marginalisation had an effect on Teacher Ding's (Early-career, Series B) sense of self-worth and identity, which kept surfacing throughout her teaching career (See Chapter 7).

In the process of negotiability, to claim ownership of meaning is an important aspect of identity construction (Wenger, 1998). The identity conflicts that most of the teachers experienced in the English Language Teaching Reform could be attributed to the fact that the students and teachers defined the meanings of learning and teaching differently. For them, though the teachers' guidance on intensive study of language structures, vocabulary and texts was the best way to develop students' language proficiency, this conflicted with learning through interactive activities facilitated by teachers in communicative language teaching (CLT). Teachers' participation in the practice, as Early-career, Series B teachers, Teacher Sun, Teacher Guo, Teacher Ding and Mid-career, Series A teacher Teacher Ma reclaimed ownership of meanings by integrating teacher-centred traditional method (TM) into CLT (see Chapter 7).

All the evidence above showed that Early-career, Series B teachers' stories and the initial stages of Middle- and Late-career, Series A teachers' professional development stories demonstrate that teachers' professional identity is constructed by identification and negotiability, as Wenger (1998) points out. It implies that the initial stage of identity construction is the process of legitimate peripheral

participation, which is considered to be valuable for developing a sense of belonging. However, the Mid- and Late-career teachers' identity construction, once they reached the stage of how to maintain and develop their identity, goes beyond what Wenger's (1998) identification and negotiability could confirm.

The usefulness of Wenger's (1998) framework lies in the way in which it helps me to make sense of my own interpretation. First of all, the process of identification incorporates issues of the self that are both personal and social, in the sense that it allows wider issues of social and economic inequalities beyond the actual site of learning to be revealed. For example, it could involve discussion about how my participants' family backgrounds may influence their pre-conceptions of learning, and the value attached to learning could be included in the discussion. Secondly, it examines workplace learning from a social participatory perspective, where the social and personal aspects of identity formation and the struggle between agency and structure interact. Thirdly, it does echo findings from other researchers such as Beijaard et al. (2004), McNally (2006), and Day and Gu (2007), in agreeing that the construction of professional identity is multi-dimensional and multifaceted. The process of identification also highlights the relational sites in which identity formation takes place as was presented in my analysis (see Chapters 6 and 7).

Although I find Wenger's (1998) framework is helpful in further developing the understanding of teacher's professional identity construction, I agree with Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2004) who suggest that this framework works better in explaining novice teachers' learning and identity formation processes, as the process of legitimate peripheral participation is considered to be valuable for developing a sense of belonging. It might not work as effectively in explaining the identity formation processes of more experienced teachers.

Teachers' Professional Identity Construction in the Context of Chinese Culture

Although the life history narratives focused on the lives of story-tellers, the stories they told reflected their lived experiences shaped by their cultural knowledge of society and their context (Bloom & Munro, 1995). The interactive relationship between language teachers' lives, their perceptions and experiences, and social context is highlighted by Duff and Uchida (1997). All workplaces or situations provide individuals with several narrative resources for identity construction (Davies & Harré, 2001). The teachers' sense of professional identity is largely characterised by personal histories and experiences, and is constantly reshaped by the new relationships developed within the professional context, where the initial conception of teaching and teachers confronts changes. Throughout the participating teachers' life stories I could see that, even though they were unique, they were not disengaged from society and context. On more than one occasion, they made reference to different social and contextual issues that were shaping their selves either consciously or unconsciously. Additionally, when the narratives of all participating teachers are brought together, they reveal important aspects of how the broader community – society and context – behaves and evolves.

The contextual influences in teachers' professional identity construction in this study could be classified in three main categories: micro-social factors, meso-social factors and macro-social factors. The micro-social factors include students, colleagues, family members, former teachers, school leaders and so on. The meso-social factors are the university level influences, for example, university ethos. The macro-social factors entail broader cultural, political and educational environments such as the status of the profession and the language in society. I discuss how each of these factors influence teachers' personal and professional identity construction separately, however, the fact that micro, meso and macro-social factors are interconnected, is evident on more than one occasion throughout this discussion.

Micro-social Influences

The influence of micro-social factors on teachers' selves appeared from very early moments of the participants' lives. Being born into a teacher's family was a central player in the formation of their future teacher selves for Teacher Ding (Early-career, Series B), Teacher Liu (Late-career, Series A) and Teacher Ren (Late-career, Series A). This kind of influence from family members continued to have a strong impact on the ways they enacted their teacher selves later in their lives (see Chapter 4).

Their former teachers influenced their development of professional moral codes and their reflexive selves as teachers, as well as influencing their perceptions of the teacher-student relationship, ways of teaching and what kind of classroom teaching atmosphere they wanted to have (see Chapter 6). This is in contrast with findings in the series of Woods' studies (1996, 1999, 2002) on the impact of education reforms on Western teachers. The Chinese ideology on the 'Ways of Teachers' (Shidao), includes a belief and commitment towards a lifelong and permanent relationship between students and teachers with trust and virtue held strongly by participants. It also suggests that life experiences do contribute to who they are in the workplace (Hawthorn, 2006).

Students were a major influence in the construction of teachers' professional identity, and shaped who they were and who they intended to become. Regardless of their different employment statuses and different stages of their careers, the importance of the student-teacher relationship played a vital role in determining how they saw themselves as teachers. Interactions with students on some occasions contributed to strengthening or affirming different aspects of teachers' professional identities, whilst in others, these interactions challenged participants' identities and encouraged identity change through reflection. Teacher Sun's (Early-career, Series B) friendly approach to students and Teacher Ren's (Late-career, Series A) interactive way of teaching were warmly welcomed by their students. This served as a motivator. Contrastingly, Teacher Ma's (Mid-career, Series A) students' reactions of boredom towards her initial teaching style encouraged her to reflect on her teaching and make

changes (see Chapter 6). On the one hand, my findings show that the importance of relationships lies in the sense that they constantly reshape an individual's sense of identity. On the other hand, this relational dimension of identity construction in the Chinese context contains the proper conduct and the prescribed roles to be assumed by the individuals in a relationship (see Chapter 6).

Colleagues were another important micro-social influence for teachers' professional identity construction. Teachers enjoyed and benefited from discussions with colleagues. For example, Teacher Sun (Early-career, Series B) learned lessons from other more experienced teachers and used them to reflect on herself as a teacher. In observing their colleagues, my participating teachers knew who they were and what kind of teacher they wanted to become. However, competition complicated the complex nature of collegial relations (see Chapter 6 and Chapter 7).

Furthermore, when working with students and teachers, the self-conscious emotions emerged as the representation of the self, act as interpretive evaluation. Therefore, the self-conscious emotions might directly shape the identity and guide its construction and reconstruction (see Chapter 6).

Meso-social Influences

The meso context has an impact on teachers' lives at least as much as that of the macro context because the meso context is closer for teachers. As one of the pro-reform universities (as well as nationwide reforms), the university policies of Sun Yat-sen University also added challenges for the teachers. The current reforms brought the Early-career, Series B teachers insecurity of identity. The employment status weakened their sense of belonging, which indicated their marginality in the community. Not having a PhD degree demonstrated their lack of professional competence and meant that they were not identified as full members of the department (see Chapter 7). But due to the university policy allowing teachers to exercise their own professional judgement about their teaching practices, the

legitimacy of access to practice was not necessarily linked with competence, contrasting with Wenger's (1998) views. They could still bring their agency into play to do research, which could be proved by Teacher Ren's (Late-career, Series A) stories of becoming a researcher. She used learning-by-doing to demonstrate her competence in becoming a researcher without having any outstanding qualifications. She proved that gaining qualifications was not the only way to get the recognition of competence valued by a community.

Macro-social Influences

The broader context was an influence that was clearly present from the very early stages of participants' lives. The status of English as a language went through ups and downs in China. For the Late-career, Series A teachers, their education was interrupted by the Cultural Revolution. Although some of them started to learn English, except for Teacher Ren, who learned Russian, all of them began to learn English in depth at university. Most of the Early-career teachers were interested in learning it early on in their lives. Macro-social influences were, in several cases, the main factor that determined participants' career choice, as was apparent, in Teacher Ma's (Mid-career, Series A) and especially in the Late-career teachers' stories. Their jobs were allocated, and they told how the broader context influenced their decisions to become English language teachers. Teachers' lived experiences were all part of the education landscape, which was inseparable from the socioeconomic landscape at that time. Additionally, under the influences of the Chinese culture of learning and teaching, teachers in my study constantly referenced Confucius' doctrines as preferred ways of thinking about teaching (see Chapter 7), which bestowed some prescribed roles for teachers (see Chapter 5). Furthermore, the macro context influenced teachers' perceptions of their social status (see Chapter 7).

Stets and Burke (2003) have discussed how the influence that exists between self and society is dual. From the above, I can see how language teachers' lives and selves are

shaped by the broader context. From Teacher Ren's (Late-career, Series A) stories, I can see how she brought her agency into full play and re-interpreted the oppressive social context as opportunities for change and empowerment, for example, the story of how she became an excellent teacher and researcher without good qualifications (see Chapter 4). However, there is no evidence in the participants' stories to show how previous educational changes during their early years as teachers' impacted on their teachers' professional identity construction. I am only able to perceive the current educational changes' impact on their professional identity construction. For example, most of teachers lived with two competing identities – a traditional one and a communicative one – as well as being both a teacher and a researcher (see Chapter 7).

