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## **Becoming a 'good' Chinese language teacher**

*Professional identity, learning experience and teaching culture*

Zhang, Chun

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# **BECOMING A 'GOOD' CHINESE LANGUAGE TEACHER**

PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY, LEARNING EXPERIENCE  
AND TEACHING CULTURE

BY  
**CHÚN ZHĀNG**

DISSERTATION SUBMITTED 2016



**AALBORG UNIVERSITY**  
DENMARK



**BECOMING A 'GOOD' CHINESE  
LANGUAGE TEACHER:  
PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY, LEARNING  
EXPERIENCE AND TEACHING  
CULTURE**

by

Chún Zhāng



**AALBORG UNIVERSITY**  
DENMARK

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## CV

Chún Zhāng obtained her Bachelor of Arts from East China Normal University, in Shanghai, China in 1994, and a Master degree in IT, Language and Learning from Aarhus University, Denmark in 2004. Chún is a full-time teaching associate professor in China studies, Department of Culture and Society, Aarhus University, Denmark, and has been a Ph.D. student (part-time) in the Department of Learning and Philosophy, Aalborg University since 2011. Chún specialized in teaching Chinese as a foreign language (TCFL) and Chinese teacher education. She has a track record in research into bilingualism and bilingual education. Chún is a member of several research groups, including IC Research Group founded at Department of Learning and Philosophy, Aalborg University, and the member of the Nordic research consortium in Chinese studies sponsored by Erasmus Plus, aiming for initialing teacher development programs to TCFL teachers within Nordic Universities.





# ENGLISH SUMMARY

Recent studies on CFL (Chinese as foreign language) teacher identity have increasingly been paying attention to teachers' beliefs, learning experience, and educational context. Whilst insightful, these studies have not addressed the ways CFL teachers relate their beliefs, experiences and context in the process of professional identity construction. This Ph.D. project addresses this research gap by aiming to understand what teachers believe who they are, what they think who the others are, and how they relate the understanding to their professional identities. The project is carried out within the Danish higher educational context. Ten CFL teachers from three Danish universities participated in the project. The dissertation has been divided into nine chapters. The 1<sup>st</sup> chapter is an introduction that presents an overall picture of the study. The 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter is about literature review. I provided a historical background about two major research areas. Then I reviewed empirical studies in the domain of CFL teacher identity research. After reviewing these studies, I raised two major concerns. In order to address these concerns in a theoretically sound manner, in the 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter, a proposed research model was proposed, which took social identity theory (Wenger 1998) and domain-related CFL research into consideration. Chapter 4 is about methodology. A qualitative research consisting of semi-structured interviews, classroom observation and researcher's journal is adopted. Four studies reported in Chapter 5, 6, 7 and 8 are the most significant empirical studies aiming to address the research questions. They are based on the proposed research model. The 1<sup>st</sup> study reported in Chapter 5 aims to understand the factors influencing the professional identity construction of three nonnative-speaker teachers of Chinese. The study reveals that teachers' present teaching is closely influenced by teachers' prior CFL learning experience at Chinese university, and the ability of making sense of their experience determines the degree each nonnative-speaker teacher of Chinese modify the sense of identification. The second study, reported in Chapter 6 aims to understand the identity construction of two new nonnative-speaker teachers of Chinese. A narrative

approach is adopted. The study results show the relationship between prior domain-related (i.e., CFL learning) experience, their beliefs of being teachers, and their self-identification. The 3<sup>rd</sup> study, reported in Chapter 7, aims to understand the factors influencing the identity construction of three native-speaker teachers of Chinese teaching Chinese to Danish university students. The study revealed two interesting results. One result was that the ability of relating to student response from the perspective of the other cultures indicates a strong willingness of the native CFL teachers to find opportunities to engage with otherness. The other result was that the Chinese teachers seek the possibilities to establish a “third space”, upon which they construct their meaning of becoming ‘good’ teachers. The 4<sup>th</sup> study, reported in Chapter 8, aims to better understand the factors influencing the identity construction of three new native-speaker teachers of Chinese. The results revealed that the new teachers experienced tensions and conflicts while performing their preferred roles of teachers. These tensions and conflicts attributed to their negotiation between the implication of “Chinese-styled” teacher and “Danish-styled” teacher. Finally, in Chapter 9, the main research results are summarized, and major findings are discussed in terms of (1) interaction between teachers’ domain-related prior experience and teachers’ beliefs, (2) interplay between students’ responses and teachers’ beliefs, and (3) interrelation between teacher’s identity and teaching cultures. The conclusions, educational implications for CFL teacher education and development as well as some questions for further research are also developed and discussed in the final chapter.

# DANSK RESUME

De seneste studier inden for området CFL (Chinese as Foreign Language) af læreres faglige identitet har i stadig højere grad været rettet mod lærernes holdning, deres egen erfaring med at lære og den uddannelsesmæssige kontekst. Trods indsigtfulde, har disse studier ikke undersøgt hvordan CFL-lærernes holdning, erfaringer og kontekst indgår som led i opbygningen af lærerens professionelle identitet. Denne Ph.D.-opgave bidrager med forskning på dette område med det mål at forstå CFL-læreres undervisning og erfaring med læring i en dansk kontekst. Med fokus på lærernes professionelle identitet undersøger jeg sammenhængen mellem læreres tro på at blive en 'god' lærer, deres forståelse af de danske studerende og deres overvejelser i forhold til at undervise studerende ved danske universiteter i kinesisk som fremmedsprog (CFL). Ti CFL-lærere fra tre danske universiteter deltog i undersøgelsen. Afhandlingen er inddelt i ni kapitler. Første kapitel er en introduktion til studiet som helhed. Andet kapitel er en gennemgang af litteratur på området, specielt en gennemgang af den historiske baggrund for to større forskningsområder. Herefter gennemgår jeg empiriske undersøgelser inden for området CFL-læreres læreridentitet. På denne baggrund rejser jeg to problemstillinger. For på teoretisk holdbar vis at forholde mig til disse problemstillinger, foreslår jeg i tredje kapitel en forskningsmodel som tager social identitetsteori (Wenger 1998) og domæne-relateret CFL-forskning i betragtning. Metodologien gennemgås i fjerde kapitel. En kvalitativ undersøgelse bestående af semi-strukturerede interviews, klasserumsobservation og forskernotater foreslås. De fire undersøgelser fremlagt i kapitlerne 5, 6, 7 og 8 bygger på den foreslåede model og er de mest signifikante empiriske i forhold til at besvare problemstillingen. Den første undersøgelse, som beskrives i kapitel 5, har som mål at forstå de faktorer der har indflydelse på opbygningen af identitet hos tre ikke-kinesiske kinesisklærere. Undersøgelsen viser at lærernes undervisning i dag i høj grad er påvirket af erfaringerne fra deres tid som CFL-studerende ved kinesiske universiteter. Evnen til at gøre brug af deres erfaring er afgørende for i hvilken grad den enkelte ikke-

kinesiske kinesisklærer modererer sin opfattelse af identifikation. Den anden undersøgelse, beskrevet i kapitel 6, sigter mod en forståelse af opbygningen af identitet hos to nye ikke-kinesiske kinesisklærere. Her anvendes en narrativ tilgang. Undersøgelsens resultater viser sammenhængen mellem tidligere domæne-relateret erfaring (i indlæring af fremmedsprog) og lærernes opfattelse og identifikation af sig selv som lærere. Den tredje undersøgelse, beskrevet i kapitel 7, sigter mod en forståelse af de faktorer der har betydning for opbygningen af identitet hos tre kinesiske kinesisklærere som underviser danske universitetsstuderende i kinesisk. Undersøgelsen afslører to interessante resultater. Det ene at evnen til at relatere studenteres respons ud fra den anden kulturs perspektiv er tegn på en stærk vilje fra den kinesiske CFL-lærers side til at finde lejlighed til at forholde sig til forskellighed. Det andet at de kinesiske lærere søger mulighed for at etablere et 'tredje rum', hvor de finder frem til deres ide om at det at være en god lærer. Den fjerde undersøgelse, beskrevet i kapitel 8, sigter mod en bedre forståelse af de faktorer som har indflydelse på opbygningen af identitet hos tre nye kinesiske kinesisklærere. Resultaterne viser at de nye lærere oplevede spændinger og konflikter, når de optrådte i deres egen foretrukne lærerrolle. Disse spændinger og konflikter bidrog til deres forhandling mellem hvad det vil sige at være lærer på 'kinesisk' måde og på 'dansk' måde. Til sidst, i kapitel 9, opsummeres undersøgelsens forskningsresultater, og de vigtigste resultater diskuteres i forhold til (1) interaktionen mellem læreres domæne-relaterede tidligere erfaring og deres holdning, (2) samspillet mellem studenternes svar og lærernes opfattelse, og (3) forholdet mellem læreridentitet og undervisningskultur. Konklusioner og undervisningsmæssige implikationer for CFL-læreres uddannelse og udvikling samt spørgsmål til videre forskning på området udfoldes og diskuteres ligeledes i det afsluttende kapitel.

# MANDAROTY PAGE

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This thesis has been submitted for assessment in particle fulfillment of the PhD degree. The thesis is based on the submitted or published scientific papers that are listed above. Parts of the papers are used directly or indirectly in the extended summary of the thesis. As part of the assessment, co-author statements have been

made available to the assessment committee and are also available at the Faculty. The thesis is not in its present form acceptable for open publication but only in limited and closed circulation as copyright may not be ensured.

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Chún Zhāng, 12th of May 2016

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# CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

With an increased demand for teaching and learning Chinese as a foreign language (henceforth: CFL) all over the world, there is a pressing need to understand the teachers who teach CFL to foreign students outside China. This PhD dissertation aims to discover what the native-speaker teachers of Chinese and nonnative-speaker teachers of Chinese experienced while teaching CFL at Danish universities. What are their beliefs in becoming ‘good’ teachers? What are their views on CFL teaching experience at Danish universities? And what are their reflections on their teaching and learning experience? Focusing on teachers’ professional identities<sup>1</sup>, I explore the relationship between teachers’ beliefs, experience and their reflections, and that of these constructs to what teachers construct their professional identities in a Danish higher educational context.

## 1.1. MOTIVATION

The motivation for investigating teacher identity emerged from my own personal experience. I am a native speaker of Chinese and have taught Chinese to university students in China and in Denmark for many years. My personal understanding of teaching CFL (henceforth: TCFL) practices and teaching environments naturally gave me a rich source of information to reflect upon, resulting in the “ethnographical approach” adopted in this article. I was born in Shanghai, China. I finished elementary, secondary and tertiary education in Shanghai. Before I left Shanghai, I had been working as an English teacher teaching English to Chinese students at a university in Shanghai. It never occurred to me that identity would become an issue for me. I had certain kinds of roles<sup>2</sup> /identities in society, at work and at home. My students never challenged my status as a teacher who had authority and power over them. My visit to Denmark as a Chinese language instructor in 2000 was a huge revelation to me in that I experienced the students, who refused to do their assignments, who misbehaved in the class, and who confronted with the teachers. Challenged by them, I started to doubt my identity as a teacher. Issues revolving around my background, the way of teaching, and my views of being teacher, among others, formed invisible forces pushing me towards the question about what kind of teacher I can become. In addition, my cross-cultural and inter-cultural experiences as a teacher, as a native-speaker teacher of Chinese at a Danish university represent a

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<sup>1</sup> The concept of teacher’s identity will be defined in the subsequent chapters. However, in this chapter, the terms ‘professional identity’, ‘teacher identity’ and ‘identity’ will be used interchangeably.

<sup>2</sup> In this study, I use ‘identity’ rather than ‘role’ because according to Britzman (1992, p.19), “roles speak to function (e.g. teaching skills) whereas identity voices investments and commitments”.

broad array of personal and professional identities and have thus contributed to developing my academic interest in exploring the issue of teacher identity. I had some colleagues who taught Chinese language. We conversed with each other on regular basis. Although the majority of this conversation was informal, what I heard surprised me. I remember clearly one local nonnative-speaker teacher of Chinese<sup>3</sup>, who had taught Chinese for many years, saying over a cup of tea in a calm tone, “*we are teacher slaves*”. Another native-speaker teacher of Chinese<sup>4</sup> said, “*We are no better than the servants*” (我们就是服务员 Wǒmen jiùshì fúwùyuán). Although I too had experienced this kind of frustration, I did not expect the other teachers to have the similar experiences. How I view myself as teacher may only matter to me; but how the other teachers view themselves is important for me from a research point of view.

## 1.2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Dervin (2015) has claimed that “*research on Chinese students abroad (be they exchange or degree students) is plentiful... but this is not the case with Chinese teachers and academic staff abroad*” (p.5). Like students studying abroad, CFL teachers’ experiences differ enormously. Some teachers were born in China and have studied and trained in TCFL in China and/or outside China; while others were non-Chinese and have studied Chinese and trained in TCFL within and outside China. In the field of TCFL, although the Chinese National Office for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language (abbreviated to *Hanban*) sends thousands of CFL teachers abroad in order to “*give a boost to the teaching of Chinese abroad*” (Dervin, 2015, p.5), the demand for qualified CFL teachers is big and their supply is unfortunately small. Orton (2011) called for training more local non-native Chinese teachers because she believed that “*second language learner teachers have expertise in their students’ own language, knowledge of the learning path to be taken, and competence in the interactions*” (p. 161). However, understanding teachers’ professional identity is not equally important for everyone, nor is it important at every time and at every place. So why is identity important in my study? When and where do CFL teachers’ identities become an issue? And why is my study on CFL teachers worthy of research?

- *Why is identity important in my study?*

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<sup>3</sup> In this study, local non-native speaker teachers of Chinese have been referred as nonnative CFL teachers in the remaining thesis.

<sup>4</sup> In this study, native-speaker teachers of Chinese refer to the teachers who were born in China, and finished their primary, secondary and tertiary education within China. More details can be found in Chapter 4.

The answer to the first question can be found in the theory of social identity. Social identity theory claimed the concept of identity based on the social categories created by society (nationality, race, gender, class etc.) that are relational in power and status (Tajfel, 1978). Individuals derive identity or understanding of self, “*in great part from the social categories to which they belong*” (Abrams & Hogg, 1998, p.19). Phinney (1990) asserted that “*individuals need a firm sense of group identification in order to maintain a sense of well-being... simply being a member of a group provides individuals with a sense of belonging that contributes to a positive self-concept*” (p.501). These views of identity define people in social categories to meet the basic human need for a sense of belonging: failure to be included in a group or to remain in a group leads to negative self-perceptions. Thus, finding a way to construct or reconstruct a positive identity is important to the well-being of the individual.

- *When and where do CFL teachers’ identities become an issue?*

In a dynamic society where human mobility results in the flow of cultures, there is a power relation and status inequality (Lo Bianco, 2011, p.3). Whenever and wherever there are cultural encounters, there is also an identity issue. While a great deal of CFL teachers (both native and nonnative-speaker teachers of Chinese) teach CFL in cross-cultural and intercultural contexts (see e.g., Tsung & Cruickshank, 2011; Wang et al., 2013), problems arise with regard to teachers’ identities and their well-being, in other words, problems related to how they understand themselves as teachers, how they understand their students, and how they relate their understanding with teaching experiences in a non-Chinese context are all connected.

- *Why is my study worthy of research?*

One fundamental question this study needs to address clearly is “why is it important?” My justification of this question lies in three intersecting factors. (1) there are an abundant theoretical and methodology literature on foreign language teachers’ identities, and the relationship between teachers’ beliefs, views and their professional identities (see Chapter 2: Literature review); (2) the status of teachers’ professional identities as a fundamental aspect of language teacher well-being and development (see e.g., studies by Clarke, 2008; Morgan, 2004); and (3) there is the general absence of research which has examined how foreign language teachers view, think, and believe in being teachers; how they understand others, and how these relate to what they do; in other words, how the relationship relate to their understanding of being and becoming teachers that affect the construction of their professional identities.

### **1.3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

This Ph.D. project is designed for four empirical studies. Four manuscripts are included in this dissertation, among which three manuscripts have been published

and one is under peer review. Each manuscript has one or two research question(s). The entire dissertation is guided by three major research questions.

- (1) What factors are associated with influencing CFL teachers' beliefs in becoming 'good' teachers at Danish universities?
- (2) What is the relationship between CFL teachers' beliefs and their understanding of the others? How does this relationship relate to their professional identities?
- (3) Do the teaching cultures play a role in CFL teachers' professional identity construction? If yes, in what ways?

## 1.4. DISSERTATION STRUCTURE

**Chapter 1** provides a general introduction to this Ph.D. dissertation. It started with elucidating the motivation of conducting the study. Then I looked at the problem statement and described briefly the study purpose. After doing that, I raised three research questions. **Chapter 2** is about literature review. I provided a historical background about two major research areas, i.e., foreign language teacher cognition research and foreign language teacher identity research. Then I reviewed empirical studies in the domain of CFL teacher identity research. After reviewing these studies, I raised two major concerns. One is the lack of theoretical framework in researching CFL teachers, who work outside China. The other is the tendency to emphasize on the understanding and reflection from native-speaker teachers of Chinese without seriously considering nonnative teachers of Chinese teaching in the "home country". In order to address these concerns in a theoretically sound manner, in **Chapter 3**, a proposed research model was proposed, which integrated social identity theory and domain-related CFL research into consideration. **Chapter 4** is about methodology. I describe how the data are collected, who the participants are, and what methods I used to validate current study. Four studies reported in Chapter 5, 6, 7 and 8 are the most significant empirical studies aiming to address the research questions. The first study reported in **Chapter 5** aimed to understand the factors influencing the professional identity construction of three nonnative-speaker teachers of Chinese (i.e., three Danes teaching CFL within their home country). It examined the relationship between CFL learning experience in China, CFL teaching experience in Denmark, reflection on the 'Chinese' pedagogy and self-position in relation to teaching. This study used Wenger's (1998) definition of identity, with the focus on "*identity is related to practice, and construction of one's identity is related to identification and meaning negotiation*" (p.149). The results revealed that their current TCFL is closely influenced by their prior CFL learning experience at Chinese university, and the ability of making sense of their experience determines the degree each nonnative-speaker teacher of Chinese modify the sense of identification. The second study, reported in **Chapter 6**, aimed to understand the

identity construction of two new<sup>5</sup> nonnative-speaker teachers of Chinese. I adopted a narrative approach to describe an account of two Danish CFL teachers' experiences of learning and teaching both within their home country (i.e., Denmark) and within China. The results indicated the significant impact of their prior TCFL experience on their current beliefs on being a teacher. The results also showed the experiences gained from learning within China enriched their views and beliefs on being CFL teachers in that they tend to “*suspend their own beliefs, and analyze them from the viewpoint of the others*” (Forsman, 2005, p.4). These results highlighted the relationship between prior domain-related (i.e., CFL learning) experience, their beliefs of being teachers, and their self-identification. In order to discover the relationship between above-mentioned factors, the next two studies, reported in Chapter 7 and Chapter 8, examined the identity construction of six native-speaker teachers of Chinese teaching in the host country (i.e., it refers to three universities in Denmark). The 3<sup>rd</sup> study, reported in **Chapter 7**, aimed to understand the factors influencing the identity construction of three native-speaker teachers of Chinese teaching Chinese at the universities in Denmark. It examined the relationship between the identity constructions, their prior domain-related experience, and the beliefs on being ‘good’ teachers. In this study, I used Danielewicz (2001) concept on identity that claimed “*a close relationship between teachers’ beliefs and teachers’ understanding of other*” (p.10). The study revealed two interesting results. One result was that the ability of relating to student response from the perspective of the other cultures indicates a strong willingness of the native CFL teachers to find opportunities to engage with otherness. The other result was that the Chinese teachers seek the possibilities to establish a “third space”, upon which they construct their meaning of becoming ‘good’ teachers. The 4<sup>th</sup> study, reported in **Chapter 8**, aimed to better understand the factors influencing the identity construction of three new native-speaker teachers of Chinese. With similar methodology balanced, this study again use narrative approach (which is also used in the 2<sup>nd</sup> study) to examine the relationship between teacher’s prior learning experience, context change and their beliefs on being teachers. The results revealed that the new native CFL teachers experienced tensions and conflicts while performing their preferred roles of teachers. These tensions and conflicts attributed to their negotiation between the implication of “Chinese-styled” teacher and “Danish-styled” teacher. The results further indicated that the meaning of being a CFL teacher entailed enacting a series of preferred roles, but the beliefs in becoming a good teacher, however, entailed a complicated process of negotiation with the students, teachers and the teaching cultures. Finally, in **Chapter 9**, the main research results are summarized, and major findings are discussed in terms of (1) interaction between teachers’ domain-related prior experiences and teachers’ beliefs, (2) interplay between students’ responses and teachers’ beliefs, and (3) interrelation between teacher’s professional identity

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<sup>5</sup> I use ‘new teacher’ to refer to teachers who just finished their teaching practicum and began the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> year of teaching. But I also use ‘beginning teacher’ in some chapters. I use these two terms interchangeably in the remaining dissertation.

and teaching cultures. The conclusions, educational implications for CFL teacher education and development as well as some questions for further research are also developed and discussed in the final chapter.