Differences and Possible Reasons

Teachers' career stages, employment statuses and life stages/ages all contributed to their perceptions of their professional identity construction.

All the Early-career, Series B teachers' identities as teachers were bound up with reactions from students, and their emotions were greatly attached to students' performance in class as shown in Chapter 6. Teacher Ma (Mid-career, Series A) did mention students' reactions in class, but she used it as a source of reflection in order to improve her teaching. None of Late-career, Series A teachers said anything about students' reactions. In this case, the difference between Early-career and Mid- and Late-career teachers may lie in their career stage and the difference between Teacher Ma and the rest of Late-career teachers may be mainly due to their life stage/age.

For all the Early-career, Series B teachers, desire for feedback and the importance of evaluation from students was an integral part of how they valued themselves as teachers. Teacher Ma (Mid-career, Series A) mentioned that students' evaluation was important to her as a source to make adjustments in her teaching. None of Late-career teachers mentioned a desire for feedback. Their ways of teaching were not

based on students' feedback, they tried to teach what they thought was right for them (see Chapter 6). In this case, the differences between Early-career and Mid- and Late-career teachers were mainly due to their different career stages, and, again, the difference between Teacher Ma and the rest of the Late-career teachers may lie in their life stage/age and career stage.

All Early-career, Series B teachers experienced a common threat towards their teachers' professional identity, an insecurity of identity, or a danger of losing the identity once they failed to meet the qualification standard (the PhD degree and doing research) set by the university personnel system and the requirement of reform by the university (see Chapter 7). Though not as severe as the Series B teachers' situation, Teacher Ma (Mid-career, Series A) also faced the same challenge of doing research and gaining a professional title. However, these issues did not worry Late-career teachers any more. In this case, the difference between Early-career and Mid- and Late-career teachers was mainly due to their different employment statuses and, yet again, the difference between Teacher Ma and the rest of Late-career teachers may lie in the life stage/age and career stage.

The Series A teachers have all spoken of themselves as teachers but yet, simultaneously, dissociated themselves from other colleagues to identify their differences or uniqueness among their colleagues; however, none of the Early-career, Series B teachers mentioned this othering process. In this case, the difference may lie in the career stages (see Chapter 6). Teachers negotiate professional identities as learners (Cohen, 2010). In the process of professional identity construction they bring in many sources of knowledge.

Teachers' Voices: Individual Voice and Collective Voices

Being silenced in quantitative research, in this research the focus on teachers' lives enables the teachers' voices to be heard. Through each teacher's stories, we can get access to each as a real person (see Chapter 4). Those individual voices can be put

together to show the collective voice from each group, and those groups can be put together to show the collective voice from College English teachers as a cohort. Even when teachers talked about the same thing, from their talking, I can still identify who this teacher is (see Chapter 4, 5, 6 and 7). The research is significant in collecting individual voices from Chinese College English teachers, and building their collective voice through exemplification, orchestration and amplification. Individual stories are examples which show how teachers live and struggle in their meso context with cultural uniqueness and the macro context of reforms. Teachers' experiences and interpretations are orchestrated through comparing, contrasting and building theory/theories from the ground stories as an attempt to produce a new but coherent narrative at an intellectual level (Somers, 2001). The orchestration of teachers' voices can be amplified in terms of its scope of impact and to inform the public of the subjective reality experienced by teachers. This small-scale, in-depth research project in one university attempts to begin that process. It is anticipated that it will resonate with teachers who lived under the same context, and illuminate their perspectives for those who did not.

8.3 Implications

The implications presented here reflect the concerns that have emerged from exploring the lived experiences of eight Chinese College English teachers at different stages of their careers in their teaching journey. The findings raise questions in relation to areas of policy making, teacher education and teachers' practices.

Implications for Policy

The findings of this study suggest that the interweaving of the education system, university and teachers as three corners of triangle of education reforms, echoes the importance of macro, meso and micro levels of influences under the impact of education reforms (Carlyle & Woods, 2002). The macro level of influence on

teachers is mainly found at social and educational levels, for example, when a new professional model is brought into the educational regime, which could create a climate which leads to teachers' stress. The meso level of influence is mainly found at university level with its institutional factors which are closer to teachers' lives than the social influences. A competitive environment with less support in the institution may make teachers more susceptible to negative emotions and even burn-out. The micro level is mainly found at a personal level. It is found that teachers engage heavily in emotional labour with their students. The policy or structural changes may make teachers more vulnerable. The findings show that reforms should be based on the constructive effort of these three components in the triangle. Teachers demonstrate an emotional attachment to their students and their work. They care for their students and, if they find that reforms will benefit their students, they commit to the reforms. Additionally, for those teachers, such as Teacher Ma (Mid-career, Series A) and Teacher Ren (Late-career, Series A), due to problems they identified in their teaching practice and ideas gained through training, they changed their ways of teaching long before the reform started and proved to be successful. It shows that the changes initiated by teachers could be more successful than a top-down implementation. Policy makers should have a better understanding of this, because the fact is that no changes will be possible if reforms are to be delivered in a top-down manner. Sometimes, teachers will compromise and follow, but their educational practices are unfruitful. Moreover, teachers' voices should be treasured. They could and should be invited to a round-table to discuss, plan and initiate education reforms.

Giddens' theory of structuration highlights that selves are created and recreated by two major influences. One of these is interaction with the social and educational context and the second one is the reflection that emerges as a result of selves' interaction with the context (Giddens & Pierson, 1998). Teachers' agency plays an important role. In this sense, it is better to know how teachers make sense of these

external expectations and how to understand how they internalise them when process education reforms. If so, the reforms need to be carried out at a modest pace in order to give teachers enough time to reflect on their educational experiences and plan for the real changes.

The findings also show that the unique characteristics of a workplace intensify the challenges and changes placed on the shoulder of teachers. The implementation of reforms may be carried on, but policy makers should be aware that they are in danger of losing the talented and committed teachers (see Chapter 7, teachers who do not want to do research). I doubt whether severe competition would be able to actually eliminate the weakest ones. Is there a possibility that the unfit ones are forced to leave the teaching profession and fittest ones are also forced to do so? That is, there is a strong possibility that the weak ones will leave and the good ones will also leave, leaving a preponderance of mediocre teachers in the profession.

In order to facilitate teachers' professional development, more opportunities should be created and more support should be provided to facilitate teacher learning in both teaching and in doing research. By showing understanding and empathy, institutions should build up a network of help to retain teachers in the professional practice, where teachers may gain both intellectual and emotional support.

Implications for Teacher Education

The findings of this study identify that some of the teachers entered the university teaching profession from subject-based programmes without any previous training in teacher education or any teaching practice experience. They had just a week's induction to pass examinations on education, psychology, education law and professional ethics in order to gain the teaching certificate. Even for those teachers who were in teacher education programmes, based on the findings of this study, the effect of these teacher education programmes was nearly invisible. This may be due to the fact that those teacher education programmes gave few opportunities to review

teaching and learning strategies in classroom settings and therefore did not adequately prepare my participants. This implies that an integrated teacher induction programme should be designed and implemented. Teachers could be invited to the design of this programme which would take into account the needs of teachers collectively and individually. The findings also show the impact of prior life experiences of teachers on shaping their beliefs and perceptions. It implies that the design of teacher education and induction programmes should take these factors into consideration.

Continuous teacher training is lacking. Some uncertainties in relation to teaching methodologies and teaching styles were derived from the teachers' prior beliefs based on the principles they obtained from early learning experiences or their previous teaching practice. The designing of continuous teacher education programmes could take into account the various theoretical and practical needs of teachers.

The findings show that encouragement for teachers to take analytical approaches in reflecting on their teaching or to question assumptions seemed to be lacking. It seems to be difficult to foster teachers' understanding of the social and political contexts in a reflective manner in the Chinese context. Without doing so, it is hard for teachers to start to critically reflect on the moral and ethical issues of teaching practice and on their own beliefs about teaching. Thus, it implies that the foundation knowledge of reflective and analytical practices should be embedded in teacher education programmes (Day, 1993).

Implications for Chinese College English Teachers

A life history narrative approach has a great potential to empower the teachers who narrate the stories of their lives, since it enables them to recognise their teacher selves, the values that are central to their teacher selves and the emotions that arise in their everyday struggle to become their ideal teacher selves.

The findings of this study show that being a Chinese English language teacher implies much more than acquiring knowledge of appropriate ways of teaching in different circumstances. It requires a continuous engaged reflection on individual agency in relation to the socio-cultural factors that motivate transformation.

Engaging in reflection enables teachers to have a better knowledge of themselves as professionals, which may have a positive impact on the language classroom. Moreover, the findings illustrate that changes in teacher-student relationships serve as a factor that leads to a better professional self-conceptualisation. When teachers are able to develop an awareness of their emotional responses as one of their ways of knowing and to use the power of emotion as a basis for change, teachers can categorise their experiences, their anxieties, their fears, their excitements and learn how to use them in empowering ways (Zembylas, 2002). This, in turn, leads to an increase in the levels of motivation for them to continue to better their professional practice.

Though the meso and macro contexts brought constraints to teachers, they also brought them opportunities. For example, the requirements embedded in various reforms could be served as driving forces for teachers to update their knowledge and skills. Thus the reforms could be treated as a time for teachers to look back and think forward, and then they could work out possible adjustments for improvement, which would benefit their students as well as themselves. Similarly, the meso context of Sun Yat-sen University brought teachers pressures as well as opportunities, as I mentioned earlier, the chance to exercise their own teaching practices. If teachers could better make use those chances, they would do and achieve what they have dreamed about.

8.4 Limitations and Future Research

The life history narrative adopted in the present study provided a powerful tool to study the lived experiences of Chinese College English teachers, however, it should

be acknowledged that, as Holstein and Gubrium (2000) point out, no narration is ever neutral because they are lives interpreted and made textual which are contingent to the storyteller, audience, context, time and space. Therefore, the implication of this perspective is that I cannot be the judge of whether the narratives are accurate or of the interpretation of these narratives (Søreide, 2007). But, if time permitted, more collaborative work between the researcher and the participants, and between different researchers, would enhance the trustworthiness and validity of the data collection and analysis process.

One of the major limitations in my study is that I might have done a better job in the data collection stage to recruit more participants, and to have a more equal number in each group. In future research, I would ensure enough time, especially since this would become possible when not under the necessity of returning to the UK within two months. Due to limited time and the actual situation, I only conducted one interview with each of the participants. Although life history narratives were only able to provide a snapshot of the perceived reality (Goodson & Sykes, 2001), if time had permitted, further interviews would have been carried out, which would have facilitated the building of a better rapport with all the participants and more intimate details of their lives would have emerged. Moreover, the limitations and complexities of my relationships with the participants could have affected the process of this study and should be acknowledged. The information lost during the process of translation should also be acknowledged.

As Goodson and Sykes (2001) note, the sample sizes in life history narrative studies are usually small. The participants of this study were purposefully selected by me from my previous university with its own social and cultural characteristics (a innovating, research-intensive university). The findings may not apply to other universities in the same city or other cities in a country as massive as China because College English teachers in other universities may have different stories, different pressure and opportunities. It should be acknowledged that the findings of my study

should not be generalised to College English teachers in China as a population but it is still possible to discuss tentative suggestions.

8.5 Closing Remarks

In the process of researching, my understanding changed. For example, I hoped I could find out the influences of historical events on teachers' professional identity construction, but it turns out that, although those events may have an impact on their professional identity, I could not clearly distinguish which event they were coming from. The present reform has brought more impact on their professional identity than the historical ones. I had not realised that the employment status would affect teachers' professional identity, which emerged in the process of data analysis. I did not know, but know now, that the teacher-student relationship played such a huge role in teachers' professional identity construction, which implied the strength of impact of pedagogical relationships on teachers as well as on students. Therefore, the hypothesis that I mentioned in the introduction was not fully upheld – i.e., personal/individual and meso context seemed much more significant than macro (see Chapter 6, 7 and Teachers' Professional Identity Construction in the Context of Chinese Culture Section).

This research enlarges the existing studies on teachers' professional identity construction from a Chinese perspective by locating the study in the unique context of Sun Yat-sen University, a research intensive, high-status comprehensive university in China. My research has allowed me to develop a new perspective on teachers' professional identity construction in China by drawing on biography, the changes in society and their impact on education, which have not been brought together before in relation to Chinese College English teachers at different stages of their careers. I deliberately connected teachers' career stages to the changes in society as early-career teachers who grew up in the new century, mid-career teachers who grew up along with China's 30-year Reform and Opening-up (1978- present)

and late-career teachers who grew up along with New China's 60-year development (1949- present). It has illuminated the tensions I have described throughout this thesis in Chinese College English teachers' professional identity construction which may start to provide some useful ways to think about them and offer possible solutions.

The research is significant in collecting individual voices from Chinese College English teachers and building their collective voice (see Teachers' Voices: Individual Voice and Collective Voices Section). Furthermore, I believe a key strength of my research has been the unique way in which I personally synthesised an analytical framework and used 'I' poems to present teachers' stories with respect to enabling teachers' voices to be heard. My contribution to research on teachers' voices therefore lies in the analytical approach I adopted which highlighted the analytical and representational perspectives of centring the teachers' voice rather than only paying attention to collect teachers' voice. Apart from enabling voice, 'I' poems can be used as an innovative way to examine teachers' professional identity construction.

My findings have provided another example of concepts such as 'predetermined roles' and 'individually created roles', 'the teacher's self', 'othering', 'competing identities' and 'framework of identity construction' (see Chapter 5, Chapter 6, Chapter 7 and Section 8.2), while also having extended role identities construction as an internalised process in Chapter 5 as well as uneven competition identities in the transitional stage in Chapter 7. My findings have extended theories in general subjects, such as 'the looking-glass self' and the interaction theory (the 'I' and the 'me') which is interpreted as the self-mirroring process of identity construction and the emotional passage in the identity construction (see Chapter 6). My findings pointed out the teacher-student relationship played such a huge role in teachers' professional identity construction.

Although my research project ends, the lives and the narratives of my participants continue. Teacher Sun (Early-career, Series B) started her PhD journey this September. Last year, Teacher Ma (Mid-career, Series A) went abroad as a visiting scholar to enhance her research competence. Late-career, Series A teachers Teacher Liu, Teacher Ren and Teacher Wang retired, but they still tried to contribute to the teaching, for example, Teacher Ren worked as a guesting professor in various universities across China. Countless stories are still waiting to be told and studied. Throughout the study, I have agonised over both the possibilities and the restraints embedded in the complexities of qualitative research and narrative methods and now I feel I am ready to explore further in the field of narrative studies. Thus, I hope I can go right back to the beginning because there is so much still to be learnt.

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Appendix

Appendix A Students' Evaluation of Teaching Form

中山大学外语课教学质量学生评估指标

第一部分：单项选择		等级及分值			
要素	指标内容	优 9.5	良 7.5	中 6.0	差 3.0
教学态度	1. 教态大方、为人师表、举止得体。				
	2. 备课充分、授课熟练。				
教学内容	3. 内容清晰、符合大纲、重点突出。				
	4. 注重传授外语学习方法和培养外语交际能力。				
教学方法	5. 能准确、熟练地运用外语讲课。				
	6. 善于运用外语语境提高学生学习英语的兴趣和动力。				
	7. 授课方式生动，注重师生交流，学生参与机会多。				
	8. 因材施教，能指导学生进行课外学习，使课堂教学和学生自主学习有机结合。				
	9. 能有效使用网络等多媒体教学手段，板书清楚。				
教学效果	10. 使学生不仅从课内学校有关知识，还增强了听、说等外语综合应用能力。				
第二部分：开放式问题					
1. 我认为该教师课堂教学的特点是：					
2. 我对老师的希望和建议：					

Translation Appendix A

Students' Evaluation of Teaching Index for Foreign Language Course, Sun Yat-sen University

Part one: Multiple-choice		Grade and Score			
Components	Contents	Excellent 9.5	Good 7.5	Fair 6.0	Poor 3.0
Teacher's Attitude	1. manner, being a model of virtue, behave properly				
	2. well-prepared and skilful teaching				
	3. clarity, fitting in the syllabus with a focus				
	4. emphasising learning methods and cultivating learners' language communication capability				
Teaching Methods	5. using English to teach with accuracy and proficiency				
	6. using contexts to raise learners' language learning interests and motivation				
	7. teaching vividly, emphasising communication with students and providing lots of students' interaction activities				
	8. supervising students' learning after class, combining classroom teaching and students' autonomous learning well				
	9. effectively using multi-media to assist teaching				
The Effectiveness of Teaching	10. gaining knowledge and enhancing comprehensive capabilities of English use (listening, speaking, etc.)				
Part two: Open-ended Questions					
1. In my opinion, this teachers' classroom teaching characteristics are:					
2. My suggests and words to this teacher:					

Appendix B Letters to Faculty/ University for access for research



Ling Meng
Simon Laurie House (Rm 2.17)
The Moray House School of Education
The University of Edinburgh
Holyrood Road
Edinburgh, EH8 8AQ
Scotland, UK
L.Meng@sms.ed.ac.uk
00447551295490
July, 2010

To whom it may concern,

My name is Ling Meng, a PhD candidate in the Moray House School of Education at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland, UK. I am under the supervision of Prof. Morwenna Griffiths and Dr. Bróna Murphy. I am writing to ask for your kind consideration to let me conduct a research project on the 'Teachers' Lives: A Life History Narrative Inquiry into Chinese College English Teachers' Professional Development in the Context of Chinese Culture' at your department/university to interview 12 College English teachers from the end of October to the end of December 2010. At the same time I will be collecting documentary evidence including university reports and publicity material, which may cast further light on the lives being considered. In my research that is entitled which will record the processes the Chinese College English teachers go through in coming to identify

themselves as professionals. My research discusses and studies Chinese College English teachers' professional development stories. The main aim of the study is to reveal in the context of Chinese culture how teachers, at different stages of their careers, construct, maintain and develop their professional identities. The study explores, in particular, how far China's educational changes over the past sixty years (1949-2009) have impacted on Chinese College English teachers' professional identities. Your participation will make contribution to enable the teachers' voices to be heard.