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# CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2.1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

### 2.1.1. THE BRIEF OVERVIEW OF LANGUAGE TEACHER IDENTITY RESEARCH

Language teacher identity research<sup>6</sup> has, perhaps, not a long history. The research interest in this study emerged in the late 1990s (see e.g., Duff & Uchida, 1997). However, it is not until the early 2000s that the study of language teacher identity was established as one of the important areas of researching study (see e.g., Clarke, 2008; Danielewicz, 2001; Morgan, 2004; Pavlenko, 2003; Varghese, et.al. 2005). Morgan's study (2004) can be regarded as a key early publication, which highlighted the importance of understanding crucial relationship between language teachers' identities and teachers' pedagogy. Morgan's (2004, p.183) claim "*language teacher's identity is kind of pedagogy*" signaled the beginning of the research of the field of language teacher identity. One year later, Varghese, Morgan, Johnston and Johnson's study (Varghese et.al. 2005), a journal article of language teacher identity brought the term "teacher identity" to the broader attention of language teachers and language teacher researchers. Their research called for "*multiple perspectives on understanding and researching language teacher identity*", through which they outlined three major themes, that is, "*language teacher identity as multiple, in conflict, identity as related to social, cultural and political context*" (p.35). This emphasis on multiple and conflicting identities was essentially important – it showed what teacher identity research embraced. During the past one decade, there was a steady increase in the volume of research journals and publication exploring different aspects of what language teachers view, what they experience, and what the others view the teachers, and of the relationships of these constructs to what language teacher do in the cross-cultural contexts (see e.g., Clarke, 2008; Moloney, 2013).

A wide range of concepts and terminology characterizes language teacher identity research. One concept in this kind of research that has provided some definitional challenges is "teacher cognition" (see e.g., Borg, 2006). Teacher cognition research is concerned with understanding "*what teachers think, know and believe*" (Borg, S., & Burns, A., 2008, p.457). Its primary concern, therefore, lies with the "*unobservable dimension of teaching – teachers' mental lives*" (see Borg, 2006).

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<sup>6</sup> I will use language teacher identity to refer to foreign language teacher identity.

Thus, the concept “teacher cognition” embrace teachers’ beliefs, knowledge, thinking, attitudes and some unobservable constructs.

Though there were overlapping constructs between teacher identity research and teacher cognition research, teacher identity research was distinct from what “teacher cognition” defines. Teacher identity research is not only concerned with understanding what teachers know, believe and understand who they are, but also with what teachers think who the others are (Danielewicz, 2001, p.11). In other words, teacher identity research is about the reciprocal relation between teachers’ understanding of themselves and their understanding of others. This kind of researches highlight the complexity between teachers, the others, and the context; researchers thus became more aware of the fact that in understanding what the others view/do, and how these relate to what teachers view/do played an important role of their professional identity construction.

### **2.1.2. THE ORIGINS AND GROWTH OF LANGUAGE TEACHER IDENTITY RESEARCH**

As a tradition of language teacher research, the study of language teacher identity was influenced by teacher cognition research. Early impetus for language teacher identity research came from teacher cognition research. Teacher cognition research emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s. At that time, teacher cognition research language teaching was conceptualized largely behaviourally and language teachers were regarded as skilled workers or skilled technicians (Borg, 2009; Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008). These research saw language teachers were “*technicians who needed merely to apply the right methods and tools in order for the learners to acquire the target language*” (cited in Varghese et.al, 2005, p.24). At that time, the focus of early teacher cognition research was not on teachers as rational decision makers. The goal of the research was to generate formal knowledge that other teachers could apply (Borg, 2009). Teachers’ beliefs, thinking and views were not the key notions. In the 1980s, though, this view of teachers’ behavior and skills began to be questioned. In the 1990s, teachers’ knowledge, in particular, teachers’ pedagogical content knowledge (Schulman, 1986) emerged as a major focus for teacher education. Teacher’s pedagogical content knowledge refers to “*the manner when teachers perceive, interpret for teaching, and find different ways to represent and make subject knowledge accessible to learners*” (Shulman, 1987, p. 9). The abundant research interest generated plenty of researches and publication in the field of language teacher education in the 1990s (see, e.g., Grossman, 1995; Rickardson, 1996 cited in Borg, 2009). But most of these researches were either about the discipline specific work (e.g., math teachers, chemistry teachers), or about

the work in the field of L1 (it refers to first language, usually mother tongue) language teacher education, rather than foreign language education.

By the early 1990s, the heyday of language teacher cognition research gave way to other kinds of researches. The research interest in language teacher identity emerged in late 1990s. A key point in the emergence of teacher identity research came in 2000 when an influential article by Gee (2000) deliberated on the importance of this field of researching and Gee reported that

*“When any human being acts and interacts in a given context, others recognize that person as acting and interacting as a certain 'kind of person' or even as several different 'kinds' at once. The 'kind of person' one is recognized as 'being', at a given time and place, can change from moment to moment in the interaction, can change from context to context, and of course, can be ambiguous or unstable.”* (Gee, 2000, p.99).

This report argued that, in order to understand teachers, researchers needed to study the “others” through whom teachers made sense of themselves and their practice. Gee (2000) also emphasized the importance of “context”. This emphasis on “context” was an important departure from the views of teacher cognition research prevalent at that time; interest in the role of context in shaping what teachers think and do started to attract more and more attention, so teachers were no longer being regarded as solely a “mindful and rational decision-makers” (see Borg, 2009, p.2), but rather “teacher identity as a crucial component in determining how language teaching is played out” (Varghese et.al., 2005, p. 21). But interest in language teacher cognition has not faded away entirely. Teachers’ views and beliefs were still one of the key features in the teacher identity research (see e.g., Ilieva, 2010; Olsen, 2008).

## **2.2. OVERVIEW OF CFL TEACHER IDENTITY RESEARCH**

### **2.2.1. INTRODUCTION TO CFL TEACHER RESEARCH**

The history of TCFL as an established discipline was not long. Although TCFL in mainland China started in 1950s, it was not until the late 1970s that it was established as a discipline, with guiding principles and a serious research agenda (Lu & Zhao, 2011, p.117). At that time, CFL teachers were foreign language teachers from English department of universities. They received in general little serious and systematic training in how to teach Chinese language to foreign students. The teaching methods were mainly teacher-focused, i.e., teaching focused on the search

for effective teaching methods - “*grammar translation method emphasizing speaking, listening, writing and reading were widely applied*” (Li, P.Y., 1988). These methods would result in good and effective teaching. Thus, the goal of teaching was to apply these methods in the classroom; whereas teachers’ views and understanding of the methods was not a primary concern.

In the early 2000s, interest in the study of foreign language teacher identity also eventually impacted on the field of CFL teaching and CFL teacher identity research. During the past two decades, owing to the rapid boom in Chinese economy, the number of CFL learners increased throughout the world. As more and more native Chinese teachers or local teachers teach Chinese to non-Chinese-native students, concern over CFL teachers increased. CFL teacher research has been attracting more and more attention from researchers (see e.g., Wu, Hua, & Zhu, 2014; Wang & Du, 2014; Zhang, C., 2013; Zhang, H. S., 2006). Among the various perspectives, a newly emerged perspective is CFL teachers’ identities, caring more about teachers’ inner self as a person and as a teacher, as against teachers’ teaching methods and teacher training. Developments in teacher cognition research and teacher identity research influenced CFL teacher identity research. The questions being addressed thus were not simply “what do the teachers do?”, but rather “why do they do?” The notion of “applying” the right methods and tools in order for the learners to acquire the target language was regarded critically.

## 2.2.2. REVIEW ON CFL TEACHER IDENTITY RESEARCH

Prior to the current research, I conducted a literature review on CFL language teacher identity on the database of <http://library.au.dk> (a database of Aarhus University library, Denmark). Using the combination of the following keywords “Chinese as foreign language teachers” and “identity”, I searched online scholarly journals from 2000 up to 2015. This research resulted in the retrieval of 94 hits<sup>7</sup>. However, going through the abstracts of the first 50 published articles, unfortunately I found that the majority of the articles on teacher identity do not report studies about Chinese language teachers teaching Chinese as a degree subject, nor do they report studies about teachers’ views and beliefs of being or becoming teachers. It is difficult to find any kind of empirical studies about the CFL teachers’ views of being teachers and others’ (it refers to the local students) view of the teachers from these articles. This is probably because TCFL as a degree subject in the mainstream schools was relatively new; research of Chinese language teachers identity research in general still at its beginning stage, and there is no substantial systematic

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<sup>7</sup> The 94 hits were retrieved at 13:07 o’clock on February 12, 2015.

accumulation of empirical studies yet. Another thing is that some found articles are mainly about Chinese language teachers' choice of the teaching methods (see e.g., Linnell, 2001) or teachers' judgement of study curriculum, e.g., students' oral communication in CFL ( see e.g., Orton, 2014). In my opinion, the goal of these studies is to help us get a good understanding of teachers' decision and their assessment; this is what the language teacher cognition research is largely about. That is, the emphasis is not on teachers' views of themselves, neither on others' view of them from an identity point of view; but on what teachers believe, think and know.

In the next selection phase I went through the abstracts of the found articles, and selected those that met the following criteria: (1) the study has to be about language teachers teaching Chinese as a foreign language, or second language as a degree study at the mainstream schools; (2) the study reported in the paper has to be an empirical study about Chinese language teachers' beliefs, views and attitudes towards being teachers and teaching; (3) qualitative methods – interviews, observations have to be the approach used in the study methods. In the end, I found eight articles (Gao, 2012; Gao & Skum, 2010; Moloney, 2013; Orton, 2011; Wu. Hsu-Pai, Palmer, D.K., & Field, S. L., 2014; Wang & Kirkepatrick, 2012; Wang & Jensen, 2013; Zhang & Jensen, 2013) that roughly meet my criteria, which will be discussed below.

Firstly, studies on CFL teachers' identities have increasingly been paying attention to teachers' cultural backgrounds. Teachers with different backgrounds tend to have different views and beliefs in language teaching. In Gao's study (2012), she found Chinese language subject teachers tend to regard themselves as "*linguistic torchbearer and instructor of basic language knowledge*" and as "*cultural transmissioner and indoctrinator of Confucian values*" (p.93) while teaching Chinese to South Asian students in Hong Kong. This kind of view remains problematic in that these Chinese language teachers tend to "*stereotyped the students as failing to achieve academically and devalued South Asian culture and customs*" (Gao, 2012, p.96). Based on teachers' professional and cultural roles, Wang and Jensen (2013)'s study analyzed the cultural influence on native CFL teachers in teaching Chinese to Danish high school students. They concluded that "*teachers' beliefs are products of the collision between Chinese and Danish educational cultures*" (p.106). Their emphasis on the link between educational cultures and teachers' beliefs was essentially important from the views of teachers and teacher identity research; teacher identities were no longer being viewed solely in terms of national identity (in other words, whether they are Chinese or Danish) but rather in relation with teaching environment or contexts. When they encounter different educational cultures, teachers' beliefs and views change and develop.

Similar results are also found in the studies by Gao and Skum (2010) and Wu, Y, Hua, X., & Zhu, W. (Wu et.al., 2014). The results of these studies seem to suggest that in understanding CFL teachers' identity, teachers from different cultural backgrounds may have their distinctive views and beliefs, while teachers from similar cultural backgrounds may have similar views. Therefore, thorough researching and comparison of teachers with different cultural backgrounds are of great benefit for strengthening the relevance of understanding the language teachers; it is also relevant for targeting different teachers with different cultural backgrounds for professional development. It is also worth mentioning that the current found articles have an inclination for understanding Chinese language teachers teaching CFL in Australia, Britain and US – English-speaking countries. This is probably the history of TCFL in these countries are long; and research on the teacher education is relatively developed (Zhou, 2011). In my study, I am interested in investigating CFL teachers' identity constructed in a Nordic university, particularly university teachers in Denmark, when teaching Chinese as a degree study to Danish students of Chinese. I am also interested in comparing teachers with different cultural backgrounds constructed the identities, in other words, two groups of teachers, native Chinese and non-native (in this research they are Danish) teachers.

Secondly, studies on Chinese language teacher identity pay more attention to the role of teachers' past language learning background (Orton, 2011; Wang & Kirkepatrik, 2012). Teachers' learning and teaching experiences influence the ways how the teachers view themselves as teachers and view of teaching Chinese to non-native Chinese students. This brings problems not only in teachers' expectation, but also in selecting teaching materials and the manners of delivering the class. Orton's (2011) study found that native Chinese teachers have unrealistic expectation towards their English-speaking students when teaching tones, for instance. Orton (2011) found that "... *native Chinese teachers are mystified by students' difficulty hearing something so clear to their ears as the difference between mǎ and mà ... and these teachers of Chinese lack an empathetic capacity to perceive any problems the new grammar creates for a student from the perspective of the student*" (p.162). Wang and Kirkpatrick (2012) study of TCFL to international students showed that "*the majority of the CFL teachers felt that learning Chinese as a foreign language resembled learning one's mother tongue and thus the teaching method should be the same*" (p.7). It is worth mentioning that due to large linguistic distance between Chinese and English, native Chinese teachers' different, perhaps, unrealistic expectations of students do not serve students good in that little progress is made, the students probably feel too discouraged to continue learning the language.

Thirdly, recent studies also start to pay attention to understanding teachers by looking at their "*language learning trajectory*" (see e.g., Trend, 2013) instead of

merely focusing on teaching experiences. This shift of attention is particularly important when doing CFL teacher identity research from a cross-cultural levels and inter-cultural levels. Trend's (2013) study found that when they were in the initial year of teaching, the new teachers' tend to hold "rigid" views towards students and teaching. It is because these new teachers are young and their fresh memory of language learning influence their ways of teaching. While young and inexperienced, they are relatively weak in adapting the new teaching environment different from they were accustomed to. They are also relatively incompetent dealing with non-Chinese students different in understanding of the value of education. This is described in Orton's study (2011) calling for "*the scale of education may be needed to assist young China-educated language teachers to begin to cope in a system so foreign to that of their own education*" (p.163). Similar view is found in the study of Wu, H.P. et.al., (2011). According to Wu, H.P., et.al., (2011), when teaching Chinese at heritage school of U.S, native-speaker teachers had an inclination to believe that they had a responsibility to develop students' language proficiency; they viewed parents as the people most critical to maintaining students' lifelong learning. This view of teachers' role and parents' role in maintain students learning echoed a Chinese classic saying, "子不教父之过, 教不严师之惰 *zǐ bù jiào fù zhīguò, jiāo bù yán shī zhī duò*" (translation: to feed without teaching is the father's fault. To teach without severity is the teacher's laziness) (cited from The Three Character Classic<sup>8</sup>). Interestingly the Chinese traditional, in other words, Confucius influence on teachers' view of themselves and teaching was also quite common among native-speaker teachers of Chinese who involved in intercultural pedagogy in Australian schools (Moloney, 2013). Moloney's study (2013) indicated that "*teachers educated in China remain influenced by a traditional Chinese approach to language pedagogy, grounded in Confucian principles*" (p.215). In other words, native teachers were largely influenced by Confucius ways of perceiving teaching and coping with students. This influence on teachers is also found common among CFL teachers within China. Wang and Kirkepatrick (2012) revealed that albeit teaching Chinese in China, CFL teachers perceived that the TCFL job required them to show "*a strong national pride*" in front of foreigners by not missing or borrowing. According to Wang and Kirkepatrick (2012), the teachers involved "*concerned the building and maintenance of a Sinophone identity*" (p.15). By further comparing different cross-cultural influence, Wang and Kirkpatrick (2012)'s study revealed a

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<sup>8</sup> Three Character Classic, Trimetric Classic or 三字经, is one of the Chinese classic texts, It was probably written in the 13th century by Yinglin Wang (1223-1296) during the Song Dynasty. Wang's writing also largely influenced by Confucianism. Translated by Herbet A. Giles, Shanghai, 1910 (retrieved from <http://www.mandarinchineseschool.com/chinese-cultures/299-san-zi-jing-three-character-classic-full-edition-with-pinyin-and-english-translation>)

striking difference. The CFL teachers' representation of a Sinophone identity is to show national pride in front of the foreigners when teaching in the home country (i.e., China); whereas the identity construction of a native Chinese teacher outside China is to maintain an identity distinctive from that of the others (see Study Four reported in Chapter 8). In contrast, even for the experienced native Chinese teachers, the construction and maintenance of "Chinese" are necessary. The local non-native teachers (here it refers to non-ethnic Chinese), on the contrary, used "non-Chinese" more often in the contexts to distinguish themselves from the native Chinese teachers. This is found in the study of Zhang and Jensen (2013) describing the identity construction process of three Danish CFL teachers<sup>9</sup> (Zhang & Jensen, 2013). This result clearly shows that national identity is a powerful tool used by the teacher to distinguish oneself from the others, or identify oneself with the others, and native CFL teachers are often not fully aware of its national and cultural requirements when teaching outside China. Therefore, in order to obtain a comprehensive picture of these teachers, combining the study of native and non-native, experienced and inexperienced teachers is a good way to start.

### **2.2.3. REVIEW ON THE METHODOLOGY OF CFL TEACHER IDENTITY RESEARCH**

Despite the encouraging developments, previous CFL teacher identity research has been limited in many ways, and one of the primary concerns is about the research methodology. Studies were rarely conducted by employing a clear research method or by collecting empirical data generated from native- and non-native teachers, experienced and inexperienced teachers. The eight found studies reviewed basically reported empirical data, which provide me with some empirical evidence on the understanding of CFL teacher identity. Nevertheless, methodology remains an issue. Therefore, the next section reviews the methodology generally employed for conducting CFL teacher identity research.

In Moloney's (2013) study, the focus was to implement a one-day course in intercultural language pedagogy for 20 native-speaker teachers of Chinese. Even though pre- and post-course surveys and interviews were used to identify teacher needs, and to track teachers' changes in understanding, it is not clear what the data tell me mainly because the study duration was short, and there was no clear follow-up studies on how these teachers changed their understanding after the one-day course. In Gao & Skum's (Gao & Skum, 2010) study, they used open-ended interviews supplemented with classroom observation. Yet, each participant was

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<sup>9</sup> Please refer to Study 1 reported in Chapter 5 included in this dissertation.



interviewed only once, and there were only two teaching assistants involved in their study. In Wu, H-P., et.al., (2010)'s study, "a qualitative multiple case study" was used, and "*multiple data sources, i.e., semi-structured interviews, researcher's journals and teachers' artefacts*" were included (p.51). Even though cross case analysis was used to identify the similarities among the teachers' understanding of being teachers, it is not clear how they validate the data because all the collected interview data were in Chinese, and there was no clear explanation about the translation. As Chinese and English are linguistically distant from each other, poor and improper translations may lead to misunderstanding.

When conducting a teacher identity research, there are a number of approaches that have been widely used. One of the approaches is the narrative inquiry. Narrative inquiry is a research tool, widely used in investigating a teacher's life history or "life story" (see e.g., Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Goodson, 1992; Tsui, 2007). Their studies regarded teachers' professional identity as "*stories to live by*". According to them, these stories are not only shaped by their own practical knowledge, values, feelings and purposes, but are also shaped by traditions and contexts of the teacher works, "*the boarder social and cultural context within which the sotries are lived out*" (see also Bullough, 1997; cited in Beijaard et.al., 2004). In Wang & Kirkepatrick (2012)'s study, a narrative approach was employed and a detailed smapling method was elucidated. Although their study did show interesting results that CFL teachers identity was related to their national pride, and Sinophone identities, it was not so clear which theoretical concepts were refered to and it was not explained at length.

Reviewing CFL teacher identity research and research methodology, it is confirmed in this research context, many of the found articles have provided insight into the specific challenges faced by CFL teacher identity researchers; for example, perhaps the most researched area has been native Chinese teachers' views and beliefs in language instruction and teaching, and their past learning experience influencing their present teaching. These studies have definitely developed my understandings of the way teachers view themselves and of their teaching behavior. It is also worth mentioning that cross-cultural and intercultural play an important role on teachers' beliefs, their views and their behavior. Despite the methodological challenges, recent study by Moloney (2013) has been particularly important in revealing the Confucian influence on the native-speaker teachers of Chinese to develop an intercultural competency. Local non-native CFL teacher (see e.g., Zhang & Jensen 2013) has also been the focus of one study, though the volume in each case is relatively small; studies of language teacher identity in relation to non-English speaking students have been particularly scarce. Other aspects of language teacher identity, such as, the relation between teachers' views of teaching/student and the

others' (it mostly refers to the local students) view of teaching and teachers, and its relation to the teacher identity construction have received less attention from a teacher identity perspective. In terms of the context, much of the found articles/studies available has been conducted with teachers, often China-born native teachers, teaching students at heritage schools, typically, in English-speaking countries ( see, e.g., Wu, H.P et.al.), in bilingual region like Hong Kong (see e.g., Gao, 2013; Gao & Skum, 2010), or China-born student teachers receiving training abroad, typically in a training program where TCFL is not curriculum-based (see e.g., Moloney, 2013). In Wang & Jensen's study (2013), though, the study context is Danish schools. But their study focused on native teachers' beliefs of high school students learning CFL, and their views of teaching Chinese to non-degree students. There has been much less work in university contexts where local non-native Chinese speakers teach Chinese language to their local students. These are all areas deserving research attention, but have been unfortunately under-researched from a teacher identity point of view.