In China, teachers being a silent group in traditional quantitative research, their feelings and experiences are generally ignored. In-depth qualitative research examining the actual processes and dynamics experienced by teachers is less valued and underdeveloped compared to western societies. Hence, your permission for my entry into your department/university not only benefits my research, but also significantly enhances the development of qualitative research of local educational studies.

I sincerely wish to obtain your authorization to conduct my research in your school. I am looking forward to receiving your reply.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.

Yours sincerely,

Ling Meng

Appendix C Approval from the Faculty of English Education



中山大学外语教学中心
Faculty of English Education, Sun Yat-sen University

中国广州市新港西路 135 号 邮编: 510275
No. 135 Xingangxi Road, Guangzhou, P.R. China
电话: (020)84111929 传真: (020) 84115978

留英博士回国收集数据接待人同意函

中山大学研究生院:

兹同意中山大学 2008 年第三批国家建设高水平大学公派研究生攻读博士学位爱丁堡大学项目博士生孟玲同学, 于 2010 年 10 月 26 日至 2011 年 12 月 30 日期间, 在中山大学外语教学中心开展为期八周的研究数据收集和研究对象的访谈工作。
特此证明。

中山大学外语教学中心主任, 教授
夏纪梅

2010 年 8 月 14 日

院/系/所盖章



Translation Appendix C

The Approval for Data Collection

We hereby certify that the eight-week's fieldwork (26th October, 2010 – 30th December, 2010) of Ling Meng, a PhD candidate at the University of Edinburgh (The State Scholarship Study Abroad Program for Graduate Studies at the China National University of Construction by China Scholarship Council, 2008) in Faculty of English Education, Sun Yat-sen University to do interviews and collect supplementary documentation.

The Dean of Faculty of English Education

Professor Jimei Xia

Signature

14 August, 2010

Stamp

中山大学

中大函〔2010〕397号

关于孟玲同学留学期间回国调研的函

相关使（领）馆：

我校所派赴英国攻读博士学位研究生孟玲(性别：女，出生日期：1982年2月2日)于2008年12月被国家留学基金管理委员会国家公派研究生项目录取(录取文号：留金出〔2008〕3072号，录取学号：2008638095)。

该生留学机构为英国爱丁堡大学，外方指导教师是 Prof. J.L. Blussé，批准留学期限为36个月，已于2009年9月派出。该生从事英语教育、跨文化交流方面的研究，因科研工作需要，由外方导师安排，现申请赴国内进行为期2个月的调研工作，起止时间为2010年10月底至12月底。国内接待单位主要为中山大学外语教学中心。

专此函达，请予审批。



二〇一〇年十月二十五日

Translation Appendix D

No. 397, 2010

Official Letter

Sun Yat-sen University

We hereby certify that Ling Meng, a PhD student at the University of Edinburgh to do two-month's fieldwork (from the end of October to the end of December) in Faculty of English Education, Sun Yat-sen University.

Sun Yat-sen University

Stamp

25 October, 2010

Appendix E Invitation Letter for Participating Teachers



Ling Meng
Simon Laurie House (Rm 2.17)
The Moray House School of Education
The University of Edinburgh
Holyrood Road
Edinburgh, EH8 8AQ
Scotland, UK
L.Meng@sms.ed.ac.uk
00447551295490
August, 2010

Dear Participants,

My name is Ling Meng, a PhD candidate in the Moray House School of Education at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland, UK. I am under the supervision of Prof. Morwenna Griffiths and Dr. Bróna Murphy. My data collection has already gained consent and support from Professor Jimei Xia, the dean of faculty of English Education. I am delighted to invite you to participate in my research that is entitled 'Teachers' Lives: A Life History Narrative Inquiry into Chinese College English Teachers' Professional Development in the Context of Chinese Culture,' which will record the processes the Chinese College English teachers go through in coming to identify themselves as professionals. My research discusses and studies Chinese College English teachers' professional development stories. The main aim of the study is to reveal in the context of Chinese culture how teachers, at different stages of their careers, construct, maintain and develop their professional identities. The study explores, in particular, how far China's educational changes over the past sixty

years (1949-2009) have impacted on Chinese College English teachers' professional identities. Your participation will make contribution to enable the teachers' voices to be heard.

My fieldwork will last two months from the end of October to the end of December 2010. During this period, I will conduct a series of in-depth semi-structured interviews with at least twelve College English teachers. I will then need to transcribe these interviews and do a preliminary analysis before I can carry out a second series of interviews with six of you, chosen to be key informants for my study. At the same time I will be collecting documentary evidence including university reports and publicity material, which may cast further light on the lives being considered. Each interview will last no more than 90 minutes. The time and place for the interviews will be arranged upon your convenience. The interviews will be audio-recorded by using a digital recorder upon your permission. There are not any issues of safety involved in participating in my research. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you can withdraw from the research any time you want.

The data obtained will be only used in my research. Access to the data is strictly limited to my supervisors and me. The original data was in Chinese, I will only translate some parts of it into English. I will report the findings in my PhD dissertation and I may also report the findings in publications of various types, including conference paper, presentation, journal articles and books.

If you have any enquires about this research, please feel free to call (00447551295490) or e-mail (L.Meng@sms.ed.ac.uk) me.

Thank you very much.

Yours sincerely,

Ling Meng

Appendix F Consent Form

Consent Form

Thank you for expressing an interest in my research study and for being willing to participate in my audio recordings which will provide the data for my PhD research at the University of Edinburgh. The main aim of the study is to reveal in the context of Chinese culture how teachers, at different stages of their careers, construct, maintain and develop their professional identities.

By taking part in such recordings, you are providing me with spoken data that will be later transcribed for research purposes. I value your contribution and would like, at this stage, to assure you of the following:

- (a) All recordings will only be used for research purposes and/or work related to research findings
- (b) Confidentiality will be guaranteed at all times through signed agreements. The degree of anonymity will be discussed and negotiated with regard to specific stories. If you do not wish to be anonymous, some stories will be named your own name
- (c) Any participant can delete any part of a recording and/or transcript that he/she wishes both after the recording is made and also after reading a transcript of the recording
- (d) If, at any stage of involvement, a participant has concerns about the project and wishes to contact someone independent, he/she may contact: Sandra Orr, the Administrative Officer, the University of Edinburgh, Research Support Office, the Moray House School of Education, Holyrood Road, Edinburgh EH8 8AQ , Tel.: 0044131 651 6386 (Thurs, Fri), 0044131 650 4018 (Mon, Tues)

Thank you once again for your interest and assistance. In the meantime, if you have any queries and/or questions about any aspect of my work, please contact me. My e-mail address is L.Meng@sms.ed.ac.uk and my telephone number is 00447551295490.

I have read and fully understand the information sheet that was issued by the researcher or on behalf of the researcher before the commencement of the audio recordings.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Appendix G Interview Questions

1. Why did you choose to be a College English teacher?
2. Have you always wanted to be a teacher?
3. Could you tell me how you became a College English teacher?
4. How do you see your teaching career? Could you recall your experiences and try to describe them in as much detail as possible?

What was the experience like for you in the beginning period? How about now?

-- Do you remember your first day of teaching? Can you describe it in detail?

What skills and experience did you bring to teaching at the very beginning?

How did you manage your class when you are a novice? How about now?

How about your students' reactions to you? Are there any differences between the past and now? What are they? How did they happen?

What's your view of your lessons, ways of teaching and achievement at the very beginning? And now?

When you have difficulties, do you go for help? Who helps you? Do you discuss things with your colleagues? Do you read books about teaching? Do you attend trainings, workshops and seminars? Do you observe other teachers' classes?

5. What's your teacher training experience? What's the impact of training experience on your teaching?
6. What academic activities, such as conferences, seminars and research have you been involved in? What are their influence on you?
7. During the whole process of your teaching, what are the most significant moments in your memory?
-- What are the good moments in your class?
8. What have you learnt from the process of teaching?
9. How do you see yourself as a novice, and now?
10. Do you think your students like you? Do they always like you? Why and why not?

11. What do you think it is like to be a teacher? Why? What is the stereotype of a teacher?

Are you that kind of a teacher? What are the differences? What kind of teacher do you want to become?

12. What kind of experience makes you realise you are a teacher?

13. What kind of experience makes you feel that you are seen by others as a teacher?

14. Are you proud to be a teacher? Do you like people to see you as a teacher? Do you like to tell others you are a teacher? How does your family see you? Do you teach in your family? When you meet people for the first time how do you introduce yourself? How would you like to be seen by your students and other teachers?