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## CHAPTER 3 THEORETICAL CONCEPTS

As noted in Chapter 2, historically, the theoretical background of language teacher<sup>10</sup> identity research lay partly in teacher cognition research, and partly in cultural and social accounts of teachers' identity research. These viewed teacher identity research as a process of identity construction within social and cultural contexts. Varghese et.al, (2005, p.39) for example, claimed that in order to have a comprehensive understanding of language teachers and teaching, it is vital that we should take teachers' "*identity-in-practice*" and "*identity-in-discourse*" into account. An understanding of a teacher's identity becomes an understanding of teachers' practice, and the discourse they constructed and/or embedded in. This is so-called "*an action-oriented approach*" (cited in Varghese et.al, 2005, p.39) underlining the feature of identity research, i.e., "*identity construction is a social matter; which is operationalized through practices and tasks*" (ibid.). Thus, language teacher identity can be formed and constructed either through social practice (i.e., a practice in the teaching environment comes to be associated with a particular response through students' views/action) or through the interaction with the others (i.e., an identity produced as a result of individual's personal experience and responses from the others). Teacher's practice entails their content knowledge, pedagogy knowledge and teachers' understanding of both kinds of knowledge, which ensure that their practice is professional. As for foreign language teachers, already acquired knowledge and accustomed habits interplay with the new knowledge and new experience as a result of divergent values found in different cultures and at different contexts. Thus, the challenge facing my current study is how to understand the rationale behind the interplay of different understanding of CFL teachers. To this end, the social aspect of identity construction sought to identify the features of the foreign language teachers that differed from those of the first language teachers so they could be helped to form or strengthen their professionalism in a context different from they used to.

### 3.1. WENGER'S (1998) SOCIAL THEORY OF IDENTITY

Wenger's (1998) book "*Community of Practice: Learning, Meaning and Identity*" expands and explores identity construction as an experience of learning. Wenger closely links the identity construction with social learning. He starts with this assumption: "*Engagement in social practice is the fundamental process by which we learn and so become who we are*" (p. 191). The primary unit of analysis is neither

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<sup>10</sup> I will use language teachers to refer to foreign language teachers.

the individual nor social institutions but rather the informal “community of practice” that people construct their identities as “*they pursue shared enterprises over time*” (ibid.p.145). In order to give a social account of learning, Wenger’s theory explores “*the intersection of issues of community, social practice, meaning, and identity in a systematic way*” (p.149). The result is a broad conceptual framework for thinking about learning as a process of social participation. Wenger (1998) addresses the identity construction as an experience in terms of three modes of belonging – “*engagement, imagination, and alignment*” (Wenger, 1998).

Identity study therefore became closely associated with social aspect of identity construction and the emergency of social account of learning. Whereas teacher cognition research derived from language acquisition theory emphasizing the “*unobservable dimension of teaching – teachers’ mental lives*” (see Borg, 2006), Wenger’s (1998) social identity theory emphasizes the role of social dimension – the dimension from which teacher gain understanding of themselves and that of the others. Identity construction is regarded as a process and the process is rather complicated. It is explained in terms of three modes of belonging (Wenger, 1998), according to which an individual’s experiences in terms of verbal expression is regarded valid from a research point of view resulting in a “*meaning negotiation*” and “*economy of meaning*” (Wenger, 1998) that is used in actual qualitative research (see e.g., Clarke, 2008; Trend, 2011). The social identity theory by Wenger (1998) indicates both what the researchers should pay attention to (i.e., an individual’s experiences by looking at his/her views in relation with his/her work practice), and how what is paid attention to is created as part of identity research (i.e., the contexts in which individual is created his/her meaning). Additionally, Wenger (1998, p.163) claimed the “*identity constructed in practice*” and thus characterized some features of identity in practice as follows: (1) Negotiated: “*identity is becoming, the work of identity is ongoing*” (p.163); (2) a learning process: “*an identity is a trajectory in time that incorporates both past and future into the meaning of the present*” (p. 163); and (3) a local-global interplay: “*an identity is neither narrowly local to activities nor abstractly global*” (p. 163). These characteristics of identity shed light on the complicated link between identity and self-identification, and identity and social context. Therefore, the important role of social context is explained in more detail in the following section.

### 3.2. TEACHER IDENTITY AND THE CONTEXT

Before I explained the importance of the context in identity construction, I first discussed about the term “*identity-in-discourse*”. The term “*identity-in-discourse*” was first invented by Varghese et.al. (2005), though it was widely utilized by the studies of Joan Danielewicz and John Trend (see e.g., Danielewicz, 2001; Trend,



2011, 2012) to refer to the role of language in the process of identity construction. From a poststructuralist perspective, “*identity construction occurs as individuals identify with particular subject positions within discourses*” (Weedon, 1997 cited by Trend, 2012). This view is further explained by Jørgensen and Phillips’ study (2002). According to Jørgensen and Phillips (2002), discourse refers to “*the fixation of the meaning of linguistic signs within a particular domain*” (p.27). They claimed, “*Meaning can never be entirely fixed, it is contingent, and it allows space for conflict*” (p.47). To further concretize the relationship between different discourses, Jørgensen and Phillips (2002) introduce the concept of an “*order of discourse*”, which refers to a space in which different discourses “*partly cover the same terrain which they compete to fill with meaning*” (p. 56). This view indicates that discourse is characterized with conflicts and competition. Also, language plays an important role in constructing one’s identity. According to Danielewicz (2001), she pointed out, “*discourse is manifested through language, which consists of a system of beliefs, attitudes and values that exist within particular social and cultural practices*” (p.11). This view of the role of language in identity construction has evolved considerably over the past decade but the central themes have remained largely intact. According to Weedon (1997, cited by Trend, 2012), “*language and identity are mutually constitutive*” (p.21). Building on Danielewicz (2001), Jørgensen and Phillips (2002) and Weedon’s (1997), I claim the following themes are important when understanding language teachers’ identity: (1) the role of language (i.e., a teacher’s verbal language consists primarily of linguistic data); (2) the meaning is “contingent” (i.e., what teachers say does not match what they “truly” mean); (3) an identity is constructed discursively (i.e., teacher’s identity construction is related to what they believe to be the discourse of language teaching).

It should be noted, however, that some of the themes have also be found among some articles focusing the role of self in relation to a person’s identity (see, e.g., (Borich, 1999; Lauriala & Kukkonen, 2005) and they continue to be disputed. For example, not all researchers agree that identity is unstable and dynamic (see e.g., Lauriala & Kukkonen, 2005), preferring to treat the relation between “self-concept” and identity as inherently stable as an aspect of nature (i.e., they called ‘*the actual self*’) rather than nurture (i.e., they called ‘*the ought self*’) (cited in Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009, p.179). It is also worth mentioning that some of the articles clarified the link between ‘self’ and ‘identity’. They called “*self is the meaning maker, whereas identity is the meaning made*” (Rodgers & Scott, 2008, p.739). Also, the nature of identity construction of the foreign language teachers responsible for professional development remains a matter of controversy, with some researchers viewing these as specifically innate in nature and others as involving processes of combination of nature (i.e., self) and nurture (i.e., context).

### 3.3. RESEARCH MODEL

Many of the above discussions were supported by the result of teacher identity research. It was found that the professional identity constructed by teachers were highly complicated. There are plenty of definitional challenges in understanding the foreign language teacher identity. For some scholars, identity can mean an understanding of how “we” view/identify ourselves in doing (see e.g., Gao, 2012); for some scholars, identity can mean understanding of how we understand others (see e.g., Danielewicz 2001); and for some scholars, identity can mean cultural values or perspectives a person most strongly relate to (see e.g., Clarke, 2008; Moloney, 2013). Each aspects and understanding has its merits and values in its respective studies. It is not my intention to argue for/against for better or for worse. Yet, a close link between teachers’ practice and their context is demonstrated by Varghese et.al. (2005)’s study. Their study underlines the link between “*identity-in-practice*” and “*identity-in-discourse*” when understanding the teachers. Based on this, a research model has been elaborated (see figure 1) in order to provide a clear presentation of the whole conceptual framework. This model integrates teachers’ views and beliefs with being teachers that related to identity. By doing so, it not only gives an explanation of “what teachers do” and “why teachers do”, but also helps to better understand the process of teachers’ identity construction. In this model, there are three major aspects, namely, teachers’ views/beliefs with being teachers, teachers’ teaching, and the contexts in which teachers form their views and beliefs. For the contexts, I choose not to use the term “discourse” in that discourse speaks “*the field of discursivity allows for conflicts and contestation*” (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p.49). Here, contexts are widely used to refer to the teaching environments, teaching cultures, and the social-cultural environments through which teachers make sense of being teachers and TCFL.

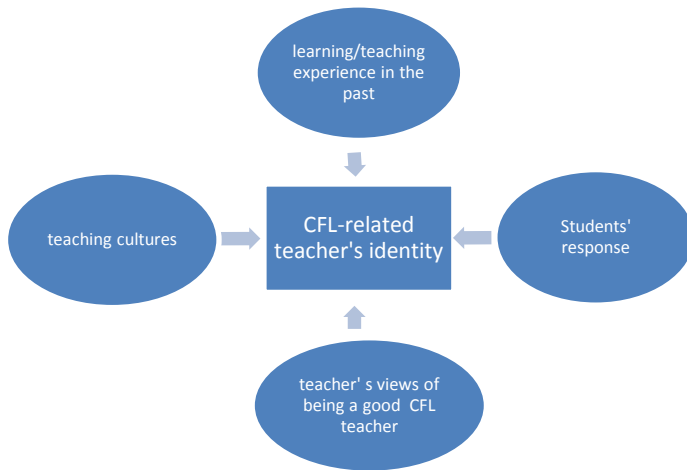


Figure 1 Proposed model of CFL teacher identity (a research model based on Varghese et.al. 2005)

There are four key relationships among these four branches that lie in the area of interest for this present research. The first is the relationship between different teaching cultures and CFL-related teacher's identity, i.e., what role does teaching cultures at different countries (i.e., Denmark and China) play on teachers' perceived views and beliefs? The second is the interaction between teacher's views of being a "good" teacher and TCFL-related teacher identity, i.e., field-related content knowledge and pedagogy-related knowledge. The third is the relation between teachers' past learning and/or teaching experiences, i.e., it looks at teacher's identity beyond here and now of their teaching. The fourth is the relation between teachers' views and attitudes towards students' reaction related to TCFL, i.e., this provides identity with new dimensions because it takes teacher's view beyond themselves by looking at the other's CFL-related responses.

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## CHAPTER 4 METHODOLOGY

This research is conducted as a qualitative study. Guided by the research questions, literature review and theories presented above, this chapter is organized into five sections: (1) study setting, (2) the participants (3) data collection, (4) data triangulation, and (5) ethical concerns. Each section details the methodology of researching and writing this dissertation.

### 4.1. TCFL AND CFL TEACHERS IN DENMARK

According to Kjeld Brødsgaard (1996, p.943), “*the first Dane to teach Chinese at a Danish university was Kurt Wulf who taught at the University of Copenhagen from 1926 to his death in 1936*”. There was practically no language teaching at Danish university level after Wulf’s death. It was not until 1957 that Søren Egerod took over language teaching. His special interests were classical Chinese, Chinese linguistics and South-East Asian linguistics<sup>11</sup> (cited by Brødsgaard, 1996). With the background of strong traditional sinology, the faculty of East Asian Institute at Copenhagen University expanded and had a tenured staff of five in Chinese at the late 1980s. It was unknown how many language teachers were at that time. By the time when I conducted this research (2011-2015), there were five tenured staff working at the Department of Chinese studies, among them, two are full-time language teachers.

At Aarhus University, Chinese studies were established in late 1960s when a position in Sinology was established as part of the Department of Linguistics. In 1973, the Chinese section was established as an independent department. Unlike Copenhagen University’s profile focusing on traditional sinology, the newly-established Chinese studies had a profile focusing on modern and contemporary China research, based on “*the idea of inter-disciplinary integration, i.e., the combination of classical orientalist training in language and history with the social scientific and cultural approaches of a whole range of other fields of study*” (cited in Clausen, S., Starrs & Wedell-Wedellsborg, 1995: i). During that time, Chinese language was taught both by Danish sinologists and local overseas Chinese. The local Danish sinologists taught classical Chinese and grammar to the students, while

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<sup>11</sup> See also Søren Egeron, ‘Chinese at Danish universities’, in Chinese studies in the Nordic countries (European Association of Chinese studies, Survey, No. 3, 1994:5-9) (cited by Brødsgaard, 1996, p.943)

the overseas Chinese taught conversation class.<sup>12</sup> It was not until 1978 that the Department signed an agreement with Ministry of Education, China about the exchange of scholars. In 1980, Department received the first native-speaker teacher of Chinese. His name was Mingdao Gu and he was a professor from Nanjing University. However, it was not until 2006 that the Department offered a tenured position to language teachers. Since then, the Department of Aarhus University has two full-time language teachers, one is Dane and the other is native-speaker teacher of Chinese.

University of Southern Denmark (SDU) was established in 1998 through a merger involving three universities at southern Denmark. Chinese studies at SDU were relatively new and it was established in 2005. Different CU and AU's profile, the Department of Chinese studies at SDU offers a degree study focusing on Chinese business. The Department offers a Bachelor degree and a Master degree. There were 35 students enrolled at the Bachelor degree in 2012. The Department has three full-time language teachers, one is German, and the other two are native-speaker teachers of Chinese.

## 4.2. THE PARTICIPANTS

Language teachers at Danish universities are generally employed with academic titles such as 'teaching assistant', (in Danish: studieadjunkt) 'teaching lecturer' (in Danish: undervisningsassistent) or 'teaching associate professor' (in Danish: studielektor). I use the term "teacher" to refer to all these CFL teachers regardless of the academic title they may hold. The study started during the autumn 2011. I finished data collection by the end of 2014. Ten teachers - four non-native CFL teachers (three females and one male) and six native CFL teachers (five female and one male) - participated in this study. By native Chinese, this study takes three criteria into account. (1) Their first language<sup>13</sup> is Chinese, although their native language is a dialect other than standard Chinese; (2) they were born in Mainland China; and (3) they have completed primary, secondary and higher education in China. By non-native Chinese, this study takes three criteria into account. (1)

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<sup>12</sup> During the interviews, one Danish language teacher told me that she once had a cook, who worked at the local Chinese restaurant, taught oral Chinese to her. The cook was from Hong Kong, and he spoke Chinese with a strong Cantonese accent.

<sup>13</sup> In some literature, first language refers to the native language or mother tongue so to distinct from other foreign languages. Although some of the participants speak one/two Chinese dialects, I regard them as native speakers of Chinese because they were born in China and received their education in China.

Chinese is not their first, neither their second foreign language, (2) they have completed higher education in Denmark; and (3) they have learning and/or teaching experience in China.

To distinguish native from nonnative-speaker teachers, each native teacher is ascribed to an English name, plus a Chinese surname (illustrated with a tone marker); and each nonnative teacher is ascribed to an English name. (See Table 1: Biographical data of the participants)

### 4.3. DATA

I started to collect data in spring 2011. I completed collecting data by the end of 2014. The data collection lasted almost four-year study. I used semi-structured interviews, classroom observations and researcher journals in this study. I conducted data collection in the following manner. First, in order to gain some factual information, I started with an individual questionnaire. After that, semi-structured interviews were carried out. Each interview was audio-recorded and later was transcribed. Parallel to interviews, classroom observation was conducted. In the following, I will detail each steps and finally present a triangulation in an effort to validate the methods.

- Entering the field

Gaining access to the informants/participants is a very crucial question (Flick, 2009, p.106). As an insider researcher, I knew most of CFL teachers. After my Ph. D study plan had been approved in 2011, I started to invite teachers to join my study. Early spring 2011, I talked to the colleagues of mine at University A. I introduced them this study, and asked for approval to joining the study. At that time, Thomas Táo, Agnes, Ellen, and Sara agreed to join in the study. In the autumn 2011, I talked with a former colleague of mine, Rebecca Rèn. She was an experienced CFL teacher at University B. Rebecca Rèn introduced her colleague, Grace Gù to me and she joined my study. In autumn 2012, Mary Mǎ came to University A working as a teaching assistant on a one-year contract basis. She joined my study in autumn 2012. Earlier spring 2013, Thomas Táo quit his job at University A and later he began to teach at University C. Although his workplace had changed, he continued to join in my study. Susan Shěn joined my study in early spring 2013. She was a new teacher, though, but she actively involved in my study ever since. In summer 2013, Mary Mǎ left Denmark. In autumn 2013, Betty Bì came to University A and worked as a teaching assistant. Betty Bì is a native CFL teacher, and she participated in the study ever since. Finally, in autumn 2014, Frank taught grammar at University A. I invited him to join my study. He agreed.

Table 1: Biographical data of the participants

Name	Age	Gender	Educational qualification	TCFL experience	Position	1 <sup>st</sup> Language
Agnes	29	female	BA, MA, student	PhD. 2 years	Teaching assistant	Danish
Betty Bi	28	female	BA, MA in TCFL	1 year	Teaching assistant	Chinese
Ellen	65	female	BA, MA	35 years	Teaching associate professor	Danish
Frank	30	male	BA, MA	1.5 years	Teaching assistant	Danish
Grace Gi	42	female	BA, MA	4 years	Teaching lecturer	Chinese
Mary Mã	27	female	BA, MA in TCFL	1 year	Teaching assistant	Chinese
Rebecca Rèn	56	female	BA, MA, PhD	8 years	Associate professor	Chinese
Sara	39	female	BA, MA, PhD	11 years	Teaching lecturer	Danish
Susan Shěn	30	female	BA, MA, PhD	1 year	Teaching assistant	Chinese
Thomas Táo	45	male	BA, MA	4 years	Teaching lecturer	Chinese

Notes: More details about each participant can be found in chapter 5, 6, 7 & 8.



- Questionnaires

It is perhaps more proper to use a term of “*written interview*” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011) in this study than “questionnaire” in that the scale of questionnaire is small and the subject numbers are only ten. Yet, TCFL within Danish universities is in general small and teaching staff are few; ten CFL teachers in fact represented 67% of CFL teachers at universities in Denmark<sup>14</sup>. Prior to distributing the questionnaires, I talked to each teacher and asked for the consent. After receiving an oral consent, I sent each one a questionnaire<sup>15</sup> by emails. The questionnaire covered personal data, such as, age, gender, nationality, educational background, and years of teaching experience; and information pertaining to course they taught, problems of course implementation, and situation dealing with their students in the classroom. Some teachers answered the questions in Chinese, and some did it in English/Danish.

- Semi-structured interviews

I used semi-structured interviews as one of the major methods to collect data, aiming to get a better understanding of their views and beliefs on being CFL teachers in Denmark. Each interview lasted about 30 to 45 minutes. They were audio-recorded and later were transcribed. Different from traditional interview approach, where interviewer’s role and “*question-and-answer*” format are used (see e.g., Bogden & Biklen, 2003; Kvale, 1996), I used semi-structured interviews with a narrative approach aiming to discover the relationship between their beliefs on being teachers and their understanding of being CFL teachers. As some studies emphasized the connections between the participants’ “*experiences, beliefs, and their developing professional selves*” (Alsup, 2006, p.192; Hoffman, 2009). During each interview, the participants were asked to talk about their own experiences of language learning with particular focus on foreign language learning and teaching within China and in Denmark. Additionally, participants were asked about their decision and aspiration to become “good” teachers and how they understand or interpret “good” teachers. I also asked them about the “*critical incidents*” happened during their teaching at Danish universities. I asked them to identify so-called “*turning points*” i.e., “*key moments and experiences*” as teachers identified as unpleasant, frustrating, or

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<sup>14</sup> There were 15 teachers teaching Chinese as a foreign language at Danish universities (University A, B and C) by end of 2014 when my data collection completed.

<sup>15</sup> See Appendix A

significant in shaping their understandings of themselves as CFL teachers or the relation with others (Strauss, 1987, cited in Gu, Schweisfurth, & Day, 2009, p.12).

- Classroom observation

In order to counterbalance the methodological challenge, I conducted approximately 32-hour classroom observation aiming to examine whether there was a convergence and/or divergence between what they said and what they did (see, e.g., Borg, 2006). Yet, owing to time limit and geographic distance, I did not observe every participant's classroom teaching. I used a method of "*selective observation*" focusing on what is most relevant to my study interest (Flick, 2009). I believe this method is also valid from a methodology point of view<sup>16</sup>. At the time of observation, I observed what they said and how they managed classroom teaching. Field notes were written down in the class. I noted down the main points including (1) their choice of teaching methods, (2) seating arrangements, (3) use of teaching materials, (4) questioning patterns and so on so forth. I also wrote down their verbal expressions (for example, use of language instruction, tones of instruction) and non-verbal signs, including teachers' gestures and facial expressions. All field notes were transcribed and used later to correspond to interview data.

- Researcher's journal

Ethnographic inquiry, as a research approach for understanding language teacher identity construction and development, is commonly used in social and educational domain (Cohen et.al. 2011). In the field teacher identity research, the study of the relationship between teacher and the context has to be studied "*in total*" rather than "*in fragments*" (Cohen et.al. 2011), i.e., "*to understand the situation researchers need to understand context because situations affect behavior and perspectives and vice versa*" (p.219). One of the methods I used is the researcher's journal. The researcher journal refers to researcher-generated materials, including reflective journals and a methodological log (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). It is a useful tool used in teacher identity research to highlight the "*discursive aspect of identity construction*" (Mawhinney & Xu, 1997) in that "*identity is constructed where two or more different voices come into contact*" (Holquist, 1990, p.23). Adopting an "ethnographic approach", I kept the journal as a methodological log documenting my own reflections, thoughts and interpretation<sup>17</sup> of the data collection process.