15. What does being a teacher mean to you? What do you want to gain from teaching?

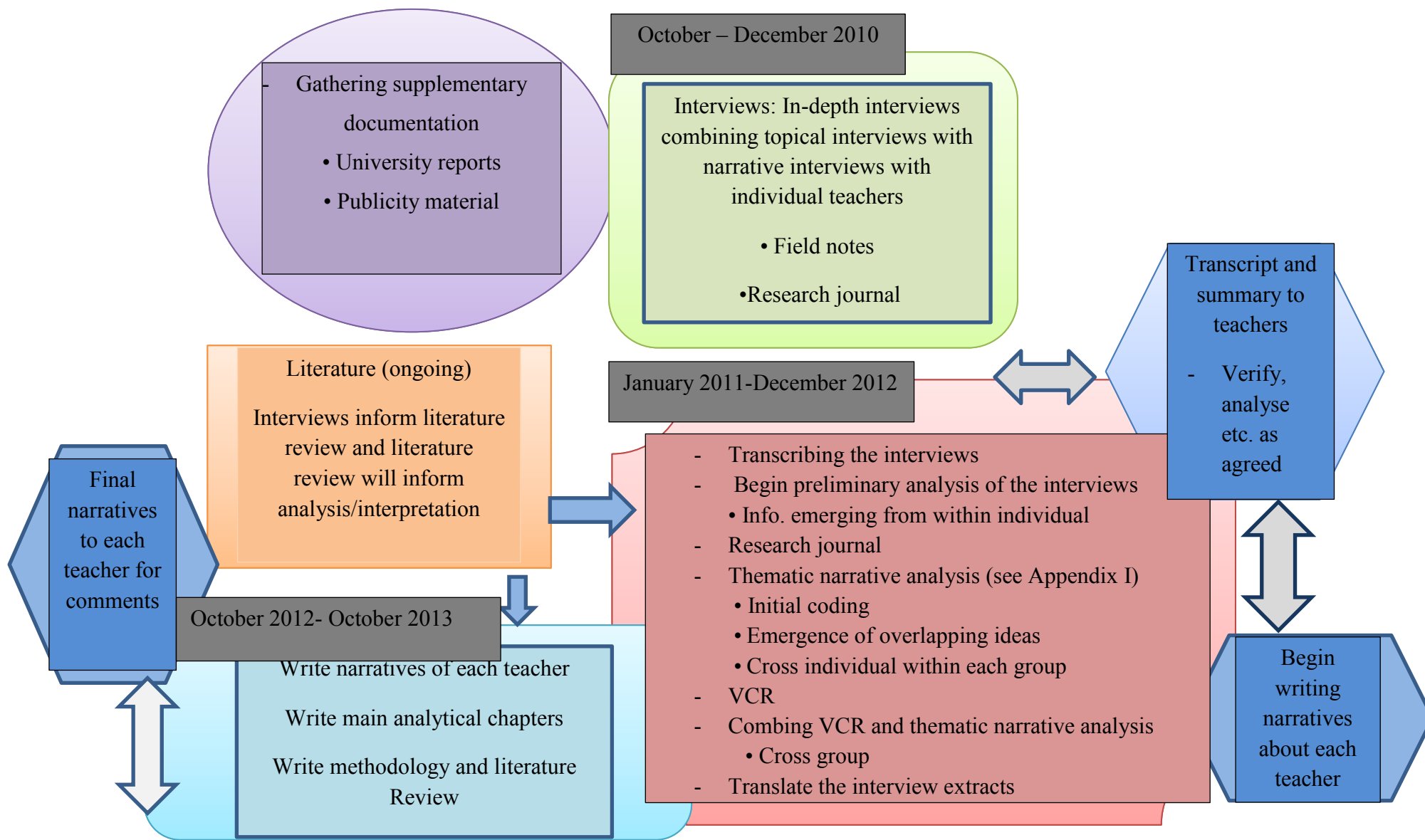
16. What are the best things about being a teacher? What are the challenging aspects?

17. What's your view of your future? Do you see yourself still teaching the rest of your life? If so, where do you think you will be and what do you hope to be doing? If not, what would you rather be doing?

18. Could you bring something such as photographs, books, students' work, or teaching plans here which are important to you and thus can aid you to recall your good, bad or interesting memories about your teaching? Can you tell me more about stories behind these things?

19. Have you got anything left?

Appendix H Overview of Research Process and Timeline



Gathering supplementary documentation

- University reports
- Publicity material

October – December 2010

Interviews: In-depth interviews combining topical interviews with narrative interviews with individual teachers

- Field notes
- Research journal

Transcript and summary to teachers

- Verify, analyse etc. as agreed

January 2011-December 2012

- Transcribing the interviews
- Begin preliminary analysis of the interviews
 - Info. emerging from within individual
- Research journal
- Thematic narrative analysis (see Appendix I)
 - Initial coding
 - Emergence of overlapping ideas
 - Cross individual within each group
- VCR
- Combing VCR and thematic narrative analysis
 - Cross group
- Translate the interview extracts

Begin writing narratives about each teacher

October 2012- October 2013

Literature (ongoing)

Interviews inform literature review and literature review will inform analysis/interpretation

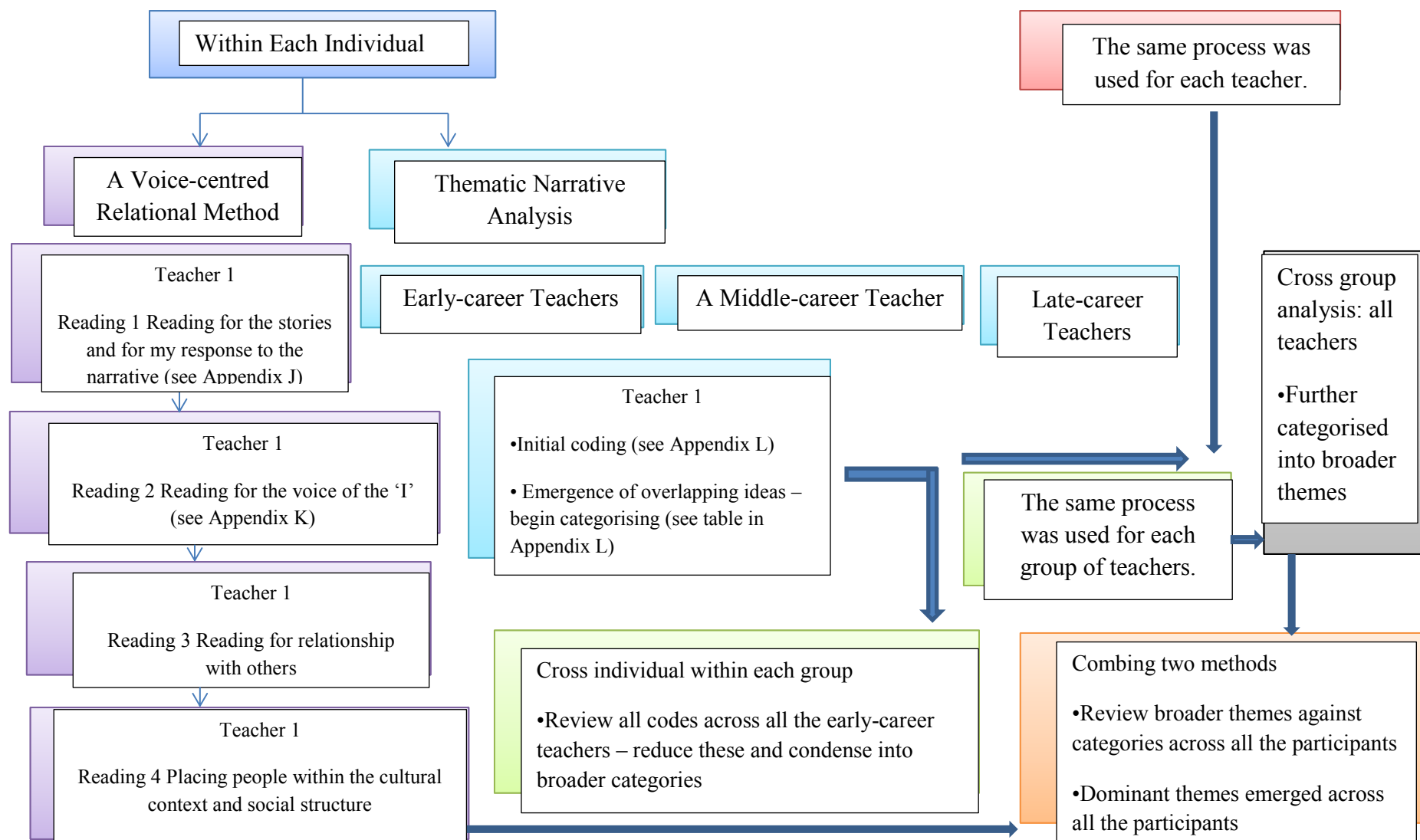
Write narratives of each teacher

Write main analytical chapters

Write methodology and literature Review

Final narratives to each teacher for comments

Appendix I Process of Data Analysis and Interpretation



Appendix J Reading 1: Teacher's Stories

Teacher Hu (Early-career, Series A)

Story of Becoming a College English Teacher

According to her interest, Teacher Hu chose to be an English major at a normal university. Apart from subject learning, she also learnt about teaching methodologies in the university and did her placement which enabled her to master the basic skills to become a teacher. Through her communication with both non-English major undergraduates and English major ones, she preferred to teach the non-English majors because of the inspirational conversations and depth of their thinking which were more attractive.