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<sup>16</sup> You can find a chart of rounds of interviews and observation in Appendix F.

<sup>17</sup> Please refer to Appendix E for details.

#### 4.4. TRIANGULATION OF DATA

Qualitative research, as a research tool for understanding language teacher identity construction and development, has been widely used (see Chapter 2: Literature Review). Meanwhile, it has also attracted increasing criticisms. One of the criticisms was that qualitative research of teacher identity only presents a partial picture of a teacher's views in forms of teacher's verbal words (e.g., see interview methods employed widely in the study of e.g., Nixon, 1989; Sugrue, 1997) because of its emphasis on verbal expressions to the exclusion of teacher's practice (see e.g., Gao, 2012). According to language teacher cognition research (Borg, 2006); what teachers say does not practically match what they do. It is not uncommon convergence and/or divergence can be found between teacher's views in form of words and teacher's practice in form of classroom teaching. When being interviewed, the interviewees may hesitate to express their "real" or "true" meaning (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995, p.80). They may choose to avoid answering the interview questions or producing replies to "please" the interviewers (Denzin, 2001). In this case, interview methods employed by teacher identity studies (see e.g., Sugrue, 1997) cannot completely reflect teachers' "true" thinking, or "true" views because of its reliance on verbal production (i.e., linguistic data). However, it is also argued that these limitations are not relevant since interview method is not only the identity research approach anymore as it was in the early 2000s, and it does not claim to be a research method that aims to provide a full picture of professional development of language teachers (see e.g., Gee, 2000). Recently, classroom observation was also widely used to demonstrate (in)consistence between what teachers do and what they say. Simon Borg (see his studies in 2006) made a significant contribution in this aspect. While the limitations are acknowledged and new insight into the limitations are discussed, methods of interview, observation and researcher's journal adopted in current study as one of the major qualitative research remain a valid and important research method in helping me to cope with understanding CFL teacher identity. Thus, to strengthen the data validity, I illustrate the triangulation of the data as below (Figure 2).

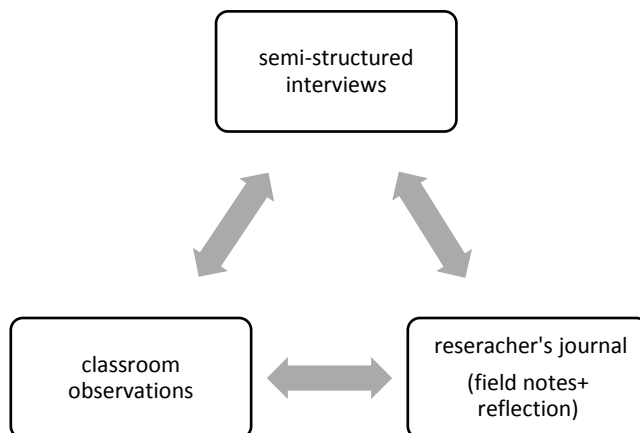


Figure 2: Brief illustration of data triangulation

#### 4.5. ETHICAL CONCERNS

I followed the research guidelines established by Aarhus Universities, Copenhagen University and University of Southern Denmark. Prior to my current research, I completed an overall research application to Aarhus University, Copenhagen University and University of Southern Denmark. Consent was received orally from each participant before the questionnaires were delivered and the interviews were recorded. Data for the study, including paper copy of questionnaires and hardcopy transcripts of interviews were kept in an encrypted file at my office computer and private computer. I also maintained electronic audio and print data files on two different password-protected iPhones for validating the authenticity of each file. The final step to keep data confidential was to ascribe alias to each participant in the dissertation, but in such small and detailed study there could not be absolute anonymity. This fact was made clear to participants before they agreed to participate in the study, and it was explicitly stated in the endnotes of the questionnaire.

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## CHAPTER 5: STUDY ONE

# Professional Identity Construction of Non-native Chinese Language Teachers<sup>18</sup>

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## INTRODUCTION

In the field of teaching Chinese as a foreign language (abbreviated to TCFL), although research on professional development of native Chinese language teachers has emerged in the last one decade, only a very small number of studies have focused on professional development of *non-native* Chinese language teachers (abbreviated to NNCLTs). To address this insufficiency from a perspective of teacher identity, this article reports on a qualitative study that investigated NNCLTs, whose experience, reflection and a sense of identification affect the construction of their professional identity. Drawing upon a framework that underscores Wenger's (1998) definition of identity, a qualitative method was adopted to study what are the factors influencing the construction of NNCLTs' professional identity in an educational context. The study took place during the 2011 to 2013 academic years; and the study findings demonstrate some of the factors influencing NNCLTs' professional identity in relation to foreign language teaching in Denmark.

The study contributes to the research in foreign language education and identity construction of non-native language teachers. Most of the researches on identity study primarily focus on native language teachers in a host country (Orton, 2011; Zhang, 2013). Seldom have researchers scrutinized the issue from a reverse point of view, that is, non-native language teachers teaching a foreign language in their home country. With a high degree of teacher mobility in an inter-cultural context (Tsung & Cruickshank, 2011), how non-native language teachers navigate their sense of belongings and how they negotiate their meaning in relation to foreign language teaching are insufficiently studied. To address this insufficiency, this study adopt non-native Chinese language teachers at one Danish university as a case study to discuss what are the factors influencing the construction of professional identity.

This paper begins by a brief literature review in relation to some of the aspects influencing teacher identity. Next, drawing upon Wenger's (1998) definition of identity, a conceptual framework for understanding teacher identity construction is outlined. Guided by the framework, a section on the methodology of the study is presented. Findings elicited from the data are then described and interpreted in terms of this framework. Finally, conclusions regarding the factors influencing the construction of professional identity of non-native foreign language teachers are drawn. The study is guided by the following research question:

*What are the factors influencing the construction of non-native language teachers' professional identities in their home culture?*

### THREE ASPECTS INFLUENCING TEACHER IDENTITY

Having reviewed the literature on issues of identity as teachers, we found that the studies relevant to our research question could be categorized into three important aspects. The first aspect is on studies in which the focus is on the relation between



teachers' identity and their pedagogy (Morgan, 2004). In a study by Morgan, his concept of “*teacher identity as pedagogy*” is important. It shows the “*transformative potential of a teacher's identity shaped by the processes of instruction and interaction within specific sites of foreign language education*” (Morgan, 2004, p.172). Morgan (2004) argues “*teachers' identities change across time and place; it seems that identity negotiation is domain-specific*” (p.183). By domain-specific, Morgan (2004) means that identity negotiation is rooted in the types of practices characteristic of language education programs. The second aspect is on the studies in which the focus is on the relation of teachers' professional identity and their sense of positioning (Varghese et al. 2005; Trend, 2011). In the work of Varghese et. al. (2005), they claim that a comprehensive understanding of teaching and teachers requires attention to “*identity-in-practice*”. According to Trend (2011), identity-in-practice describes “*an action-oriented approach to understanding identity, underlining the need to investigate identity construction as a social matter, which is operationalized through concrete practices and tasks*” (p.614). In line with it, Varghese et.al., (2005) stated that “*teacher's positionality in relation to her students, and to the broader context in which the teacher was situated, was vital*” (p. 22). The third aspect is on the studies in which the focus is on the identity construction experience of teachers as they cross different borders (Trend, 2013; Tsui, 2007). In the work of Trend (2013), it is argued that “*experience of border-crossing for ones who experience roles of learners, teachers and teacher educators are closely related to how they identify themselves; and thereupon create a sense of belonging*” (p. 1). Similar views are also found in the study of Tsui (2007). According to Tsui (2007), such experiences of border crossing are important for identity because they can involve “*a feeling of becoming someone new*” (p. 678).

Given the aspects described above, we see that some researchers focus on a relation between teachers' identities and their pedagogy from a pedagogical perspective; some researchers focus on the importance of teachers' positionality in relation to the practice from a social perspective; and some researchers focus on teachers' experience at different stages as they construct professional identity from a developmental perspective. In the present study we focus on understanding the construction of teacher professional identity from an integrative perspective, i.e., a perspective which takes into account the three perspectives; and thereupon examines which of these factors influence construction of professional identity. We will start by defining the concept of identity.

### THE CONCEPT OF IDENTITY

Identity displays multiple aspects and multiple definitions. For some scholars, identity can mean an understanding of “self” (Mead 1934; 1967); for some scholars, identity can mean understanding of how others view us (see e.g., Gee, 2000; Danielewicz, 2001); and for some scholars, identity can mean cultural values or perspective a person most strongly relate to (see e.g., Clarke, 2008; Cummins, 1996;

Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). To avoid confusion, in this study, we adopt Wenger's (Wenger 1998) definition of identity, that is, "*identity is closely related to practice; and the construction of one's identity is related to identification and meaning negotiation within community*" (p.149). By practice and community, Wenger (1998) summarises the relationship between practice and community as "*mutual engagement*", "*a joint enterprise*" and "*a shared repertoire*". With respect to this study, we understand practice as what people do and what people say. We thus confine practice to language teaching, and study how teachers perceive themselves and how they perform in classroom teaching. By identification, we adopt Wenger's (1998) meaning, that is, "*identification is the investment of self in building associations and differentiations, in a sense, that we identify, or are being identified, as belonging to socially organized categories and roles*" (ibid. p.188). Alternatively, differentiation means that we are also identified as not belonging to socially organized categories and roles. By meaning negotiation, we lean back to Wenger's explanation that "*the diverse degree of claim ownership over the meanings produced in a sense of being able to use and modified them as their own*" (ibid, p. 200). To concretize Wenger's definition of identity, we narrow the focus into the following two key issues, i.e., what are the factors influencing teachers' sense of identification, i.e., belonging or not belonging? And what are the factors influencing how they find meaning as they practice classroom teaching? Rather than seeking answers to each issue on an individual basis, we explore the answers from an integrative perspective, taking into account the three aspects influencing teacher identity; and thereupon finding answers corresponding to the concept of identity outlined above.

## METHODOLOGY

Guided by the research question and the theoretical framework, a qualitative study was conducted and data was collected through interviews and observation. By interviews, we explored how the teachers talked about their experience as teachers and in terms of teaching methods. By observation, we explored how they dealt with students and Chinese language teaching in practice in the classroom.

The study took place from 2011 to 2013 academic years. Three teachers were involved in this study, Ellen, Agnes and Sara. All of them had been teaching Chinese as a foreign language to Chinese-major students at one Danish university at the time the study was being conducted. They are females and they are Danes. Upon the study, all of them had years of classroom teaching experience in the field of TCFL. Upon recruited by the university, Sara and Agnes had received teaching practicum from Danish universities as pre-service teachers; Ellen had a chance to attend pedagogical sessions while working as an in-service teacher in China.

Participants:

*Teacher participant 1: Ellen*

Ellen is a teaching associate professor in TCFL at one Danish university, with thirty years of teaching experience. She was in her early sixties when the research was conducted. She holds a MA in China studies. She started her Chinese study in the late 1970s at university A. After several years' study, she was awarded a scholarship to intensify her Chinese language study at one university in China. Prior to being recruited as a teacher by Danish university, Ellen had received fragmented six months teaching practicum at one Chinese university. Upon recruited by university, Ellen had been offered a chance to attend a pedagogical session, which was limited to the completion of a two-week practicum as part of her teaching qualification as an in-service teacher.

*Teacher participant 2: Agnes*

Agnes is a PhD student, and she taught Chinese language at one Danish university, with roughly two years of teaching experience. She was in her late twenties when the research was conducted. She studied Chinese at various Chinese universities stretching over two years. She holds a MA in China studies and is pursuing a PhD degree when the research was being done. Upon recruited by university, Agnes had received teaching practicum from the Danish university, which was limited to the completion of a two-month practicum as part of her teaching qualification as a PhD student.

*Teacher participant 3: Sara*

Sara is a teaching lecturer and researcher at one Danish university, with ten years of teaching experience in TCFL. She was in her late thirties when the research was conducted. She studied Chinese for six months in one Chinese university while she was pursuing her BA. She holds a PhD in China studies. Upon recruited by Danish university, Sara had received teaching practicum from the university, which was limited to the completion of a two-month practicum as part of her teaching qualification as a pre-service university teacher.

*Process of data production*

The process of data collection was conducted in the following manner. To gain some factual information, it started with an individual questionnaire. The questionnaire covered partly personal data, such as, age, gender, nationality, educational background, and years of teaching experience; and partly information pertaining to courses they taught, problems of course implementation, and situation dealing with their students in the classroom. The written language of the questionnaires was in English, but two participants answered the questions in English, and one in Danish.

Next, individual interviews were carried out. Each interview was audio-recorded and later was transcribed. The questions asked in the interview cover issues such as their

experiences of being foreign language learners and teachers in China and in Denmark; their pedagogical practice in relation to language learning and teaching; and their reflection upon their experience of language learning and teaching in general and Chinese learning and teaching in specific. The interviews were conducted mainly in English, and occasionally a mixture of both Danish and Chinese was used to express certain notions such as Danish idiom, Chinese fixed phrases.

Parallel to interviews, classroom observation was conducted over a period of two years. We observed Agnes' classroom teaching once in the autumn semester 2012. Due to time limit, we did not observe Sara's classroom teaching. In the case of Ellen, however, we followed her classroom teaching from spring semester 2012 to spring semester 2013 consecutively. The duration of Ellen's case covered over a period of three semesters. During each semester, we have been sitting in the class for two hours observing her teaching. At the time of observation, we observed what the teachers said and how they managed classroom teaching. Field notes were written down in the class; verbal expressions and non-verbal signs were also noted down, including teachers' gestures and facial expressions. All field notes were transcribed and used to correspond to interview data.

## FINDINGS

In correspondence with the process of data production, in the following chapter we first present the findings from interviews; and thereafter we present one scenario drawn from the observational data.

### *Experiences of border-crossing*

To understand how Ellen, Sara and Agnes identify them as non-native Chinese language teachers, we investigate, firstly, how they perceive themselves both as Chinese language learners and Chinese language teachers. Shown through the following excerpts of the transcriptions, the excerpts illustrate how Ellen, Sara and Agnes experienced as learners in Chinese universities influences the way they view themselves as teachers and teaching in Danish universities. With respect to the research question, we are primarily concerned with one key concept: identification.

#### *Excerpt 1:*

*'Chinese teachers are very strict with, especially, with regard to tests, examinations. If you have not attended the class and if you haven't told the teachers, they would not look good on you. The atmosphere was very different from university. In the universities, you are not obligated to go to class. But in China, they check all the time and they know you are absent. They also focused more on how the new words are used in the sentence structure rather than*

*actually using the words in practice. This meant that the students learned a lot of new words every week so that they could read and write, but not actually use them outside classroom. I suppose that it was, in a sense, kind of different'.*

*'...the way I teach is inspired by what I have been through. This works and this does not work, and combine... but I never have any experience as a teacher before, but an experience as a student. (Agnes)*

*Excerpt 2:*

*'... the methods used by Chinese teachers when I studied are very different from ours, different in a sense that teachers were disciplinary, (there are) a lot of tests every week. And this demands that we had to recapture the lessons in Chinese. In China, I know I had to learn it by heart, otherwise if I forgot one word, then my Chinese teacher would say, 'hey, you forgot one word'. They pointed it out right away. So in this way, you were automatically learned. I think I learned a lot.' (Ellen)*

*Excerpt 3:*

*'There is real difference [from Danish teachers and Chinese teachers] from pedagogical approaches. I think many countries are different from Danish teachers, even when Germans come here and comment that here we used to be very equal with students. Do you remember, who was here, xx [a name of a native-speaking teacher of Chinese], who made a list who is the best and who is the worst in the class. This is very Chinese thing to do.... I would never dream of making a list, a public list. It is something that you just don't do it in Denmark' (Sara)*

In each excerpt, Ellen, Sara and Agnes describe some of their experience as Chinese language learners at Chinese universities. Despite of the pedagogical difference they experienced at Chinese universities, Ellen, Sara and Agnes express a certain acceptance towards the engagement of Chinese teachers and 'Chinese' way of teaching Chinese. Agnes asserts that *'the atmosphere [at Chinese university] is different from ours [Danish university]' (excerpt 1)*. It implicates that the atmosphere of Chinese classroom differs that of Danish's, in a sense, that Chinese teachers are strict not only in terms of teaching, but also in terms of classroom management, for instance, keeping the students' attendance. Ellen places her acceptance towards the effectiveness of learning vocabulary. She states explicitly that *'They [Chinese teachers] pointed it out right away. So in this way, you were automatically learned. I think I learned a lot' (excerpt 2)*. Sara shows certain recognition towards the notion of fostering competition among the students, but she is hesitant about implementing it within her own class. Her statement *'I would never dream of making a list, a public list'* details her perceptions of the difference in terms of teaching context

between that of Denmark and that of China, upon which she intentionally excludes herself a member of Chinese teachers. She said that *'it is something that you just don't do it in Denmark'*. This implicates that she might not do it in class teaching in Denmark; however it can't exclude that she would do it in class teaching in China.

*Reflection upon the applicability of 'Chinese' pedagogy in Danish context*

Although they accept some values associated with 'Chinese' way of language teaching, Ellen, Agnese and Sara seem to be aware of the applicability of Chinese pedagogy in a Danish educational context. As non-native Chinese language teachers, they absorb different cultural views; and meanwhile, they try to balance the influence of home culture and that of Chinese culture. The following excerpts illustrate how Ellen, Agnes and Sara reflect upon their teaching practice across different place and different time.

*Excerpt 4:*

*'I am very disciplinary. I like discipline and I would like to have the right to get sort of disciplinary in the classroom. So I try to combine the teacher role with friendly teacher's role, and also open, in a sense, to make them [students] feel secure, safe, 'tryg' [English translation: confident and secure] so that they were not afraid of making mistakes'. (Ellen)*

*Excerpt 5*

*'We do not check students' attendance, this is not very Danish, at least not overtly. But of course, I know who attends classes regularly, who do not...I used to explain to the students at the beginning of the semester that it is very difficult to learn a language without attending the class. You get a lot of subjects where you can read at home, but learning a language requires a learning environment. Since it is in Denmark, the only place to get speak Chinese is the classroom. So I always try to motivate them to come to the class. But they don't.' (Sara)*

In excerpt 4, Ellen mentioned her teaching practice. She explained in details about what type of teacher she strives for. She put it *'I want to be a teacher who is good at combining a disciplinary teacher role with a friendly teacher role'*. Her understanding and explanation of being a “disciplinary” teacher was to *“make them (students) feel secure, safe, 'tryg' so that they were not afraid of making mistakes”*, a stance that leaves little doubt that *'a combination of disciplinary teacher role and friendly teacher role’* were of great importance in being a “good” teacher. In addition, Ellen's professional understanding of the Danish students guides her pedagogical approach. She knows that on the one hand, a disciplinary teacher behavior as she experienced in China would intimidate the students and prevent

them from being active; and she believes that active participation is important in language learning. On the other hand, Ellen seeks to integrate a modified disciplinary aspect to increase learning outcome for the students.

In Sara's case, the question is about student attendance. In China, one of the powerful pedagogical tools is checking the students' physical presence in class. Sara's professional opinion tells her that this approach would not be acceptable in a Danish context and therefore it would not be applicable to the local classroom. However, as she adamantly believes in the importance of attending language classes in order to learn to speak the language; her pedagogical approach is to motivate students.

### *Self-positioning in relation to teaching practice*

As outlined in the framework, identity is related to identification, which can be understood as a sense of positioning in relation to the practice. As such, how NNCLTs position themselves in relation to their teaching practice is vital for us to understand the construction of professional identity. The following excerpts illustrate how they manage their sense of positioning.

#### *Excerpt 6*

*'.. Having a good relationship with the students would make teaching worthwhile. So if you don't like teaching, if you are uncomfortable with the students, if you always think the students are stupid, then you are in the wrong profession. I think you have to enjoy interacting with young people. I see myself more as teacher than researcher. If somebody asks what I do, I guess I would say I am a university teacher. I guess this is what I would say.'* (Sara).

#### *Excerpt 7*

*'...the salary is lousy, very lousy. It is only...if I did not have this request, or desire to keep, hopefully, getting better and better in Chinese, I probably drop out a long time ago. But I am fascinated by the language. But in other sense, I am lucky. I also have good circumstances. I feel my workplace as if it is my home, easy for me that I have good colleagues... and the students. That is very important'.* (Ellen)

#### *Excerpt 8*

*I think it is still teacher and student relationship...but there is another aspect, we (students and I) are more or less same age. So some of the students are couple of years younger than me. That is a little bit strange. But I don't think*

*they see me as their fellow students. It doesn't really matter. They are here to learn something.'* (Agnes)

As illustrated above in excerpt 5, Sara positions herself in relation to the students as motivator and facilitator rather than as a controller. To follow up, Sara places emphasis on the importance of good relationship with the students. She seems to put herself in a position closely related to the students within her practice. She states explicitly that *'having a good relationship with the students would make teaching worthwhile'* (excerpt 6). This positioning offers her a dimension to view herself, to find meaning and thereupon to identify her sense of belonging. In her statement, *'if somebody asks what I do, I guess I would say I am a university teacher. I guess this is what I would say.'* This statement signals that she identifies herself as a university teacher rather than having an identity as a researcher. Furthermore, her professional identity is as a teacher within a Danish university.

Ellen's strongest motivation for the job is her desire for her own professional development, i.e., to improve her Chinese proficiency. On the other hand, she has also developed a strong sense of belonging to the colleagues and students. Her metaphorical statement that *'I feel my workplace as if it is my home'* (excerpt 7) describes that she relates herself and her teaching practice to the workplace, that is, the institute. What matters to Ellen is not the salary, as she says explicitly that *'the salary is lousy, very lousy'*, but what really matters to her is *'a good circumstance'*. As she put it *'I have good colleagues... and the students. That is very important'*. Ellen, too, identifies her identity through a sense of belonging, a belonging to a Danish university context.

Agnes, however, reflects upon her positioning between 'teacher' and 'student'. She ascribes this to the age difference. She asserts that *'but there is another aspect, we (students and I) are more or less same age. So some of the students are years younger than me. That is a little bit strange'* (excerpt 8). Her assertion, on the surface, seems to state a factual information, namely, age difference; but in a deep sense, however, it implicates the role she identifies herself in her own class in Denmark. We see that the teacher role she experienced as the learner in China, in turn, influences her way of teaching. Her reflection upon the experiences as a learner in China guides her pedagogical approach in Denmark. Contrary to building association, Agnes seeks to differentiate her pedagogical approach from that of her teachers in China, in a sense, that she is identified as not belonging to the pedagogical approaches adopted by her Chinese teachers. In her final remark *'but I don't think they see me as their fellow students. It doesn't really matter. They are here to learn something'*, we see that she negotiates the meaning of her position/professional identity, i.e., that the perception which might be held by the students (that she is too young to be a teacher) is overruled by the position and professional identity assigned to her by the authorities, namely, the university.



*Observation data – episode*

As noted above, teachers' identities are not only related to how they manage the sense of belonging and not belonging, but also related to their performance in class teaching (Gao, 2012; Gee, 2000). Thus, in the following section, we present one “episode” from Ellen's class teaching as a case. The reason to select Ellen as a case is that we have been following her class teaching consecutively for roughly six hours over a period of three semesters. We present the episode first and then discuss how such data can be analyzed in terms of the conceptual framework.

*Episode*

The teacher (Ellen) was sitting among twenty-three students at a round table, while some student were typing something in their PC, some students were reading the textbook, and some were looking at the teacher in the class. The teacher asked students to read a text one by one. Some of the students attempted to read in a low voice. Some of them were still typing something in the PC. Before she started to ask the students to read, she said, "*Jeg forventer at I forberedt jer i teksten*" (English: I expect that you have prepared the text.). *Hvem vil gerne slippe for at læse højt idag?* (English: who would like to skip over the text reading today?) A female student (alias: A) sitting behind the class raised her hand and said, 'I haven't prepared the text. I don't want to read.' After text reading, the teacher moved on to have the students to work in pairs to make a sentence analysis. This was the activity in which students analyzed a Chinese sentence by using grammatical terms. One male student (alias: B) enthusiastically was volunteering for each sentence. The teacher told him to be quiet. The male student said, 'I have prepared these sentences. I know I can do it'. The teacher responded, 'Well, leave them to other students'. In the middle of lecturing, another female student (alias: C) stood up and left the classroom. The teacher frowned a little bit, but she did not say a word. Next, the teacher had the students correct the original sentence and then each worked in the list one by one, eliciting the correcting pronunciation from the group as a whole. When one female student (alias: D) was mistakenly pronounced /s/ as /k/ in a Chinese word 餐 (/san/), the teacher stop her and said that '*Det var et godt forsøg. Du tænkte sikkert at /c/ skulle udtales som på englesk.*' (English: "It is a good try. You mistook the sound of 'c' with English pronunciation"). Then the teacher moved on. Of course, there was no reprimand involved in the teacher's tone.

*Coherence and interplay between observation and interview data*

As noted by the concept of identity, identity is related to practice; and practice, in this study, is understood as how the teachers perform in language class teaching. Rather than presenting scenarios from all of the participants, we select Ellen's scenario as a case study. A case study of Ellen's serves not only as basis for the subsequent discussion on the findings of the interview data, but also as an interplay

in which discussion is footed. Rather than presenting some scenarios of Ellen's daily life of being a TCFL teacher in Denmark, we are faithful to the research question; and therefore zoom down to pinpoint her teaching performance in one class.

Given the observational data, first, we see the teacher, on the one hand, positions herself as one of the learners, for instance, '*she is sitting among students at a round table*', she accepts students to sit in the class without participating. This is, at one point, the teacher performing a role of friendly teacher and she strives to create a pleasant atmosphere, an atmosphere that students feel safe and confident. But on the other hand, the teacher reacts to the students as the sort of learners who needs to be managed by the teacher's instructions and by procedures. For instance, the teacher calms down a male student. We can note that the teacher here responds the student in terms of the formal role as teacher (guide) and student (ones to be guided). At this point, a disciplinary teacher's role is reassumed. Aside from the verbal expressions, we also noted non-verbal expressions. For example, we noticed that the teacher frowned as one female student left the class in the middle of lecturing without any excuses. This minute expression implies the teacher's disapproval of the female student's behaviour. However, being aware of the circumstances, the teacher did not say a word.

In terms of identity, one's identity is closely related to one's performance. In the case of Ellen's interview data, although she asserts strongly that '*I am very disciplinary. I like discipline and I would like to have the right to get sort of disciplinary in the classroom*' (excerpt 4), Ellen might not identify herself as one of the disciplinary teachers. However, observational data shows, in part, how she reacts to the male student in her class teaching. Ellen's reaction to him reflects her understanding of 'a disciplinary teacher', an understanding that is context dependant. However, as an identity is always constructed in terms of how a person identifies her/himself and meaning is always negotiable in different contexts (Wenger 1998), the meaning of "a disciplinary teacher" found by Ellen, a non-native Chinese language teacher, differs from that of a native Chinese-speaking language teacher, whom Ellen described. Thus, for Ellen, "a disciplinary teacher" is associated with a teacher that inspires students, creates a pleasant atmosphere and acts as a guide. As a result, it seems that on the one hand, Ellen is inspired by the native Chinese-speaking language teachers and shows a certain acceptance towards their behaviour and notion of "a being disciplinary teacher"; but on the other hand, she develops her own meaning of "a disciplinary teacher" in the context of class teaching. As discussed, identification takes place in engaging in practice, and identity construction entails "*our investment in what we do in relations with other people*" (Wenger 1998, p. 192). Argued by Morgan (2004), teacher identity changes across time and space; and identity negotiation is domain-specific. The changes of Ellen's perception of "a disciplinary teacher" and her actual implementation of "a disciplinary teacher" can only exist harmoniously through "a meaning negotiation" (Wenger 1998) within her

class teaching and within a Danish educational context, in which she attempts to find meaning of her performance and her narratives about “a disciplinary teacher”.

## DISCUSSION

As clarified by Wenger's (1998) identity definition and our understanding of the concept of identity, two major aspects emerged. First, the role of both time and space is important aspects. Both aspects interact with one another and are decisive in affecting Ellen, Agnes and Sara's self-perception and reflection in relation to professional identity. Through *pedagogical practice* (narration and performance), an individual's past experiences as both a learner and a teacher, joint together with their perception of and reflection on the type of teacher and teaching they aspire to do shape the construction of professional identity in the present. Second, the alignment of NNCLTs self-positioning is also an important aspect influencing the construction of professional identity. When their self-positioning aligns with students, institutes and /or universities, the degree of their meaning negotiation varies. When each of them brings her practice in line with student, institute or university, the pedagogical approach at present in Danish university context varies. The findings tell us that in order to be applicable to the local educational culture, Ellen, Agnes and Sara operationalized their teaching methods through classroom efforts to integrate '*a modified pedagogical approach*', an approach different from that of Chinese and of Danish. In this sense, *the alignment of pedagogical practice* determines teachers' teaching approaches. Wenger (1998) states, “*we define who we are by where we have been and where we are going*” (p. 149). For Ellen, Agnes and Sara, being non-native Chinese language teachers, they draw upon their learning experience and teaching experience in China and in Denmark (i.e., “where they have been”). Thus their perceptions and meanings are on constant change over time (i.e., past and present) and across space (i.e., host country - China and home country - Denmark). By drawing upon what they have experienced in terms of Chinese language learning and teaching, Ellen, Agnes and Sara construct their own meaning in the present situation within their home culture. As outlined in the section of “concept of identity”, identity construction is related to meaning negotiation within community, the ability of constructing and negotiating meaning is fundamental to identity construction. As such, the change of *space* makes NNCLTs fully aware of the importance of context and the culture associated with context, which, in turn, is influencing their practice. Equally important, the change of *time* makes NNCLTs to reconsider the different roles of teachers they belong to or alternatively not belong to, which allow them not only to find meaning across time and space; but also to *create new meaning* appropriate to their practice. In this sense, this can also be a renewed experience.

## CONCLUSION

The qualitative study of Ellen, Sara and Agnes' as NNCLTs show that the construction of teachers' professional identity is highly complicated. We find that the teachers' identity construction was based on both *a pedagogical perspective*, i.e., they identified with their pedagogical beliefs in creating their individual teacher role; they integrated in the construction process *a social perspective* by identifying their positionality in relation to practice; and they expressed *a developmental perspective* which integrated their experiences as learners and teachers in different educational cultures – across time and space. Guided by the Wenger's (1998) identity definition and by our understanding of identity concept, we thus summarize three important factors influencing the construction of non-native language teachers' professional identities in their home culture. These factors are *meaning creation*, *pedagogical practice*, and *alignment of pedagogical practice*. In relation to this study, we conclude that the professional identity construction within the *here-and-now* of teaching practice requires the negotiation of past experiences, future aspiration, and pedagogical competence. The ability to negotiate meaning over space and across time determines to what degree each non-native language teacher is able to use and modify his/her sense of belongings; and the ability to manage a sense of identification is contingent upon space and time, in which each non-native language teacher has experienced as learners and as teachers within his/her professional practice.

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## CHAPTER 6: STUDY TWO

### Becoming ‘Professional’: Exploring New Non-native CFL Teachers’ Identity<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Manuscript under review. Zhang, C., & Wang, D.P., (2016), Becoming ‘Professional’: Exploring new non-native CFL teachers’ identity, in Tinghe, Jin & F. Dervin (eds), Interculturalities in Chinese Language Education, Palgrave Macmillan

## CHAPTER 7: STUDY THREE

### Discursive Construction of Chinese Language Teacher Identity<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Manuscript published. Zhang, C (2015a). Discursive Construction of Chinese Language Teacher Identity, In F. Dervin (ed), Chinese Educational Migration and Teacher Mobilities: Experiencing Otherness (p. 129-143). Palgrave Macmillian.



## INTRODUCTION

In recent years, researchers within the field of teaching Chinese as a foreign language (abbreviated to TCFL) have begun to examine the notion of Chinese language teacher identity (Gao, 2012; Zhang & Jensen, 2013; Zhang, 2013); however, whilst insightful, this research has not addressed the ways in which Chinese language teachers identify themselves while interacting with students and how they construct their identities as CFL teachers in other cultures. In this study, I address this research gap by exploring the discursive construction of three native Chinese language teachers (abbreviated to NCLTs) teaching CFL to Danish students. Guided by a framework of teacher “*identity-in-discourse*” (Trend, 2011, p. 531; Varghese et.al. 2005, p. 39), I examine how three NCLTs construct their teacher identity in response to various discourses that position them in particular ways. To do so, I first examine their interaction with Danish students by looking at how three NCLTs identify themselves, how they relate the interactions to themselves, and how they view the interaction from the perspectives of their own culture and other cultures.

I begin this paper with a brief discussion of the relevant literature. Then I employ the concept of teacher ‘*identity-in-discourse*’ to explore the process of constructing identities as TCFL teachers. Rather than conceptualizing teacher identity construction as a product, I describe the teachers’ identity at various points throughout their language learning and teaching in China and Denmark. Through the lens of teacher identity, this study offers an original contribution to the field of CFL teacher education. It allows us to consider the teachers’ capacity to construct identities as teachers in an intercultural context by exploring the experiences of three NCLTs in Denmark.

## DISCOURSE AND LANGUAGE

It is difficult to understand what “identity” means in that there are the numerous ways “identity” has been defined, and the numerous approaches to understanding “identity” (Olsen, 2008). Some scholars conceptualize identity as “*cultural identity*” (Cummins, 1996; Holliday, 2009) while others approach it through “*positional identities*” in discourses (Clarke, 2008; Danielewicz, 2001; Jenkins, 1996). Some scholars also suggest connecting “*social identity*” and practice (Byram, 2013; Wenger, 1998), defining identity as community membership and identity construction as a learning trajectory.

In this study, I use a concept that emphasizes the discursive nature of teacher identity construction; namely, “*identity-in-discourse*” (cited in Varghese et.al, 2005). However, like identity, discourse is one of the most widely used terms in social and educational discussions, and it is also defined in many ways (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). In this chapter, I focus on one important feature of discourse – language. I take my point of departure in “discourse analysis”, which claims that our access to reality is always through language. As noted by Danielewicz (2001), “*discourses are*

*powerfully constructive of identities because they are inherently ideological. Many discourses are not only various, they are also hierarchical*" (p. 11). As such, individuals have the opportunity to choose between competing discourses. These choices have significant ramifications in terms of identity. In addition, some discourses carry greater social values and prestige than others. Hence, in order to understand language teacher identity, I need to highlight three aspects whereby the teacher's identity becomes significant. I will therefore address the following three questions. First, how do the teachers identify themselves while interacting with Danish students? Secondly, how do they relate these interactions to the construction of teacher identity? Thirdly, what role does discourse play in identity construction? It is also helpful to appeal to Wenger's definition of identification. Wenger (1998) writes, "*identification is the investment of self in building associations and differentiation in a sense, that we identify, or are being identified, as belonging to socially organized categories and roles*" (p. 188). In this study, I will examine how teachers define themselves as teachers. Secondly, since "*individual identities are constructed in discourse ... which is manifested through language [and] consists of a system of beliefs, attitudes, and values that exist within particular social and cultural practices*" (Danielewicz, 2001, p.11), I wish to determine the perspectives that teachers take while interacting with the students. Do teachers view their interaction from the perspective of their own or another culture? What impact does the perspective have? And, finally, how do teachers identify themselves through languages?

The concept of teacher "*identity-in-discourse*" reflects the discursive nature of identity construction, which emphasizes the role of language in the manifestation of discourses and, hence, the construction of teacher identities (Clarke, 2008; Trend, 2011). From a post-structuralist perspective, language presents specific ways of giving meaning to social reality (cited in Weedon, 1997). According to Weedon (1997), he claimed "*language is also a place where our sense of ourselves, our subjectivity is constructed*" (p. 17). To overcome the problematic nature of subjectivities, I will appeal to the "*mixed inter-subjectivity*" approach (Dervin 2013), which is related to the notions of identity and interculturality. In this sense, it resembles the "*methodological fluidism*" approach (Wimmer & Schiller 2002, p. 326), which claims that "*where there were fixed boundaries, everything is now equally and immediately interconnected. Structures are replaced with fluidity*". In addition, I will take into account the idea that discourses are contingent and hierarchical (Danielewicz, 2001; Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002) and that selecting one discourse implies an ongoing struggle over the definition of identity. How can we study discourses when they are contingent and (inter-)subjective? To overcome this problem, I adopt a tool from Fairclough's (2003) theory of critical discourse analysis. In his critical discourse analysis, Fairclough (2003) argues that "*what people commit themselves to in texts is an important part of how they identify themselves, the texturing of identity*" (p. 164). Fairclough (2003) takes account of two important linguistic issues, i.e., "*commitment*" and "*evaluation*" when arguing the model of identity construction. According to Fairclough (2003), commitment refers to "*what an individual commit him/herself in terms of truth, obligation and values*". It is often employed by the use of modal verbs, "should" and "must".

Evaluation refers to “*what an individual believes, and it is often expressed in terms of “good” or “bad”, “important” or “undesirable”*” (cited in Trend 2011, p.532). It is worth mentioning that the reference of “commitment” and “evaluation” are made to tradition, authority, and values.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This qualitative study took place between 2011 and 2013. It relied on two sources of data: semi-structured interviews and entries in reflective journals. As is characteristic of semi-structured interviews (Flick, 2009), no fixed questions were posed to all the participants. Instead, open questions were introduced on a set of topics, such as the participants’ background, their daily teaching practices, and their views on interactions with Danish students. The second source of information consisted of researcher-generated materials, including reflective journals, which I – as the researcher – maintained during the two-year research period.

Three native Chinese language teachers (NCLTs) participated in this study. In order to qualify as native Chinese, the teachers had to meet three criteria. First, they had to be ethnic Chinese; second, they had to be from Mainland China; and, third, they had to have completed tertiary education at a Chinese university. For the purposes of the study, all teachers were ascribed a pseudonym and all locations and personal data were deliberately modified. I will now present each participant in turn.

### *Participant 1: Rebecca Rèn*

Rebecca Rèn is an associate professor at Danish university A. She has thirty years of teaching experience – including eight years in TCFL – and was in her late fifties when the study was conducted. Rebecca Rèn has lived in Denmark since the 1990s. She completed her undergraduate and postgraduate degrees at Chinese universities, but she obtained a PhD from a university in Denmark. Upon being recruited by Danish university A, Rebecca Rèn completed a course on university pedagogy, which was limited to a two-month practicum as part of her PhD program.

### *Participant 2: Grace Gù*

Grace Gù is a university lecturer at Danish university B and has eighteen years of TCFL experience. She was in her early forties when the study was conducted. Grace Gù has lived in Denmark for two years and holds an MA in language education from a university in China. Grace Gù was not offered the opportunity to study university pedagogy when recruited by Danish university B.

### *Participant 3: Thomas Táo*

Thomas Táo is a university lecturer at Danish university C and has four years of TCFL experience. He was in his mid-forties when the study was conducted. Thomas

Táo obtained his BA from China and his MA from a Danish university. He has lived in Denmark since 2007. Thomas Táo was given the opportunity to study university pedagogy at a Danish university, but this was limited to a two-week practicum as an in-service university teacher.

### *Procedure*

The interviews with Rebecca Rèn, Grace Gù and Thomas Táo consisted of open questions that focused on the issues surrounding their perceptions of the role of teachers in general, such as the definition of a good Chinese language teacher, their views on classroom teaching, and their opinions on interactions with students. The length of each interview ranged from twenty to thirty minutes. The interview language was Chinese but, occasionally, the participants also spoke in English or Danish. The interviews were audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed. During the two-year research period, I also completed reflective journals, which documented the data collection and data analysis.

### *Data analysis*

I began the data analysis during the data collection process in order to identify trends in the data and to progress from description to interpretation. The first step was to ascribe codes to the reflective journals and interview transcriptions and to identify emergent structures. By reading the journals and transcriptions multiple times, I identified and coded recurrent ideas as expressed by different participants. Coding is recognized as a fundamental approach to handling different stages of textual material by both Strauss (1987) and Strauss & Corbin (1990). After coding the data, I categorized the final codes into themes. Such a process of focused coding helps to identify patterns and themes from a variety of data sets and to establish relationships and connections across data collection methods.

## FINDINGS

### *What makes a good Chinese teacher?*

To understand how Rebecca Rèn, Grace Gù and Thomas Táo identified themselves as TCFL teachers, I first examined how each participant defined what TCFL meant to them. I did this by asking them to name the qualities required to be a good Chinese language teacher.

*Excerpt 1: I truly believe that a good Chinese teacher should have a broad scope of knowledge in every aspect, including knowledge of pedagogy and psychology; moreover, he/she should know how to respect students, and he/she must be both extroverted yet patient. Personally, I believe that I am a transmitter of knowledge and an instructor of Chinese language knowledge.*  
(Thomas Táo)

Excerpt 2: *I think it is important for TCFL teachers to possess the following competences. First, they should have good communication and interaction skills. Second, they should have a solid knowledge of the Chinese language, including knowledge of vocabulary, grammar, phonetics and characters. Third, they should have knowledge of pedagogy and teaching methodologies, including an ability to improvise classroom activities and incorporate these into practice. Fourth, good TCFL teachers should have a high degree of commitment and self-discipline, and, in addition, they should have high aspirations for lifelong learning and research.* (Grace Gù)

Excerpt 3: *Good TCFL teachers should have a theoretical understanding of language acquisition, general pedagogical insight, teaching experience, and the ability to reflect upon their own and others' experiences. They should be both structured and flexible in the organization of their teaching, and they should be passionate and creative. They should also be able to incorporate different teaching methods and to make the learning process interesting and fun.* (Rebecca Rèn)

In the excerpts, each participant describes what being a “good TCFL teacher” means to them. Thomas Táo claims that “a good Chinese language teacher should have a broad scope of knowledge in every aspect, including knowledge of pedagogy and psychology; showing respect to students, and being extroverted and patient teacher”. This claim leaves little doubt that he regards a solid knowledge base and personal integrity as essential qualities of good TCFL teaching. Grace Gù and Rebecca Rèn also list factors that determine good TCFL teachers: “experience ... and the ability to reflect upon their own and others' experiences” (Rebecca Rèn) and “knowledge of pedagogy and teaching methodologies, including an ability to improvise classroom activities and incorporate these into practice” (Grace Gù). These factors implicitly outline the participants' awareness of investing in both their teaching practices and in their relations with students.