Through the communication with some non-English major undergraduates, I, myself once was an English major, I have the same background as them. It is hard for me to elicit inspiration or creativity from them. On the contrary, when I communicate with non-English majors, sometimes with the help of their professional knowledge, their perspectives could let me learn a lot. Thus, to be a College English teacher to teach non-English majors is more attractive.

Story of internship

After graduation, she continued to pursue her Masters Degree in Applied Linguistics at Sun Yat-sen University. This masters programme was completely subject-based and there were no teaching components or placement opportunities. But Teacher Hu found some part-time jobs as an English teacher. She did lots of teaching practicums before graduation. Through her study and teaching experience, she discovered that she liked the feeling of teaching in the classroom and she was very clear that she was suitable for teaching. These experiences could be seen as a significant critical event in Teacher Hu's stories of becoming a College English teacher.

Before graduation, I did a lot of teaching practice. I taught in some schools, include here. Those experiences make me know I like such kind of feeling when I am teaching in the classroom. I am very clear that I am suitable to be a teacher. I think my competence and skill will enable me to become an excellent College English teacher.

Story of First Day of Teaching

Although Teacher Hu could not remember the exact situation of her first day of teaching, she did remember the feeling.

The specific situation is vague, but I could remember very clearly about the feeling. I am very excited. When I see the students almost the same age as me, they just enter university with their expectation and ambition. They are all smiling. I smile shyly (laughing). They are the first batch of students I teach, which gives me deepest impression. Now, I can still remember everyone's name.

The first class is the students from school of business. Although they know I am very young, I did a lot of teaching practice before. That is not the first day I stand in the platform. I think I am more mature than other teachers of the same age. I think I should capture them by fluent English expressions. I should let them trust me though I am young. Under their critical eyes, I finished my self-introduction and course induction, from their face I know their admire (laughing). Later on, I set up my position in their heart, they are becoming more and more cooperative.

Story of Coping with Uncooperative Students

In dealing with uncooperative students, she learnt that some of the students would like to participate, but due to language barriers, they were very passive in class. Her understanding about cooperation changed. She thought that sometimes the cooperation is superficial, such as questions and answers in class. But sometimes the cooperation is support from the bottom of the heart.

I remembered that I had a class which is not very cooperative. In my class, I required students' participation. But this class did not cooperate with me. I was very worried about it. I sent a questionnaire to them. I was astonished by the feedbacks. They tell me that actually they are very glad to participate and cooperate, but due to some language barriers, they could not be active in class. Now, I have different understanding about cooperation between me and my students. Sometimes, the cooperation is superficial, such as questions and answers in class. Sometimes, the cooperation is the support from bottom of heart. I can understand them much better.

During the process of gaining experiences, she learned to control her mood.

I try to control my mood in class. The students' performance in class will greatly impact my feeling. When they do well, I will laugh, when they cannot reach my requirements, I feel worry and angry. When students do not cooperate, in the past I feel very depressing. I am thinking whether they do not like me, whether they cannot accept my way of teaching. When I know it is because they have difficulties in how to use English to express, not the reasons I am guessing. I will

encourage them to participate in class. In the past, I never called a student's name to let this student give his or her opinion. Now I will give them a lot of chances to speak. If they are afraid, they do not need to stand up.

Story of Her Ways of Teaching

Teacher Hu shared her learning experiences with her students.

My students are freshmen. Our age disparity is very small. I use empathy. I recalled the problems I encountered when I was a freshman and my expectation towards English course. I will bring my own feelings into my teaching. Sometimes, I will share my learning experiences. I hope it will give them some enlightenment.

Then she talked about how she formed her ways of teaching.

I formed my belief when I was a student. I hope I could participate in the class, not a teacher dominates the class, which is very boring. In my job interview, I used this way. It is appreciated by the dean. She is an experienced expert. Her approval is a great encouragement for me. I insist on trying it in my class. I think there is nothing wrong with this belief, but how to design it and make students easy to accept is a question.

Story of Classroom Management

Based on what she learned from other teachers, she subdivided her students into groups and chose a monitor to help her.

Each class, we only have two-hour classroom teaching per week. The time is limited. I learnt from other teachers' experience, I divide my students into several groups. I asked group members to sit together. By doing so, I could know them easily and it is convenient for me to know their attendances. Each class, I choose a monitor. The monitor is the core of the class. The monitor will help me a lot. When students in the class have problems, but they are afraid to tell me directly, the monitor helps me to collect their ideas and feedbacks. I can communicate with them separately. With the help of monitor, I could establish a knit relationship with my students.

Stories of Students' Reactions to Her

Her previous students would like to communicate with her.

Sometimes they send me text message. They write about my influence to them. They send me email to tell me my class give them a good memory. They think I am a charming teacher. They are very cute. I think they like me.

She was struggling with how to cope with changing students. Being needed is part of her expectation of what being a teacher involves, however Teacher Hu noticed that the students who were born after the 1990s were more independent. They seldom sent her emails or text messages. Instead of asking her for help, they preferred to find out the answers on their own with the help of the internet. The change in students affects how she sees herself as a teacher.

I also use various ways to communicate with my students. I notice that this year's students are different from my former students in 2007. My 2007's students like to send my emails and text messages. But this year's students do not. They are more independent. Maybe they can find out the answers by their own. They do not like to ask me. They can use internet to find the answers. If one day they do not need me anymore, how could I survive? I am wondering what could I teach you, my students.

Stories of How She Perceives Herself as a Teacher

Her reflection of herself as a teacher:

About class design, I compared the PowerPoint Slides I use now and the one I used three years ago, I realised that I made a lot of changes. For example, at the very beginning, I used muddleheaded experience. Sometimes I take teaching for granted. But I hold a belief, that is students' involving. My class design is not very scientific. Now I can design some pertinent activities which enable more students participating. I am quite pleased with my teaching achievement. Every term, students will give us an evaluation. My score is very high. From my students' feedbacks and emails, they accept my teaching. They tell me I teach them a kind of attitude towards life. I am touched. I know they could learn something from me. I am full of enthusiasm and energy. I would like to do my best to teach my students well.

I am calm now. I had some experience. I am more mature. I can deal with my class more rational, not sentimental as before. That is not to say my enthusiasm and energy is decreasing. My mood will not be affected by my students' reaction. At the very beginning, I'm keen of teaching. But now, I am doubt about my value. I do not know where my sense of worth is. For example, my former secondary school teacher, she educated a lot of students and helped them enter into university. We have graduated for several years; we still keep in touch with her. As a general course teacher, my students have their own major. Not matter how much they like me at that time, one or two years later we won't get in touch. They seldom remember me. When I walk on campus, we come across, they seldom say hello to me. Sometimes I am thinking whether to be a secondary school teacher is more worthwhile. If a teacher lost the treasure of students, I feel he or she will lose his or her value.

I teach in the class. I witness the students' progress. Once I stand in the platform I feel I am a teacher, even I am still a student work as a part-time teacher, I think I am a teacher, because I have my duty and responsibility.

I feel it is interesting that sometimes people say you look like a teacher. I think it is a teacher's temperament. Sometimes I unconsciously bring something from my class into my life. I could not explain it very clearly. Some of my friend always tells me that I can perceive you are a teacher. You like to tell people how to do things and what they should or should not do. (laughing) Let me think about it. Sometimes in my daily life, when my act is not so mature, people around me will say you are a teacher, you should not do it like that. It makes me feel that I am a teacher, I should act as an example for others. Sometimes I show my students the cute me in my daily in my class.

Especially the students in our university, they are very excellent. The scope of knowledge is broad. Sometimes, it is an invisible pressure for you. I should go on learning and developing. For the responsibility, there is an advertisement. Educate a child will benefit a family. I totally agree with it. I feel my responsibility. I am proud of I am an influential person

Story of Difficulties Encountered in Teaching

Her way of teaching encountered some of her students' resistances.

My way of teaching is not accepted by all. I do not require all of them could use English fluently and confidently, but I hope all of them could progress a little and make some changes. These changes will benefit them a lot in the future. Some students get used to traditional way of teaching, word and grammar explanation and recitation. They hope teachers in the university could still use the same way to teach. Some of them reject the new way of teaching. They think when they listen to others' talking or while other people are talking, they have not having the conscious of listening, they feel that they are not involving. They learn nothing. It is very common. When I received students' emails, I will find a time to talk to them face to face. I think if you can talk to them, especially if a university teacher would like to talk with students, they will be appreciated. In the communication with students, we can help them know their drawbacks and make them changes. They will have great encouragement. In my class, by observation, I could know who could not involve in the class, I will find a time to talk with them after class. I find it is a very effective way.