Linguistically, each participant uses the modal verbs “must” and “should” to underline their conception of a good Chinese language teacher. The use of these modal verbs expresses not only their aspirations of what NCLT teachers “should” or “could” be, but also their commitment to the type of teacher that, from their perspectives, “must” and “will” become. As argued by Fairclough (2003), Grace Gù and Thomas Táo elucidate personal moral values to form their views of becoming good teachers. They say that a good TCFL teacher should be highly self-disciplined committed (excerpts 1 & 2). By appealing to moral values, Grace Gù and Thomas Táo claim the importance of having these moral qualities. In a sense, a teacher's moral qualities and conscience form essential parts of the definition of a good TCFL teacher.

### *Transmitting Chinese-style Teaching*

Wenger (1998) argues that “engagement in practice involves investing not only in what we do but also in relations with others” (p. 192). In the following section, I will investigate how the three participants view their interaction with Danish students.

*Excerpt 4: Danish students have little knowledge about China and Chinese cultural norms. They show little interest in them and little passion for learning about them. They treat us as equals. They barely recognize the notion of discipline, and they tend to ignore the importance of class attendance. Some students leave the class in the middle of a lesson. They like to ask questions and can sometimes be very critical of teachers. The majority of students accept homework in moderate quantities, but they will say no – or refuse to do it – if we give them too much. (Grace Gù)*

*Excerpt 5: Danish students, in general, are very casual and non-disciplinary in terms of their classroom behavior and learning attitude. The majority have difficulty focusing on learning. They are interest-orientated, which means they learn when they are interested in something. Some of the students can be quite moody. Rather than studying individually, the majority of students prefer group work. (Thomas Táo)*

*Excerpt 6: I sincerely believe that Danish students regard learning as a light-hearted undertaking. They do not treat it seriously. They do not want to compete with each other. I remember in my grammar class, I used to tell the students to evaluate each other by scoring their exercises. They did it as what they were told. But a few days later, during the mid-term evaluation, the students told me they did not like assessing each other. Some students mentioned this was a ‘Chinese-styled teaching’ method... well, since most students mentioned this, I think, perhaps, I have no other choice but to accept it. (Rebecca Rèn)*

When asked about their interaction with Danish students, the participants remarked that some of their Danish students lacked discipline (excerpts 4 & 5), that they lacked an enthusiasm for China and Chinese learning (excerpt 4), and that they lacked a competitive drive (excerpt 5), and that they were critical of teachers and their methods (excerpt 6). Grace Gù asserted that Danish students “treat us [the teachers] as equals”, which highlights her view of the difference between the teacher-student relationship in China and Denmark. In China, students are viewed as students with proper manners in terms of learning behavior and attitudes, which means that Chinese students seldom question teachers. They abide to classroom attendance rules and complete assignments; whereas, in Denmark, students are recognized as independent and free individuals, so, in a certain sense, they do not view or treat teachers as authorities. Grace Gù claims, “they will say no – or refuse to do it [their homework] – if we give them too much.”

Rebecca Rèn examines this difference in pedagogical perception by juxtaposing the “Chinese-styled teaching” and “Danish-styled teaching”. She argues that this dichotomy exists across several aspects. In China, it is believed that reasonable pressure and mutual competition are good for students. However, this pedagogical outlook is not accepted among Danish students. Instead, Danish students directly

communicate their “likes” and “dislikes” regarding teaching methods to the teacher. Such direct teacher-student communication was difficult to be accepted by the participants: both Rebecca Rèn and Grace Gù struggled to adapt to it. However, the participants claim to recognize their Danish students’ opinions: “They mentioned this was a Chinese-style teaching method. Since most students mentioned this, I think, perhaps, I have no other choice but to accept it.” (Rebecca Rèn). On the one hand, these remarks signal that the participants take seriously the opinions and responses from Danish students; on the other hand, they also signal that the participants are willing to make compromises at the expense of the values to which they are committed.

*Chinese teachers as ‘creators’ of an Alternative Teaching Environment*

Although they seem willing to compromise, the participants would like to form a community of TCFL teachers in Denmark in which they can seek consensus. The formation of such a community is associated with their willingness to question the values of their own culture and other cultures and, thereby, to create a new teaching environment. The formation of a specific community is equally important for NCLTs in the sense that it can legitimize their membership (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

*Excerpt 7: Generally speaking, Danish students are reluctant to accept pressure and discipline imposed on them by their teachers. We continuously remind them to improve their manners in terms of learning attitude and behavior; for instance, abiding to class attendance and submitting assigned homework. However, our kind reminders do not seem to make a significant difference. It is only when they realize by themselves that they would like to achieve good exam grades that they begin to improve their learning behavior and attitude. Am I right? Therefore, we, as teachers, should learn to wait for the right moment to let our students reconsider these reminders. Don't you agree with me? (Grace Gù)*

*Excerpt 8: I definitely believe that a self-disciplined and highly motivated teacher sends a positive signal to the students, but you should not expect them to behave in the ways you do or in the ways you would like them to. The majority accepts homework in moderate quantities and at reasonable intervals, but they will say no – or refuse to do it – if you press them too much. Many have a part-time job and an active social life. Although they are supposed to study full time, in reality, their time is fragmented and devoted to things other than just study. ... Remember, the students are independent individuals and have sole responsibility for them. (Rebecca Rèn)*

*Excerpt 9: Unfortunately, teaching in Denmark differs from teaching in China, in the sense that we teachers should leave a lot of space for students to become masters of their own learning. Am I right? To put it simply, if we wish to be good foreign language teachers in Denmark, we have no alternative than to adopt Danish pedagogical approaches to teaching Chinese, which means that pedagogy for teaching Chinese in Denmark*

*should be rooted in understanding the local culture – to teach Chinese to Danish students as Danish teachers do.* (Thomas Táo)

In excerpts 7, 8 and 9, Grace Gù, Rebecca Rèn and Thomas Táo constantly use plural pronouns such as ‘we’, ‘us’ and ‘our’ when referring to Chinese teachers and the Chinese teaching culture, and they use plural pronouns such as ‘they’, ‘them’ and ‘their’ when referring to others; namely, Danish students and the Danish teaching culture. This construction of an ‘us and them’ dichotomy implies that the TCFL community is built upon shared beliefs and a shared understanding about how language teaching and learning should function. The implications of these divergent views of learning and teaching for both Chinese teachers and Danish students are evaluated as incongruent. Grace Gù describes the sense of doubt among TCFL teachers in terms of teacher identities: “we, as teachers, should learn to wait for the right moment to let our students reconsider these reminders”. This description of ‘learning to wait for the right moment’ indicates two important points. One point is that Grace Gù reveals, though not explicitly, a move from tolerating the Danish way of ‘doing’ language education to finding a consensus. The other point is that this move indicates her willingness to overcome feelings of disempowerment (“they treat us as equals”, “[they] can sometimes be very critical of teachers” and “they say no – or refuse to do [their homework] – if we give them too much”). It shows strong evidence that Grace Gù overcomes the potential doubts regarding her own teacher identity. This can be confirmed when Grace Gù asks a series of rhetorical questions “am I right?” and “don’t you agree with me?” These subjective markers suggest that she identifies potential limits to creating her own meaning; conversely, these markers also suggest that she seeks consensus and solidarity within her community of TCFL teachers.

Rebecca Rèn reflects on her interaction with students in Denmark. In a strong personal statement (“I sincerely believe”), Rebecca Rèn shares her belief of teacher identity in terms of self-discipline and high motivation. In contrast to what she believes, Rebecca’s claim – “[TCFL teachers] should not expect them [the Danish students] to behave in the ways we do or in the ways we would like them to” (excerpt 8) – offers another view of the participants’ interaction with the students. Nevertheless, the strength of Rebecca’s evaluation is reasserted in her final remark: “Remember, the students are independent individuals and have sole responsibility for them”.

Besides the community of TCFL teachers in Denmark, Thomas Táo explains that there is an alternative teaching environment in which TCFL teachers are able to adopt a “mediated teaching method”. This “mediated method” supports the dichotomy of “Chinese pedagogy” and “Danish pedagogy” in language teaching. It appears – albeit implicitly – as though Thomas Táo favors adopting a Danish pedagogical approach to teaching Chinese. The dichotomy Thomas Táo employs gives rise to arguments across several dimensions. Unlike teachers in China, who take greater responsibility for their students’ learning, Danish teachers guide their students and leave a lot of space for them to become masters of their own learning (excerpt 9). Thomas Táo provides clear statements of what he believes distinguish classroom teaching in China and in Denmark. In Denmark, classrooms are



characterized by “being casual and informal” and Danish students are “independent and critical”, “non-disciplinary”, and “less competitive”. The situation is different in China, where more emphasis is placed on the students’ dependence on the teachers. Furthermore, there is also an emphasis on discipline and individual work, and the classroom atmosphere is formal and serious. However, despite this extreme contrast between Denmark and China, Thomas Táo has an inclination to favor the situation “here”. Encountered vastly different teaching and learning environments, Thomas Táo concludes it is best to “teach Chinese to Danish students as Danish teachers do”.

## DISCUSSION

Guided by the framework of teacher “*identity-in-discourse*”, and through the brief understanding of discourse analysis used by Fairclough’s (2003), the three NCLTs have discursively constructed their identities as TCFL teacher identities. They included what they believed to be the discourse of language teaching by relating to their experiences in both Denmark and in China. They also excluded what they believed to be opposed to the discourse of language teaching and learning taken up by some of their Danish students. The participants committed themselves to being “instructors of the Chinese language”, which is associated with a teaching practice that reflects the teacher’s pedagogical capability and a high degree of commitment. As they position themselves within their own cultural perspective, the participants attach importance to a teacher’s morality and high degree of commitment. As discourse is always constructed in terms of what it excludes and as its meaning is always contingent (Mills, 2004; Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002), the participants have further been regarded by Danish students as “Chinese-styled teachers” who differ from “Danish-styled” teachers. As data revealed that linguistically, the participants employ the use of plural nouns, such as “they”, and “their”, when referring to others; namely, Danish students and “Danish-styled teaching”. They also use plural nouns, such as “we” and “our”, when referring to Chinese teachers and “Chinese-styled teaching”. This construction of “they” and “we” implies a new, perhaps incongruous, combination of self-identification and perception from two sides – Chinese teachers and Danish students. However, acknowledging identities is multiple and fluid (Morgan, 2004; Varghese et. al., 2005), this dichotomy could be analyzed further with “*a mixed inter-subjectivity approach*” – not with the aim of replacing one identity with another, but with the aim of exploring the mutual interdependence of the different perspectives offered by the participants. In this study, my arguments are that such analysis should focus on what unites these identities; for example, “instructors of the Chinese language”, “transmitters of Chinese-styled teaching”, and “creators of an alternative teaching environment”. What are the commonalities? As they identify themselves, or have been identified in response to the various discourses that position themselves in a particular way, the ability of positioning reflects the NCLTs’ intercultural competence, in that they relate to student responses from the perspective of their own culture. Conversely, the ability of relating to student responses from the perspective of other cultures may

indicate the NCLTs' willingness to seek out opportunities to engage with otherness and, moreover, the possibility of establishing "*a third space*" (Bhabha, 1994) in which, as differed from rigid dichotomies between "Chinese-style teachers" and "Danish-styled teachers", each NCLT may mediate between their culture and other cultures and negotiate a degree of acceptance. Consequently, each NCLT may regard her/himself as "Chinese-style teacher" or "Danish-style teacher", and as neither of them.

## CONCLUSION

To conclude, it is important to understand how NCLTs mediate various values among various discourse and how they negotiate the degree of cultural exchange. This interplay of mediation and negotiability illustrates a degree of acceptance between their own culture and other cultures, which, in fact, could influence the construction of foreign language teacher identity. It should be noted that teachers face significant challenges in constructing their identities as CFL teachers in other cultures, and the challenges that arose with Danish students influenced the NCLTs' contributions to Chinese language teaching. On the one hand, these challenges require the teacher to demonstrate intercultural capacities to mediate – which are related to past experiences, intercultural competency and pedagogical knowledge –, but, on the other hand, they require the teacher to demonstrate a willingness to question the values in cultural exchanges between their own and other cultures.

The participants' views on a teacher's self-discipline and commitment towards his/her teaching and students is worthy of further investigation, since it has potential implications for a teacher's morality education and NCLTs' professional development overseas. It would be particularly interesting to examine the identity construction of non-native Chinese language teachers; for example, Danish teachers teaching Chinese in their home culture. What do they identify themselves with when they teach Chinese to Danish students? What challenges do they experience in the process of teacher identity construction? And what factors influence their teaching in their home culture? In my opinion, such questions could form the basis of fruitful further research.

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## CHAPTER 8: STUDY FOUR

### 'We are Servants': Identity Construction of New Native CFL Teachers<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Manuscript published. Zhang, C (2015b), 'We are Servants': Identity Construction of new CFL Teachers, *汉学纵论 (Forum on Chinese Studies)*, Fudan University Press, China, p. 18-34

## INTRODUCTION

The Chinese Ministry of Education estimated that more than 100 million people were learning Chinese as a second, foreign or additional language globally (News 2006; Xin, 2011). It has been estimated that there is a demand for four million Chinese foreign language teachers (Wang, Moloney & Li, 2013). Denmark has also experienced the Chinese 'heat' in the past few years. Among four Danish universities (University A, B, C & D), which offer degree study in Chinese studies, Danish learners of Chinese has increased 30% from 2008 to 2010 (Xinhua News 2010). To accommodate this increase, Danish universities resort to recruit native-speaker teachers of Chinese to teach Chinese as a foreign language (abbreviated to CFL). Many of these teachers are young, newly graduates from Chinese universities. New CFL teachers refer to beginning in-service teachers who have been educated and trained in China, and who do not have teaching experience overseas, to teach CFL to the speakers of other languages out of China. As more and more new native CFL teachers working outside China, there is pressing need to understand them, who are still exploring their professional identities.

In this article, I explore the process of identity construction through a narrative study of three new native CFL teachers, who teach Chinese at one university in Denmark. The structure of the paper is as follows. First I outline characteristics of Danish and Chinese teaching culture. Then I describe the methods used for collecting the data to the present study. The main body of the paper is devoted to discussions of data under three thematic headings: defining teacher's role, reconsidering teaching methods, and redefining teacher-student relationship. Finally, I conclude the paper with a summary of the key findings, and highlight the points and directions for future research. The research question is:

*How are the professional identities of new native-speaker teachers of Chinese (CFL teachers) constructed in the narratives?*

## CULTURAL BACKGROUND

### *Characteristics of Danish education*

To understand the relationship between teaching cultures and professional identity construction, I start by looking at the characteristics of Danish education and Chinese education. Denmark is considered as one of the most egalitarian countries in the world (OECD, 2015). People are equal and power distance among people is small (Dyce, 2011). There are three aspects worthy of exploring. First, in Denmark, Grundtvignism is considered to have a great impact on Danish educational culture (Korsgaard, 1997a; Thaning, 1972, p.16). Grundtvignism is based on the values and practice of Grundtvig. His thoughts and works exerted great influence on Danish nationalism, education and culture. It is believed that Grundtvig was the founder of 'Danish' pedagogy, which has been characterized as '*a spirit of freedom, equality,*

*and creativity within all branches of educational life*' (Bradley, 2008). Secondly, Grundtvignism attached importance to teaching the Danish youth on culture and society. Gurndtvignism promoted educational values such as wisdom, compassion, identification and equality. He opposed all compulsion, including exams, as *'deadening to the human soul'* (Korsgaard & Wiborg, 2006). Learning is *'motivated by curiosity and the desire to learn rather than exams and tests'* (Allchin, 1997). Thirdly, in the Grundtvig tradition, it lays emphasis on equal status between teachers and students. The role of teachers is to motivate the students and to facilitate students' learning. In line with Grundtvig's ideas, *'Danish teacher do not expect to be met with respect due to their position but due to their knowledge and ability to communicate this to the students in a pedagogical manner'* (Vinther, 2010, p. 122 ). The student-teacher relation is *'an interpersonal relationship'* (ibid. p.122), not a hierarchical teacher-student relation found in other non-egalitarian countries (Vind, 1999).

### *Characteristics of Chinese education*

In a Chinese educational context, Confucianism has significant influence on Chinese educational culture (Chou, Tu & Huang, 2013). Confucianism is based on the values and practice of Confucius. There are three aspects worthy of examination. First, Confucianism attached great importance to education and regarded education as one of the most essential means to turn an ordinary person into a superior one (Zhu, 1992). It is a strong belief in the Confucian tradition that through education, even *'a person of obscure origin can achieve upward social mobility'* (Lee, 1996). Confucianism advocates that education is a serious undertaking, i.e., education is not a light-hearted undertaking, but requires deep commitment and painstaking effort (Guo, 2001). Secondly, education does not concern only intellectual development but also the cultivation of a bond between teachers and students. Teachers are supposed to love and care for the students; while in return, students are supposed to respect teachers showing appropriate manners and proper rituals (Scollon, 1999). Loving-students entail that teachers are committed to their undertaking by being responsible for students and students' learning; whereas respecting-teachers entail that students are diligent, modest and obedient (cited in Cheng, 1994; Paine, 1990). Thirdly, one fundamental feature of Confucius education is its emphasis on maintaining a hierarchical but harmonious relation between teacher and student. Teachers enjoy a high social status, while students are expected to respect but not to challenge their teachers. It is considered as bad manners when students are critical towards teachers and their teaching. One Confucius analects claims that *'being a teacher for only one day entitles one to lifelong respect from the student that befits his father'*(一日为师终身为父)<sup>22</sup>. Treating teachers as fathers by students bring about two consequences. One consequence is that students develop a deep attachment to their teachers; another is that teachers develop great *"parental*

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<sup>22</sup> 史记: 仲尼弟子列传 (Records of the Grand Historian: Annals of Confucius and his students) Retrieved from [http://reffaq.ncl.edu.tw/hypage.cgi?HYPAGE=faq\\_detail.htm&idx=797](http://reffaq.ncl.edu.tw/hypage.cgi?HYPAGE=faq_detail.htm&idx=797) (04/05/2014)



*responsibility for the students*" (Li & Du, 2013, p.91). It is worth noting that even today; this kind of mutual attachment still prevails between teachers and students in the Chinese educational context (Biggs, 1996b).

## METHODOLOGY

### *Study Setting*

The study was undertaken at the department of Chinese studies at University A, Denmark. University A was founded in 1920s in Jutland. It is the second largest university in Denmark. The first Chinese degree course was established in the late 1960s, and today the department offers Bachelor's, Master's, and PhD programs. At the time of this study, there are 92 students enrolled in the department of China studies. It offer Bachelor's, Master's and PhD degree programmes in China studies. In the 2012/2014 academic year, there are six tenure CFL teachers. Two are native CFL teachers and four non-native CFL teachers. They are all tenure-based. In addition, University A also hires a master graduate from a partner university in China to teach conversation, listening and basic text reading.

### *Participants*

The study has been conducted over a period of three years. Three new teachers participated in this study. Each teacher is ascribed a pseudonym. The names in the data excerpts quoted in the findings and discussions are the pseudonyms of the participants. I use three criteria to select native CFL teachers. First, the participants were born in mainland China. Second, they had completed primary, secondary and tertiary education in China. And third, they were novice teacher and did not have teaching experience outside China.

#### *Participant 1: Mary Mǎ*

Mary Mǎ was in her late twenties when the study was conducted. She obtained a BA and MA degree in teaching Chinese as a foreign language (TCFL) from one normal university in Shanghai. She had been recruited as a full-time language teacher in the autumn 2012. She taught subjects such as conversation, written Chinese and reading comprehension while she works at University A. When the study had been done, she was at her initial year of teaching in Denmark.

#### *Participant 2: Betty Bi*

Betty had been recruited as a full-time language teacher in the autumn 2013. She is in the middle of twenties when the study has been conducted. She was born in China, and obtained her BA and MA from one Chinese university, majoring TCFL. Before she was recruited by University A, Betty had been working as a student teacher for a couple of months as part of her MA program. She was at her initial year of intern teaching when the study has been done.

*Participant 3: Susan Shěn*

Susan Shěn had been recruited as a part-time lecturer in the spring 2013, teaching conversation and reading comprehension to MA students. At the time of the study, Susan Shěn was at the age of 30. She was born in mainland China, and holds a PhD in Chinese literature from one Chinese university. Before she was recruited by University A, she had been working as a pre-service teacher for two months at Beijing Normal University. She was at her first year of teaching practice when the study has been done.

*Data collection*

As a narrative study, a series of semi-structured interviews were conducted. One of the characteristics of semi-structured interviews (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Strauss & Corbin 1990) is that no fixed questions were posed to the participants. Instead, I posed open questions about their daily teaching, their view of Danish students, and the reflection upon the interaction with students. Three semi-structured interviews over a consecutive two year period have been conducted to each participant in a range of 2012 to 2014 year. Table 2 illustrates the rounds of interviews.