Stories of Good Moments

The student-teacher relationship is very important to Teacher Hu. She cherished lots of good moments she had with her students.

The most precious is from my students. I gain students' support. Their letter and words are the driving force of my teaching.

I remembered that I had a class. I was not their teacher when they were freshmen. They haven't form good habit of learning when they are freshmen. Their learning is very passive. At first when I took charge of this class, I experienced a tough

time. I should try to change their old habit. I put all my energy into it. Out of my expectation, at the end of the term, they send me an email, everyone write me a sentence. I was touched and burst into tears. I read that letter several time.

Good moments (laughing), our university is a prestigious university in China. We have excellent students from all parts of the country. Our students are very good and clever. Sometimes under my supervision and sometimes it is students' own creativity make me laughing in the class. I always feel speechless. I do not know how to express my feeling, it is hard for me to find out the appropriate words. Sometimes I am laughing until I burst into tears. I am laughing it is not because their performance is funny, it is because I'm proud of them, they are amazing. It is my treasure in my life (laughing).

Once, my students talk about romance. They rearrange O' Henry's fiction Maggie's Gift. The dialogue through their performing is fantastic, which makes me astonished and speechless. (laughing) I tell them I do not know what I should say. Full mark could not express my appreciation.

My students made a presentation about humour. They are very creative. They choose a classical ancient story and put this story in our modern life. They use their perspective, people born in the late 1980s and in the early 1990s' point view to show the humour. It is very cute.

About the theme of euphemism and straightforwardness between East and West, they choose the story of butterfly love. The same scene, they use the Chinese way and Western way to perform.

Having students in different majors, having different students every year. Each student has a world. Although I could not know or discover their hundreds of worlds, I could always find something out of my expectation which brings me surprise. Have a lot of personal time. Our time is very flexible. We are relatively free.

Story of Bad Moment

Meanwhile, she had bad moments as well.

I had a bad memory. A student sent me an email to tell me that he does not like my way of teaching. He thought reading and writing are important, but I only emphasised listening and speaking. I talked to him. I told him why I choose this method. I do not mean reading and writing are not important. Due to the time of classroom teaching, they can do it after class by autonomous learning. After that, he becomes very cooperative.

Story of What She Has Learned from Teaching

I learnt a lot. For example, if in my students' talking, they mention something I do not know. (laughing) After class, I will go home to check it. I will learn something new. I learn how to get along with my students. It is a kind of attitude. I think the current thought about the relationship between students and teachers is changing, that is, the students are gods, they are not respect their teachers is

misunderstanding. I think though the time is changing, not matter which time these students are belonging to, if you could let them know your hardworking and responsible, they will cooperate.

Story of Her Perception of the Importance of Being a Teacher

First, I think for English teachers, our students have expectation to us. For example, they hope your oral English is good. If not, you need a long time to establish the trust with your students. I think the professional knowledge and skills are very important for a teacher. Then, I think your attitude towards teaching is vital. If you can let them know your love, I think even such kind of thing is voiceless, it is perceivable. If your students can feel you teach them with your heart, they will treat you sincerely. The majority of students will do so. Especially the students in our university, they are very smart, they can judge whether he or she is a good and responsible teacher. We could not fool our students. A teacher's personality will impact on students. I hope I could play an active role in their character formation. They do not need to remember me, but my personality could bring them positive effect in their future work and life. I think that is great.

Story of Her Perception of Classroom Observation

Although she would like to observe other teachers' class, it is difficult for her to go. Now she could view them on-line, which is quite helpful for her.

En, now on-line. I learnt a lot. I am willing to observe other teachers' class. But it is hard for me to go. We always have the class at the same time. The majority of teachers do not like us to observe their class.

Story of Training

Teacher Hu was looking to improve all the time.

I teach public speaking course. I went to Nanjing to attend a workshop. Some teacher gave us model classes. I find it is helpful. I could find some commonalities and realize my problems. Through discussion, it is thought-provoking. When I came back, I will adjust my teaching. I am still trying.

Story of Her Perception of Reading Academic Articles

Teacher Hu did not like reading academic articles.

When I read journal articles, I find it is hard to arouse my interest. Yes. I find the result from analysis is far away from practice or it is hard to strike a responsive chord in my heart. I lose my interest. I seldom read it.

Story of Her Perception of Academic Activities

Teacher Hu did not have time to attend academic activities, such as conference, seminars and involve in any research project.

Not too much. My teaching burden is heavy. I almost have no time to do it. I do not have the interest.

Story of Dilemmas While Doing Research

Teacher Hu always wanted to be a teacher. But her future was full of uncertainty and pressure. She was facing a professional dilemma.

I am a little bit puzzled (laughing). If it is permitted, I hope I could teach. I am afraid one day, in the near future, they will fire me if I cannot fit their requirements any more.

As a university teacher, Teacher Hu was expected to become both a qualified researcher and excellent teacher. But she only liked teaching. She was facing the dilemma of how to change from a teacher to a researcher.

I am a little bit distressed. For me, I am keen on teaching, but I do not like to do research. I heard that abroad, a university teacher could either mainly focus on teaching or research. But here, what is discouraging is that as a university teacher, I am required to do teaching and research. I feel there is a dilemma. If I still want to insist on teaching, I should make a breakthrough in research. I am puzzled.

I almost have no time to do it. I do not have the interest.

To do something I do not want to. If I would like to continue or do what I like, I should do research. In order to get what I like, I should force myself to do what I do not like.

Appendix K Reading 2

Original data as presented but arranged in poem format (1: person)

Teacher Hu, a person

I, a person

I do not like only focusing on one thing;
I like things which could cover a wide range,
I do not like to be a specialist in one area to go deeper and narrower;
That's why I choose to be a College English teacher.

I am very clear that I am suitable to be a teacher.

I feel it is interesting that sometimes people say you look like a teacher;
I think it is a teacher's temperament;
I could not explain it very clearly;
I look like a teacher;
Teaching is what I love;
I do not think I have any reason not to be pleased;
I will tell them I am a teacher now.

Me, a person

For me, I do not like only focusing on one thing;
But for me, I like things which could cover a wide range;

Some of my friends always tell me that we can perceive you are a teacher;
Let me think about it;
People around me will say you are a teacher;
It makes me feel that I am a teacher;
If other people see me as a teacher;
There is no need for me to tell them my job

I and Me, a person

I show my students the cute me in my daily life in my class;

Original data as presented but arranged in poem format (2: university teacher)

Teacher Hu, a university teacher

I, a university teacher

I do not like to do research;
I feel there is a dilemma;
If I still want to insist on teaching, I should make a breakthrough in research;
I am puzzled;

I think if you can talk to them, especially if a university teacher would like to talk with students, they will appreciate it;
I almost have no time to do it;
I do not have the interest;
I still have a long, long way to go;
I should teach my students an attitude towards life;
I always tell myself I am a teacher, a university teacher;
I should go on learning and developing;
To do something I do not want to;
If I would like to continue or do what I like, I should do research;
In order to get what I like, I should force myself to do what I do not like;
I think I can manage my teaching well;
I am a little bit puzzled (laughing);
If it permits, I hope I could teach;
I am afraid one day in the near future, they fire me if I could not fit their requirement any more

You, in general, university teachers

I think if you can talk to them, especially if a university teacher would like to talk with students, they will appreciate it;

It is an invisible pressure for you.

We, university teachers

We are required to do teaching and research;
In our communication with students, we can help them know their drawbacks and make them changes;
We could not fool our students;
We are relatively free.

He or She, a university teacher

They can judge whether he or she is a good and responsible teacher

Original data as presented but arranged in poem format (3: pre-service part-time College English/ English teacher)

Teacher Hu, a pre-service part-time College English/ English teacher

I, a pre-service part-time College English/ English teacher

I feel they are very active;
I have taught English majors when I did part-time job while I was studying;
I have the same background with them;
If I teach English majors, the courses I teach should be very focused, such as vocabulary course or grammar course.

I am still a student work as a part-time teacher,
I think I am a teacher.

Me, a pre-service part-time College English/ English teacher

Compared with English majors, the depth of their thinking is more attractive to me;
It is hard for me to find out inspiration or creativity from them.

I and Me, a pre-service part-time College English/ English teacher

Those experiences make me know I like such kind of feeling when I am teaching in the classroom.

Original data as presented but arranged in poem format (4: language teacher)
Teacher Hu, a language teacher

I, a language teacher

I think for English teachers, our students have expectation to us;

I think though I am an English teacher;

I tell myself I am a language teacher;

I hope my students could use language to express themselves freely and confidently;

I am an English teacher;

I hope my students' English learning could help them a lot in their future's work and study.

Original data as presented but arranged in poem format (5: teacher)

Teacher Hu, a teacher

I, a teacher

I think the current thought about the relationship between students and teachers is changing, that is, the students are gods, they do not respect their teachers is misunderstanding;

I think though the time is changing;

If a teacher lost the treasure of students, I feel he or she will lose his or her value.

I think the professional knowledge and skills are very important for a teacher;

I think your attitude towards teaching is vital;

I think even such kind of thing is voiceless, it is perceivable.