Table 2: Rounds of interviews

<b>Name</b>	<b>Interview 1</b>	<b>Interview 2</b>	<b>Interview 3</b>
Mary Mǎ	6 September 2012	2 November 2012	28 February 2013
Susan Shěn	5 March 2013	18 April 2013	2 June 2013
Betty Bì	22 September 2013	5 December 2013	14 February 2014

The length of each interview ranged from thirty to forty-five minutes. The interview was conducted in Chinese, with occasional code-switching into English. Interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed and translated into English by the author. To keep the originality of the language, I illustrate the excerpts in bilinguals – Chinese and English translation.

*Data Analysis*

Given the fact that Chinese and English differ greatly linguistically, the data analysis was done on the original language – Chinese. Data analysis started during the data collection process in order to select salient features out of the data. The first step of data analysis was to ascribe codes to the interview transcriptions in order to identify emergent structure. Upon reading the transcriptions multiple times, I searched for repeating ideas (the words/vocabulary with similar meaning expressed by different

participants). This approach to data analysis reflects the use of coding. Codes were assigned to different sized 'chunks' of data: words, phrases and sentences (Flick, 2009, p. 318). To ascribe codes to field notes and interview data meant giving the myriads of data materials order and structure. Methods of decoding and recoding were highly necessary to seek for repeating ideas or similar ideas expressed in the 'chunks' of data, as well as abstract themes that connected codes. After the coding, I categorized final codes into themes. Below I discuss the findings with three thematic headings elicited from the data.

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

### *Defining teacher's role: 'being responsible, patient and self-disciplinary'*

#### Excerpt 1:

我觉得当一个合格的对外汉语教师得具备，第一，有一定的汉语语言学，中国文学，文化方面的积累。第二，声音响亮，有亲和力，耐心。第三，善表达，解释。第四，能融入当地文化。第五，有想象力，有责任心。(Mary Mǎ, 1<sup>st</sup> round of interview)

(In my opinion, good CFL teachers should be knowledgeable in terms of Chinese linguistics; and they understand Chinese literature and culture. Second, good CFL teachers are supposed to speak aloud, be patient and have a high degree of empathetic capacity towards learners. Third, good CFL teachers should be capable of expressing and explaining the aspects of Chinese language clearly and accurately. Forth, good CFL teachers should be capable of accommodating and acculturating to local culture. Finally, good CFL teachers are supposed to be imaginative and creative. More important, they should have a high degree of responsibility for the students.)

#### Excerpt 2:

好的汉语教师应该具备专业知识素养，教师职业道德以及对推广汉语和中国文化事业的热情，当然还要有自律心。这儿的的学生喜欢多样的教学方式，喜欢能随时发表看法，我认为基本能接受。他们有时有异议，他们会说出来，合理的建议我会采纳。(Betty Bi, 1<sup>st</sup> round of interview)

(A good CFL teacher is one with solid foundation of content knowledge, professional morality, and the passion and commitment of promoting Chinese language and culture. Being a good CFL teacher also means to have a high degree of self-discipline. The students here like us to teach the language in a different way. They are eager to express their opinions. They are sometimes quite critical towards us. Personally, I don't absolutely object to it. Whenever they disagree with what I said, they speak out immediately. Of course I am

willing to accept their opinions as long as their opinions are reasonable.)  
(Betty Bi)

*Excerpt 3.*

优秀的汉语教师应具备好的专业素质，包括好的语言基础，正确的发音、良好的语感、对汉语语法的掌握，和从语言现象中提取出它们并解释，应用的能力。其次，应该更为耐心。我们所习以为常的语言现象对学习者来说可能很困难，需要耐心地示范、引导和纠错。再次，具有好的亲和力 (Susan Shěn, 1<sup>st</sup> round of interview)

(Good CFL teachers should, first, have solid knowledge of pedagogy, including good linguistic competence, correct pronunciation, good understanding of language teaching and learning, knowledge of Chinese grammar, in addition, they are capable of explaining the aspects of Chinese language, generated from language learning and thereupon capable of applying the aspects in the teaching practice. Second, CFL teacher should be more patient than nonnative CFL teachers. What is easy for us is not necessarily easy for them. We can't take it for granted. Teaching methods, such as, teacher model – student repeat; and constant revision and repetition require teachers' patience. Finally, good CFL teachers possess high degree of empathetic capacities towards learners and learning.) (Susan Shěn)

The 1<sup>st</sup> round of interviews were conducted at the initial month upon their arrival. It is interesting to discover that Mary Mǎ, Betty Bi and Susan Shěn unanimously regarded two kinds of knowledge as essential for being a 'good' CFL teacher. One is linguistic knowledge, and the other is pedagogical knowledge including 'passion, commitment, professional morality and self-discipline'. They attach great importance to teachers' personal quality, i.e., 'responsibility' (责任心), 'self-discipline' (自律心), 'commitment' (热情), 'patience' (耐心), and 'empathy' (亲和力). Although those qualities are still found common among teacher education (Gao, X, 2013), it seems that Confucius influence has a special impact on teachers' understanding of being teachers; and they resort to the references found in Confucius education. Linguistically, they use the modal verbs, 'should', 'can' and 'be able to' to illustrate the strong wishes and determination.

*Reconsidering teaching methods: 'teacher-instruct-student-follow'*

According to Danielewicz (2001), identity does not only refer to '*our understanding of who we are*', but also to '*what we think others are*'. This view as identity construction reflects '*our investment in what we do and at the same time we invest ourselves in our relations with other people*' (Wenger 1998). As we construct our identities through this process, we work out our relations with each other and with the world, gaining '*a lived sense of whom we are*' (Wenger 1998, p.192). In the 2<sup>nd</sup> round of interviews, becoming the type of teacher described in extracts 1-3 is built

upon a foundation of individual teacher's belief. Mary Mǎ, Betty Bì and Susan Shěn strived to become 'good' teachers, yet their views of implementing a role good CFL teacher have been impeded by what they experienced. Thus, their aspiration to becoming good CFL teachers has been challenged, as the following excerpts illustrate.

Excerpt 4:

我确实认为丹麦学生的学习氛围太轻松了，一点竞争压力都没有。他们也不喜欢老师在课堂上创造有压力的学习环境。我曾经让二年级学生在口语课上互相打分，他们事后告诉我，他们不喜欢这种方式，他们认为这是中国式的教学方法。他们既然这么说，那我就接受吧。(Mary Mǎ, 2<sup>nd</sup> round of interview)

(I really believe that Danish learning atmosphere is so relaxing. They have absolutely no drives for competition. They do not like the learning pressure created by the teacher in class. I once asked the students to assess each other by giving scores based on their spoken Chinese in class. But after the class, they told me that they did not like assessing each other openly by giving scores. All in all, they dislike this teaching method. They regard this method as a 'Chinese-styled teaching method'. Since they told me about their dislikes, I'd better accept it, I suppose.)

Excerpt 5:

这儿上课怎么没有考勤？这让我们很难办，你又不能强迫他们来…上次研究生课问他们应该怎么上，我有什么可以改进，他们都建议了很多，然后还说他们很忙什么的。我想既然他们这么忙，那就少给他们回家作业。怎么没想到他们后来就会向学生会投诉我，说我备课不充分，不给回家作业。(Betty Bì, 2<sup>nd</sup> round of interview)

(Isn't it true that no class attendance is required here? How can we possibly manage the class? You cannot force them to attend the class, can you? [...] Can you remember I asked advice from my MA students when the semester started? They were very eager to express their opinions. They told me that they were busy with other subjects. Well, since they told me about it, I think, perhaps, I ought not to burden them too much. I chose not to give them too much homework. Out of my surprise, they sent complaint to the student council stating that I was not well prepared for the lesson, and did not give them homework. ) (Betty Bì, 2<sup>nd</sup> interview)

Excerpt 6:

他们随意缺席的现象比较普遍，再认真的学生也会不来上课，有的学生甚至为了赶一趟公交车放弃下半节课。我可能必须习以为常。老师需要

适应的就是这些部分。[...]但教学内容的部分，虽然也要适应，但是不要轻易改变的。是的，在这点上老师不妨强势一点。因为还是老师去控制课堂，你是主导者，既然我是主导者，那么我就会尽量让他们接受我的方法。既由教师完全控制课堂节奏，学生在指令、引导下练习。如果有效就不要轻易放弃。(Susan Shěn, 2<sup>nd</sup> round of interview)

(It is common that students are absent from class lecture, even the most diligent students would be. Some of the students leave the class in the middle of lecturing to catch a bus. Why not wait for the next bus if you can't make it. Perhaps I must persuade myself to get used to it.[...] Regarding teaching method, we'd better make a move and adapt to theirs. Actually, regarding the teaching content, we'd better not to change too much. We'd better be strong, and uphold what we think right. After all, teachers' duty is to instruct students and deliver the lecture. After all, we are the teachers and we are the [classroom] manager. As a manager, I try to convince my students my way of teaching is right. My teaching method is about teacher-instruct-student-follow, that is, the teacher controls the pace of lecture delivery. Students learn the language systematically. All is done under manager's guidance. I shall not give up my way of teaching if it is proved effective.)

According to one of the literature review reported in Gao's study (Gao, F., 2012) that Chinese subject teacher in Hong Kong regarded the South Asian students as “*disadvantaged in terms of their cultural values*” and “*devalued South Asian family culture*” (p.95), this perspective resulted in the emphasis that the teachers regard themselves as “*cultural transmissor*” and “*indoctrinator of Confucian values*” (p.93) in front of their students. This finding is interesting in that it shows that what teachers think others are will lead to deep belief in what role a teacher should play and what kind of teacher they aspire to be. Yet, it was evident from the interviews that these teachers unconsciously chose the aspects of identities which were of pedagogical values, i.e., their favorite teaching methods. It is worth seeing that Susan Shěn strongly believes in the effectiveness of 'teacher-instruct-student-follow' method to handle the students with 'casual manners'. She regarded her role of teacher as a 'manager'. Taking a role of 'manager' is likely influenced by a Confucius approach to teacher's role, i.e., a parental role taking care of students' learning. It confirms with Moloney's study (2013) indicating that “*teachers educated in China remain influenced by a traditional Chinese approach to language pedagogy, grounded in Confucian principles*” (p.215). Betty Bì and Mary Mǎ explored the possibilities for creating a meaning out of what students requested and what extent they were able to accommodate to. They showed hesitation and uncertainty about what teaching methods they should use. Mary Mǎ fostered competition among the students, but her ways of teaching was poorly received. Betty Bì sought advice from her students at the beginning; but she felt wronged when students advanced a complaint towards her. Unfamiliar with the contexts in which their students grow up, the young native teachers were relatively unconfident of their roles and of teaching. Lacking understanding of the characteristics of Danish

education, they did not know how to adapt to sometimes very 'different' norms of students' behavior and to very 'different' ways of teaching. Thus, establishing an identity of a teacher in such context is likely to require a different order of teaching competence, and to redefine teacher's role and teacher-student relations.

*Redefining teacher-student relation: "we are just servants"*

As new native-speaker teachers of Chinese teaching Chinese in a different teaching context, what they experienced and what they reflect upon are essential for them to redefine teacher's identity. One of them is their renewed understanding of teacher-student relation. The following excerpts illustrate this point.

Excerpt 7:

在丹麦做中文老师可能更多地聆听学生的意见。他们有时候挺可爱的，真的？他们常常会在下课时鼓励和表扬老师说，'这样的方式真好'。反过来，老师在课堂内要努力避免评判，特别是批评。(Mary Mǎ, 3<sup>rd</sup> round of interview)

(As Chinese language teachers in Denmark, we need to develop capabilities to be pervious to students' comments. We should learn to receive comments and assessment from students. Danish students are sometimes quite cute, aren't they? They assess their teachers. They encourage teachers and praise teachers. They often evaluate my class after the class, saying 'well-done!' Conversely, teachers should refrain from judging students, not to mention discriminating them.)

Contrary to what she is accustomed to, Mary Mǎ reported that Danish students assessed and commented her lessons. It was a surprise to her that students commented on teacher's teaching performance so openly that she described them as '*they are sometimes quite cute!*' This gives rise to a slight tension about Mary Mǎ's beliefs and understanding of her own identity as a teacher. On the one hand, her students did not favor her ways of teaching, i.e., peer assessment. On the other hand, she was assessed by her students. The description of '*Danish students are cute!*' (可爱), in my opinion, expresses a sad emotion towards the prospect of being a teacher in Denmark.

Excerpt 8: 还有一点是教师应该更多的表现出自信的一面，但是如果不自信的一面过多表露会对学生产生不利影响，因为教师的自信不管在什么样的教学中都是非常重要的，但是如果身处跨文化交流的情况，我们教师可能对教学内容本身有自信，但在某些非教学内容的事上自己没有明确把握，而产生了不自信可能会不时表现出来。(Betty Bi, 3<sup>rd</sup> interview)

(Additionally, teachers should be confident. They are supposed to show their confidence. If you are not confident in front of the students, you may send a negative signal. No matter whom you are; teacher's confidence determines whether you are able to carry out a successful teaching. It is especially true when you teach [CFL] in a cross-cultural setting. In a cross-cultural setting, teachers might be confident in what to teach, but uncertain about how to teach – the pedagogical knowledge. Lacking confidence in pedagogical knowledge, you may expose yourself being unconfident in front of the students.)

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> round of interview, Betty Bi resolved her hesitation and revealed her belief in being a CFL teacher. Her emphasis on teacher's 'confidence'(自信) plays an important role of how she redefines teacher's identity. It is also interesting to note the construction of a 'we' and 'they' dichotomy that Betty Bi reveals in the excerpt. Betty Bi refers to the students in terms of 'they' and 'them', and repeated references to the plural 'we (teachers) 我们教师' to indicate singular form 'I'. The references to plurals indicating singulars can also be found in Mary Mă and Susan Shěn's excerpts. Their comfort level of using plurals to indicate singulars demonstrated the longing to get resonance from their colleagues so to build up a sense of belonging.

Excerpt 9:

在中国社会这么漫长的传统中，老师和学生的关系都已经转化为一种更为牢固的，常常是亲情的关系。'天地君亲师'。而不像这里，老师的角色是为学生服务的，你陪他练习，给他做引导，帮他解答问题，说白了，我们就是服务员，是一种服务的关系，我教了你几年，我们的关系就终止了。(Susan Shěn, 3<sup>rd</sup> round of interview)

(Viewing the long history of Chinese society, it is concluded that the relationship between teachers and students are built upon affection. As one saying goes, 'no relationship is more affectionate than the one between teachers and students'. Unlike what I experienced here, teachers' roles are to serve students. We accompany them to do exercise providing guidance and solving problems. Put it blankly, we are just servants. Relationship between teacher and students [here in Denmark] is built upon a bond between serving and being served. It is contract bounded. Once the contract expires, the bond is gone.)

The excerpt 9 reveals another interesting result. I can see a shift from what Susan Shěn defines a good teacher upon her arrival to what she identified herself months afterwards. As Wenger (1998) puts it, '*we have a big picture and we do something about it in concert with others*' (p.218). This form of alignment plays a role in Susan's experiences of identity construction. The 'big picture' shaping her professional identity was an attachment to aspects of relationship between students and teachers. Even though she persuaded herself to accept students' classroom



behavior (excerpt 6), Susan Shěn struggled to reconcile a role that students perceived her. Her conclusion of 'we are servants' (服务员) showed her disappointment and discomfort toward the prospect of working as a CFL teacher. Linguistically, 'teachers' and 'servants' have different connotations. In a Confucius context, teachers enjoy high social status and performed a 'parental role' toward students, while servants were considered to have low social status in a non-egalitarian country like China (Guo, 2001; Cheng, 1994). The statement of 'teachers are servants' does not only convey profound psychological disappointment, but professional dislocation. Thus, Susan Shěn's identity construction within Danish universities involves far more than strengthening her pedagogical competence (i.e., teaching methods), and accepting students' behaviours. More important, she may have to overcome this disappointment and deal with this dislocation. Evidence from the interviews with Betty Bi and Mary Mǎ showed that the dislocation of their professional roles may have a significant impact on how they understand themselves, and how they understand others.

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In this paper, I reported findings from the narrative study with three new native-speaker teachers teaching CFL at a Danish university. I discussed their beliefs, views and understanding of different aspects of CFL teaching, teachers' roles, methods, and teacher-student relationship. There seems to be a considerable similarities across the participants in terms of their views on (1) defining teachers' roles, i.e., definition of what professional quality a 'good' CFL teachers include, e.g., 'responsibility' (责任心), 'passion' (热情), 'patience' (耐心), and 'self-discipline' (自律心); (2) reconsidering teaching methods, i.e., the methods teachers prefer and the methods students accept; and (3) reconsidering teacher-student relationship, i.e., from being students' 'manager' to being students' 'servant'. The Confucius value of being a good teacher has a special impact on the formation of Chinese language teachers' view on being teachers. The findings reveal that the new native CFL teachers were unaware of educational values found in the egalitarian society. These values are deeply rooted in Danish traditional educational approach, i.e., Grundtvig values. They were reluctant to adjust to the host culture at the initial months of teaching. They show slight resistance against the teaching culture found in the host country by emphasizing on the virtues of teachers' 'commitment, responsibilities and self-discipline' commonly found in the Confucius tradition. In this aspect, they adamantly use 'Chinese-ness' to justify themselves in relation to Danish-ness. With time, as they get familiar with Danish students, and Danish classrooms, they show a less resistant attitude towards the host culture; they began to appreciate students' openness and the equality between teachers and students. They are also willing to lower their expectation and adapt to the roles that students like. In fact, the willingness to adjust and to adapt manifests their inter-cultural ability to minimize the tensions and challenges they encountered among students, within individual classrooms, and at a non-Chinese teaching setting. Despite the fact that the new teachers use 'Chinese-ness' to explain, justify and make sense of themselves in relation to others, they do not have any intention to be seen as 'being different' in a

Danish teaching context. It is particularly interesting to discover that the use of 'Chinese-ness' is not to make themselves different from others, i.e., Danish students and Danish colleagues; but rather as tool to contest the teaching cultures manifested in the host country.

Finally, I conclude that the process of new CFL teachers' identity construction is not always a pleasant experience, neither tension free. They struggle to overcome the disappointment and rearrange the dislocation. Yet, what the new teachers experienced definitely provides a chance for them to reflect on their own teaching, relocate the roles and appreciate other teaching cultures. For them, working as CFL teachers in Denmark is a first step on a journey of self-discovery in which they discover another culture, understand it and appreciate it. They develop new perspectives to see the students and themselves which enable them to construct professional identities. As a narrative study the analysis is a very complex matter that requires more than three participants. Other aspects of identity such as gender, characters, and emotions (see e.g., Borg, 2006) remained to be analyzed further even in this study.

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# CHAPTER 9 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The aim of this final chapter is to summarize and underline the main findings and the general conclusions that can be drawn from the four empirical studies. It does so by first recapitulating the major results of each of my studies. By doing it, I intend to move the discussion from description to abstraction and from specific to general. Then some concluding remarks are obtained from both empirical and theoretical perspectives. After that, the implications of my findings for CFL teachers, teacher educators and teacher researchers are analyzed. Finally, limitations of the studies are acknowledged, and future researches are presented.

## 9.1. MAIN RESEARCH FINDINGS

Guided by social identity theory (Wenger 1998) and the literature of language teacher identity research on teachers' beliefs, views and practice (Gao, 2012; Gao & Skum, 2010; Moloney, 2011; Orton, 2011; Wu, Hsu-Pai, Palmer, D.K., & Field, S. L., 2014; Wang & Kirkepatrick, 2012; Wang & Jensen, 2013; Zhang & Jensen, 2013), this Ph.D. research explored how CFL teachers construct and develop their identities at Danish universities, and accordingly how their beliefs in becoming 'good' teachers relate to their construction of teacher identities. My research was carried out in the domain of CFL teacher identity research with experienced and inexperienced (i.e., new teachers), native-speaker and nonnative-speaker teachers (i.e., Chinese CFL teachers and Danish CFL teachers). Adopting the proposed research model (based on Varghese et.al., 2005) for understanding foreign language teacher identity in an intercultural context, I designed a qualitative research consisting of semi-structured interviews, classroom observation and researcher's journal, and explored the interplay and interaction of ten CFL teachers' views and beliefs in becoming 'good' teachers, which include teachers' beliefs in becoming foreign language teachers, and their understanding of the students, and their reflection on TCFL at Danish universities. In this section, I reiterate the main research questions arisen in this dissertation and summarize my main research findings regarding each question.