I would like to be a very simple teacher;

I teach in the class;

I witness the students' progress;

Once I stand in the platform I feel I am a teacher;

I have my duties and responsibilities; I unconsciously bring something from my class into my life.

I am a teacher,

I should act as an example for others.

I hope my students think I am a cute teacher;

My colleagues think I am a responsible teacher;

I totally agree with it;

I feel my responsibilities;

I am proud of I am an influential person;

What I say and what I do could influence at least several hundred students every year;

I have the power of discourse to affect them.

If I could not gain happiness from teaching,

I think it is a miserable; I hope I could also realise my value;

I hope to gain the attention and recognition from both students and society;

Although I could not know or discover their hundreds of worlds,

I and Me, a teacher

I think it is recognition to me.

I could always find something out of my expectation which brings me surprise.

You, in general, a teacher

If you could let them know you are hardworking and responsible, they will cooperate;

If you can let them know your love, I think even such kind of thing is voiceless, it is perceivable;
If your students can feel you teach them with your heart, they will treat you sincerely.

Original data as presented but arranged in poem format (6: communicative language teaching teacher)

Teacher Hu, a communicative language teacher

I, a communicative language teacher

I required students' participation;

I hold a belief, that is students' involving;

I can design some pertinent activities which enable more students' participation;

I use the same way of teaching;

I formed my belief when I was a student;

I insist on trying it in my class;

I think there is nothing wrong with this belief.

**Original data as presented but arranged in poem format (7: family member)
Teacher Hu, a family member**

Me, a family member

My family give me consolation and encouragement;

I and they, family member

When they have some problems, I will talk to them;

They will feel I am a teacher;

I am good at persuading them.

Me and they, family member

They always tell me it is OK.

Original data as presented but arranged in poem format (8: student)
Teacher Hu, a student

I, a student

I choose a normal university as an English major student.

I mastered some basic skills to be a teacher.

I strengthen my willingness to be a teacher;
I continue to do my master degree here;
I obtained professional knowledge and skills;
I did a lot of teaching practicum.

The problems I encountered when I was a freshman.

I hope I could participate in the class, not a teacher dominates the class, which is very boring.

Me, a student

All these are the prerequisite to let me become a College English teacher.

We, students

We have graduated for several years; we still keep in touch with her.

Original data as presented but arranged in poem format (9: College English teacher)

Teacher Hu, a College English teacher

I, a College English teacher

I taught in some schools, include here;
I did a lot of teaching practicum before;
I think my competence and skill will enable me to become an excellent College English teacher.

I am satisfied with myself and my job;
I have being a College English teacher for three years;
I am not willing to change my job.

I feel depressed;
When I could not find out my value, I feel hesitated.

I could remember very clearly about the feeling;
I am very excited;
I smile shyly;
They are the first batch of students I teach, which gives me deepest impression;
I can still remember everyone's name.

Although they know I am very young;
I think I am more mature than other teachers of the same age;
I think I should capture them by fluent English expressions;
I should let them trust me though I am young;
I finished my self-introduction and course induction, from their face I know their admire (laughing);
I set up my position in their heart.

I remembered that I had a class which is not very cooperative;
I am very worried about it;
I send a questionnaire to them;
I was astonished by the feedbacks;
I could understand them much better.

I try to control my mood in class;
I will laugh;
I feel worried and angry;
I feel very depressing;
I am thinking whether they do not like me;
When I know it is because they had difficulties in how to use English to express, not the reasons I am guessing;
I will encourage them to participate in class;
I never call student's name to let this student give his or her opinion; I will give them a lot of chances to speak.

I use empathy;
I recall the problems;
I bring my own feelings into my teaching;
I share my learning experiences;
I hope it will give them some enlightenment.

I learnt from other teachers' experience;
I divide my students into several groups;
I asked group members to sit together;
I could know them easily and it is convenient for me to know their attendances;
I choose a monitor;
I can communicate with them separately;
I could establish a knit relationship with my students;
I use the same way;
I also use various ways to communicate with my students.

I notice that this year's students are different from my former students in 2007;
How could I survive?
I am wondering what I could teach you, my students.

I compared the PowerPoint Slides, I use now with the one I used three years ago;
I realised that I made a lot of changes;
I used muddleheaded experience;
I take teaching for granted;
I am quite pleased with my teaching achievement.

I teach them a kind of attitude towards life;
I am touched.

I haven't received it directly from students as before;
I do not require all of them could use English fluently and confidently, but I hope all of them could progress a little and make some changes;
When I received students' emails,
I will find a time to talk to them face to face;
I could know who could not involve in the class;
I will find a time to talk with them after class;
I find it is a very effective way;

I feel upset.
I could figure them out by my own or I can discuss them with my close colleagues.

When I read journal articles,
I find it is hard to arouse my interest;
I find the result from analysis is far away from practice or it is hard to strike a responsive chord in my heart;
I lose my interest;
I seldom read it.

I learnt a lot;
I am willing to observe other teachers' class;
I teach public speaking course;
I went to Nanjing to attend a workshop;
I find it is helpful;
I could find some commonalities and realise my problems;
When I came back, I will adjust my teaching;
I am still trying.

I gain students' support;
I remembered that I had a class;
I was not their teacher when they were freshmen;
When I took charge of this class,
I experienced a tough time;
I should try to change their old habit;
I put all my energy into it; I was touched and burst into tears;
I read that letter several time;

I had a bad memory;
I only emphasised listening and speaking;
I talked to him;
I told him why I choose this method;
I do not mean reading and writing are not important; I always feel speechless;
I am laughing until I burst into tears;
I am laughing it is not because their performance is funny, it is because I am proud of them, they are amazing;
I tell them I do not know what I should say.

If in my students' talking, they mention something I do not know (laughing);
I will go home to check it;
I will learn something new.

I learn how to get along with my students;
I am calm now;
I had some experience;
I am more mature;
I can deal with my class more rational, not sentimental as before.

I am doubt about my value;
I do not know where my sense of worth is;
I am thinking whether to be a secondary school teacher is more worthwhile.

I think yes;
I am a charming teacher;
I hope I could play an active role in their character formation;
I think that is great;
I can plug myself into teaching, gain joy from it and let my students learn a lot.

If I could not think about some headache problems, that is great;
I show my students the cute me in my daily in my class.

Me, a College English teacher

But this class does not cooperate with me;
They tell me that actually they are very glad to participate and cooperate.
It is convenient for me to know their attendancy;
The monitor will help me a lot;
They are afraid to tell me directly, the monitor helps me to collect their ideas and
feedbacks;

They do not like to ask me;

If one day they do not need me anymore,

They do not like to communicate with me;
They seldom send me emails;

Her approval is a great encouragement for me;

But it is hard to for me to go;

At the end of the term, they send me an email, everyone write me a sentence;
A student sent me an email to tell me that he does not like my way of teaching;
Sometimes under my supervision and sometimes it is students' own creativity
making me laughing in the class;
It is hard for me to find out the appropriate words;
The dialogue through their performing is fantastic, which makes me astonished and
speechless;

Not matter how much they like me at that time;
They seldom remember me;
They seldom say hello to me.

They like me;
Sometimes they send me text message;
They send me email to tell me my classes give them a good memory.

They do not need to remember me.

I and me, a College English teacher

For me, I am keen of teaching;

When I see the students almost the same age as me;
They are the first batch of students I teach, which gives me deepest impression;
I should let them trust me though I am young.

I had different understanding about cooperation between me and my students;
I am thinking whether they do not like me.

They tell me I teach them a kind of attitude towards life;
I know they could learn something from me;

I think they accept me;

I do not know how to express my feeling, it is hard for me to find out the appropriate words;

When I walk on campus, we come across, they seldom say hello to me;

I think they like me.

We/us, College English teachers

We always have the class at the same time;
The majority of teachers do not like us to observe theirs.

Some teacher gave us model classes.

Appendix L An Example of Coding from Teacher Hu's Transcript

The first class is the students from school of business. Although they know I am very young, I did a lot of teaching practice before. It is not the first day I stand in the platform. I think I am more mature than other teachers of the same age. I think I should capture them by fluent English expressions, I should let them trust me though I am young. Under their critical eyes, I finished my self-introduction and course induction, from their face I know their admire. (laughing) Later on, I set up my position in their heart, they are becoming more and more cooperative.



Comment [ML1]: How they might see her as a teacher

Comment [ML2]: Insight into what the student thinks is needed in terms of being the teacher

Comment [ML3]: Possible ways she wants to be seen by the students

Comment [ML4]: How they might see her as a teacher

Comment [ML5]: How they might see her as a teacher

Comment [ML6]: Possible ways she wants to be seen by students

Comment [ML7]: Possible ways she wants to be seen by the students

Relationship with Students	How they might see her as a teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although they know I am very young • though I am young • Under their critical eyes , I finished my self-introduction and course induction
	Insight into what the student thinks is needed in terms of being the teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think I should capture them by fluent English expressions.
	Possible ways the teacher wants to be seen by the students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I should let them trust me • from their face I know their admire • I set up my position in their heart