### 9.1.1. INTERACTION BETWEEN CFL TEACHERS' DOMAIN-RELATED PRIOR EXPERIENCE AND TEACHERS' BELIEFS

One of the questions I wanted to address in this dissertation was what factors influence teacher's beliefs in becoming a 'good' teacher. In line with the literature, teachers' language learning experience played a significant role in influencing their current views and beliefs in becoming teachers. If teacher's past experiences as a learner and/or as a teacher (i.e., domain-related prior experience) converge the

present experiences, then teacher's identity construction process as operationalized in my study would have a positive effect on teacher's views and beliefs in being and becoming a "good" teacher; if not, then it would have a negative effect on teacher's views and beliefs. Therefore it can be concluded that teachers' domain-related prior experience challenge the current CFL teacher beliefs. In the first study reported in Chapter 6, the nonnative-speaker teachers of Chinese, Agnes, Sara and Ellen, adamantly described some of their experiences as CFL learners within Chinese universities. Agnes' statement "the way I teach is very much inspired by what I have been through" indicates her experiences as a learner in China guided her pedagogical approach to TCFL in Denmark. In the second study reported in Chapter 6, Frank deliberated what he experienced as a CFL learner in Denmark and in Zhejiang University. His statement "I had been in their [Danish students] shoes" revealed that his past experiences strongly shaped his views and beliefs about what a teacher should be and what type of teacher he aspired to be. It is worth mentioning that for new non-native teachers of Chinese, the recognition of their competence in CFL learning was one of the major sources of identity recognition. In line with what Moloney' study (2013, p.215) indicated that "*teachers educated in China remain influenced by a traditional Chinese approach to language pedagogy, grounded in Confucian principles*", what I have found in the 3rd study reported in Chapter 7 verifies this indication. When asking Rebecca Rèn, Grace Gù and Thomas Táo to define what a "good" CFL teacher meant for them, interestingly, aside from mentioning pedagogy knowledge and content knowledge, they scored high in the aspects of "teacher's commitment", "teachers' responsibility" and "teachers' high-degree of self-discipline". It seems that for them, a teacher's moral qualities form essential parts of what they believe in a "good" teacher, and these moral qualities are grounded in Confucian teaching principles (see e.g., Zhang, C., 2015a).

Surprisingly, contrary to what Wang and Kirkepatrick (2012, p.19) stated that "*CFL teachers' representation of a Sinophone identity is to show national pride in front of the foreigners when teaching within China*", what I found in the 4th study reported in Chapter 8 is that the new native-speaker teachers of Chinese, Mary Mǎ, Betty Bì, and Susan Shěn do not wish to show "*national pride*" explicitly when teaching CFL outside China, as we might probably expected. They do not wish; at least not explicitly maintain an identity distinctive from that of the others (i.e., local students, and local Danish teachers). Although they use "Chinese-styled" or "Chineseness" to explain and justify themselves in relation to their students and find meaning in their own work, they do not have any intention to be seen as "different". This means that using "Chinese" is not a way to distinguish themselves within Danish context, rather it is a way to reduce their "*psychological discomfort*" and "*professional dislocation*" (Zhang, C., 2015b) occurred when teaching Chinese in a new country and dealing with Danish students. In order to counterbalance the methodological challenge, the 4<sup>th</sup> study also adopted a narrative approach by looking further how the new native CFL teachers changed their views and how their views are related to the professional identity construction. Though young and inexperienced, one of the

teachers, Susan Shěn, succeeded in implementing “teacher-lecture and student-drill” method – a method that nonnative-speaker teachers (i.e., Frank, Agnes, and Sara) called “a *very* Chinese method”. This result is interesting in that it confirms that “*identity is closely related to what we do*” (Wenger 1998, p.192), but more important, it shows that teacher’s identity is manifested in the forms of teaching – in other words, engagement. When a teacher teaches in a given context, the students recognize him/her as a type of teacher by recognizing the methods the teacher applies. It conformed to what Morgan (2004) claimed “*teacher identity is a kind of pedagogy*” (p.183). Further, it echoed with what Wenger (1998, p.193) claim “*identification takes place in the doing*”. Thus identity construction in engagement involves “*investing not only in what we do but also in relations with others*” (Wenger 1998, p.192). In other words, this relational form of identity construction is mutuality. Lacking others’ (i.e., Danish students or colleagues) responses, teacher identity construction is inhibited.

### **9.1.2. RECIPROCAL INTERPLAY BETWEEN STUDENTS’ RESPONSES AND TEACHERS’ BELIEFS**

Distinct from what teacher cognition research defines, teacher identity research is not only concerned with understanding what teachers believe and think (see e.g., Borg, 2006), but also with what teachers think who others are (see e.g., Danielewicz, 2001, p.10). According to Danielewicz (2001), “*believing what kind of teacher you are is closely related to what you think what your students are, and it has the potential to increase teachers’ understanding what the others think who you are*”(p.10). One of the theoretical claims made by CFL teachers about their beliefs in becoming “good” teacher is on the detailed description of how the students respond to the teaching, i.e., the students’ classroom manners and behavior. According to one of the literature review reported in Gao’ study (2012) that Chinese subject teacher in Hong Kong regarded the South Asian students as “disadvantaged in terms of their cultural values” and “*devalued South Asian family culture*” (p.95), this perspective resulted in the emphasis that the teachers regard themselves as “*cultural transmissor*” and “*indoctrinator of Confucian values*” (p.93) in front of their students. This finding is particular interesting in that it shows that what teachers think others are will lead to deep belief in what role a teacher should play and what kind of teacher they aspire to be. As Beijaard, et.al, (2004) pointed out that “*this relationship seems to be sound theoretical basis for researching teachers’ professional identity.*” (p.126)

In my studies of understanding how teachers relate others’ behavior to construct their own professional identity in the domain of teacher identity research, I take account of two important standpoints: (1) how teachers relate the interaction with students to themselves, and (2) how they view the interaction from the perspectives of their own culture and other’s. As the context of my research on CFL teacher identity research was different from those identity research reported in the previous



studies listed in literature review, therefore in the understanding the context of how CFL teachers construct their professional identity, I mainly consider the potential influence of two teaching cultures (i.e., the teaching culture grounded in Confucian values and the teaching culture grounded in Grundtvig values). In the 1<sup>st</sup> study reported in Chapter 5, although they considered Danish students in general not serious about learning and they recognized the effectiveness of some “Chinese” language-teaching method, the nonnative-speaker teachers of Chinese tend not to “force” their students to be disciplinary, nor do they implement the endorsed method in language teaching (see e.g. Zhang & Jensen, 2013). This finding suggests a paradox associated with nonnative CFL teacher’s identities. Similar evidence is also found among new and inexperienced nonnative teachers (see Study 2 reported in Chapter 6). Compared with Chinese teaching cultures, the nonnative teachers gave priority to their own Danish teaching cultures, which characterized with equality, freedom and egalitarian; and emphasis on students’ rights. In Chapter 7, the data obtained show another aspect of paradox associated with the identities of native-speaker teachers of Chinese. Yet, the native teachers showed an emphasis on their roles of linguistic capabilities. This emphasis contributed to their identities of linguistic instructors. Compared to young and inexperienced native teachers, the experienced native teachers attached great importance to Confucian values of being “good” teachers. This emphasis on the importance of Confucian adds a social filter through which they construct their identities as teachers. In the 4<sup>th</sup> study reported in Chapter 8, unfamiliar with Danish teaching cultures, the new native teachers were unconfident about their roles and about teaching. Lacking confidence and knowledge of Danish teaching cultures, the new teachers performed their roles of teaching elementary language skills and overlooks the power of the local contexts. Yet, it was evident from classroom observations that these teachers unconsciously chose the aspects of identities which were of pedagogical values, i.e., peer assessment, “teacher-instruct-student-follow” method, and teachers’ confidence presented in the class and in the interviews showed an emphasis on the teachers’ authority. In addition, the transit from ‘role of teacher’ to ‘role of servant’ deserves further discussion. This conformed to Vinther’s (2010) findings that teachers in Denmark do not expect to gain respect due to their position. It is teachers’ ability to communicate their knowledge deserves students’ respect.

### **9.1.3. INTERRELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CFL TEACHER IDENTITY AND TEACHING CULTURES**

Another main research question in this dissertation was to explore the relationships between CFL teacher’s identity and the teaching cultures. Although relation between the teaching cultures and teacher identity has been previously addressed, studies conducting investigations of relations among native and nonnative, experienced and inexperienced teachers are rarely found. Additionally, previous studies have mainly relied on teachers’ past experiences, language learning trajectory, and teacher’s cultural background. Therefore, one of the purposes of my study was to explore the

relationship between CFL teacher identity constructions in certain teaching culture(s). I believe understanding teaching cultures could reveal more on the relationship between teachers' perception of being "good" teachers and their efforts to cope with their "learning trajectory" toward becoming "good" teachers. These questions were mainly answered in Chapter 5, 6, 7 and 8. Thus, in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> study reported in Chapter 7 and 8, I described the characteristics of teaching cultures found in Denmark (i.e., e.g., Grundtvig) and that in China (i.e., e.g., Confucian). My purpose of introducing them is not to evaluate the teaching culture grounded in Grundtvig over that in Confucian for better or worse; rather I intend to localize my study by examining what roles the teaching cultures play in determining teachers' beliefs and view of being teachers, their understanding of the teaching, and the others. The four studies reported in Chapter 5, 6, 7, and 8 show some interesting results regarding the relation between teacher identities and teaching cultures. In the 1<sup>st</sup> study reported in Chapter 5, the study findings suggest that the experienced non-native CFL teachers managed to employ '*a modified pedagogical approach*', an approach different from that of Chinese and of Danish" (Zhang, C. & Jensen, 2013, p. 124). The purpose of employing this approach is to "be applicable to the local educational culture" (ibid.). Similar result is also found in the 3<sup>rd</sup> study reported in Chapter 7. It shows that the Confucius value of being a good teacher has a special impact on the experienced native teachers' views of becoming "good" teachers. Yet, these teachers do not only attach to Confucius values of teaching, rather they create an alternative teaching environment in which TCFL teachers are able to adopt a "*mediated teaching method*" (Zhang, C., 2015a, p.144). Some literature claim the choice of teaching methods affect identity, as methods tend to have particular teaching cultures of their own (see e.g., Morgan 2004; Varghese et.al.,2005). These findings are particularly interesting in that on the one hand, it conforms to what Feiman-Nemser and Floden (1986) claim that "*there is no one teaching culture in a school*" (p. 505). On the other hand, it shows that teachers may to some extent create and develop his or her own teaching culture. Evidence has been found in the study 1, 2, 3 and 4 reported in Chapter 5, 6, 7 and 8. Therefore, the process of each CFL teacher identity construction is not static and passive, rather it is active and dynamic interweaving with the creation of his/her own classroom culture and the meaning-making of the teaching cultures found in the host and home countries.

The following research findings are conclusive through all my studies: (1) CFL teachers' beliefs are positively related with their domain-related prior experience, i.e., teachers with broad cross-cultural and inter-cultural experience had significantly more positive beliefs of being a "good" teachers than the teachers with little cross-cultural experiences, in constructing the teacher professional identity at a home and host cultures. (2) CFL teachers' beliefs in becoming "good" teachers are closely related with students' responses and with teachers' own understanding of what they regard their students are, i.e., teachers with long teaching experience and deep understanding of local teaching cultures had inclination to create "alternative identities" than those with little teaching experience. This is found common among

experienced CFL teachers, regardless native or nonnative speakers. (3) Local teaching cultures have an impact on CFL teachers' beliefs and understanding of themselves as teachers, but teachers differ in the way they deal with the teaching cultures depending on the values they personally attach to. What is more important is that the experienced CFL teacher has an inclination for creating his/her unique classroom cultures. Therefore, my current study does not only reinforce the fluid and dynamic nature of teacher identity, as claimed by Varghese et.al, (2005), but it also shows a close link between teacher identity and their context. Equally important, it demonstrates that the teaching context is neither passive nor static, but it is active and dynamic and it can be changed.

These research findings are partly consistent with the previous CFL teacher identity research, and partly add new perspectives to understanding current teacher identity research. In my study, these findings were extended to the nonnative-speaker teachers of Chinese teaching CFL to local students. Although my findings are partially in line with the results from the previous researches reported in Literature Review (see Chapter 2), the interview data (i.e., linguistic data) does not tell us completely about the complex interplay and influences among experience, culture and identity. Therefore, a detailed description of classroom observation was then used in the 1<sup>st</sup> study reported in Chapter 5. Additionally, another research method was applied with a narrative approach as described in Chapter 6 and Chapter 8. Narrative approach allows me to discover the “*stories teachers live by*” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p.4), and thus understand the rationale behind these stories. The findings from the narrative studies revealed that the impact of domain-related prior experience on teachers' beliefs is mediated by the contexts they live in and is negotiated with respect to the interaction of convergent and divergent beliefs embodied in different teaching cultures. Regarding the mediation and negotiation, results from Chapter 6 and Chapter 8 revealed something new. Previous studies on new native-speaker teachers tend to suggest that the new teachers' view being teachers and teachers are “*rigid*” and “*dogmatic*” (see e.g., Trend, 2013). However, results from these two studies reported in Chapter 8 indicate that new native CFL teachers' views of becoming “*professional*” are surprisingly flexible among Agnes, Frank, Mary Mǎ, Betty Bì, and Susan Shěn. They showed “*a strong willingness to adjust themselves to the needs of the students and the willingness to accommodate to the local teaching cultures*” (see e.g., Zhang, 2015a; Zhang 2015b). However, results from my study also indicate that creating “*an alternative teacher identity*” has an essential impact on how the teachers understand themselves. These findings from my studies highlight the role of “*a third space*” (Bhabha, 1994) plays in the process of foreign language teacher identity construction within a cross- and intercultural study.

## 9.2. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The lack of a clear research framework for foreign language teacher identity research in the theoretical literature and the neglect of domain-related factors in

empirical studies led me to adopt Wenger's (1998) social identity theory, and employ qualitative research method including interviews, observation and researcher's journals to start my investigation in CFL teacher identity research. After summarizing the main research findings in this dissertation, I would like to go back to the research model and the theoretical constructs adopted in my studies. I would discuss the main research findings from the triangulation of data, and then draw some concluding remarks both from a theoretical and an empirical perspective.

### **9.2.1. CFL TEACHER'S DOMAIN-RELATED EXPERIENCE: RECONSIDERING TEACHER'S EXPERIENCE**

Regarding the construct of teacher domain-related experience, one of the first conclusions that can be drawn from the results of my studies is that CFL teachers' domain-related prior experience produces a significant impact on teacher's understanding and beliefs on being teachers. The theoretical construct claims that "*the individual creates a trajectory of identity formation that links understandings of past experiences to anticipations of the future connected to the present*" (Wenger 1998, p.154), and this leads to one mode of identification: "imagination", and therefore, building up a trajectory should lead to better understanding of present identity. The theoretical construct also claims that "*identity is becoming; it is not confined to specific periods of life, or to specific settings.*" (Wenger 1998, p.163) Yet, my study results do not totally agree with the claims on the factors associated with CFL teacher identity construction. In the following paragraphs I will re-examine the social identity theory advocated by Wenger (1998) in the specific context of CFL teacher identity research in Danish context.

First of all, the results from the empirical studies reported in this dissertation cast doubt on one of the fundamental claims of the teacher identity research for regarding "*engagement, imagination and alignment*" as the major ways for building up person's identity. This claim has certain merits. Yet, when applying this claim in the context of CFL teacher identity research, my findings raised a few questions regarding 'identity-in-practice' and 'identity-in-context'. As also acknowledged by researchers ( e.g., Beijaard et.al, 2004 ), it is still too early to expect any definitive answers to the various questions regarding the factors associated in influencing foreign language teacher identity. Factors such as teachers' personality and teachers' history of growing up should also be taken account. Although I apply triangulation to justify what "*lived experience of teacher identity*" (Wenger 198, p.145) entails, students should also bring to their views and beliefs to the teachers' understandings, which in large shape teacher's identity construction, and thus influence their teachers' choice of methods. This view is in particular important in that the lack of understanding the interplay between local students and teacher related variables (e.g., teacher's age, gender, personality, characters, emotions etc.) will lead to anxiety and confusion about their teacher identities. The theoretical proposition of a complex of identity construction and a person's trajectory contributing to fluid and temporal

identity is fairly well established (see e.g., Morgan, 2004; Varghese et.al., 2005). In the case of CFL teacher identity construction, narrative and discursive construction of their identities (e.g., link their prior learning experience, define meaning of being teachers, and negotiate own meaning of teaching) will create and strengthen teachers' beliefs in being teachers, and thus aspire to become 'good' teachers. However, as shown in my studies, whether teachers' beliefs can directly relate with constructing teacher identity is not straightforward. Other empirical studies that tried to look at factors of teachers' narrated stories (see. e.g., Tsui, 2007) in order to study the 'path' a teacher walked did not yield enough evidence to support the theoretical claim from identity construction. Teachers' "lived experiences" combined with the "*constant interaction of multiple trajectories convergent and divergent defines identities*" (Lave & Wenger 1991; cited from Wenger 1998, p.154). Therefore, definition of what teacher identity research should entail and what teacher identity is about should probably be better considered in relation to teachers' beliefs and their trajectories – a path that teachers make sense of their doing through time that connect with the past, the present and the future. Also discussed in my studies, teachers find meaning in their own ways. Familiarity and knowledge with teaching cultures found in different classrooms and embedded at different countries also affect teachers' understanding about themselves and their professions. Moreover, some evidence shows that experienced CFL teachers develop their unique teaching cultures by creating "a modified teaching method". What is complex for teachers with limited prior knowledge could be hard to develop a sense of belonging for teachers with better relevant prior knowledge. Second, teacher related variables (e.g., teacher's gender, age, personality, and cognition) play an important role in mediating the impact of students' responses on their own teaching and understanding of being teachers. There is also some evidence from identity theory on the relationship among self, identity and society (Mead, 1934). His theory revealed that "*self can arise only in a social setting where there is a social communication*" (cited in Beijgaard, et.al., 2003, p.107). In this respect, empirical study of language teacher identity in TCFL should consider the valid means of researching identity by taking account the interaction between teacher related variables, teacher's beliefs and the teaching cultures they are embedded in. Further, the alignment of CFL teachers' self-positioning is also an important aspect that influences the construction of professional identity, i.e., which perspective do the teachers view themselves, their own culture and/or other cultures? The ability to "*suspend one's own beliefs*" and "*analyze one's own beliefs from the viewpoint of the others*" (Forsman, 2005, p.4) requires the teachers to demonstrate the intercultural competence. In other words, the process of foreign language teacher's identity construction is also a process of developing their intercultural competency.

To sum up this section, I believe that Wenger's (1998) social identity theory does provide me with a theoretically inspired and empirically manageable framework for researching language teacher identity in the domain of TCFL. When investigated in the context of TCFL at Danish universities, my results raised a few questions

regarding the role of the teaching cultures. Although the study results are theoretically driven, more empirical studies are definitely needed in future studies. It is suggested that teachers' understanding of being CFL teachers and that of TCFL within Danish universities are complicated issues. Students also bring to the teacher's understanding their own understandings and beliefs, which shape teachers' beliefs, and thus influence teachers' understanding. Therefore, CFL teacher identity is a process of becoming; in which domain-related CFL experience plays a significant role in the process of identity construction.

### **9.2.2. RECONSIDERING THE DEFINITION OF NATIVE AND NONNATIVE TEACHERS**

In this section, I will first discuss the main research findings on native CFL teachers' identities and nonnative CFL in light of the "identity-in-context" (Morgan 2004; Varghese et.al., 2005; Wenger 1998). In the end, I revisit the proposed research model.

In line with the "identity-in-context", my current findings indicate that the teacher identity is not narrowly constructed according to "*the biological quality*" (cited in Widdowson, 1994) nor is constructed according to the "*linguistic competence*" (Amin, 2004, p.74). In fact, it is very hard to draw a clear line between the native teachers and nonnative. It is even harder to find a point of reference to distinguish native and nonnative. Kachru and Nelson (1996) argued that "*viewing teachers through the lens of native and nonnative dichotomy is a monocultural and monolingual point of reference*" (p. 225). Yet, in a multicultural and multilingual society as today, viewing CFL teachers as native and nonnative is too simplistic. However, it should be acknowledged that there are some variables brought into play by native and nonnative CFL teachers. These variables make an important impact on teachers' potentials to construct their professional identities. As has already discussed in my studies, the popularity of one language over the other usually reflects the political and economic power of a nation (Herlund, 2001). Chinese is no exception. The increasing popularity of TCFL both within and outside China can be viewed as a result of China's accelerating economic boom and political influence on today's world (Wang, Moloney & Li, 2013). However, as a rising nation, China's educational values and teaching cultures continue to be challenged, and its cultural norms and pedagogical values are not yet fully recognized by many Western ideologies (Biggs, 1996b). As a relatively new discipline, some of the TCFL methods (e.g., ways of teaching) adopted by native CFL teachers are particularly challenged. Confucian teaching culture, one of which emphasizes the teacher's authority and the student's compliance, is challenged by the local students (i.e., Danish students) who grow up in an egalitarian society. It is also challenged by nonnative teachers. My studies show that the teachers constantly mediate the dichotomy between what "Chinese" and "Danish" teaching methods mean to them. For nonnative CFL teachers (i.e., local Danish teachers), they use "Danish" to relate

to in their social relations with Danish teachers and Danish students. While for native CFL teachers (i.e., Chinese), they use “Chinese” to distinguish themselves in their social relations with others. But it does not mean the native and nonnative CFL teachers do not have anything in common. On the contrary, my studies reveal an interesting result. Both groups of teachers are not merely satisfied with the current teaching methods, but also search for “*a modified pedagogical approach*”, an approach different from that of Chinese and of Danish. Further, the study also reveals that both experienced and inexperienced CFL teachers are willing to challenge the views that position “Danish” educational values and environments as superior to those found in Confucian cultures, regardless of Chinese native or Danish native. Their willingness to challenge what “Danish” and “Chinese” implicated can alter teachers’ beliefs, and the altered beliefs gradually foster their capability to become critical. Being critical of the context and of their domain-related experiences forms an important source for the development of CFL teachers’ identities in this case. It conforms to what Wenger’s theory claimed that “*identity in practice and in context is characterized as a process of becoming and it is also a learning process*” (Wenger 1998, p. 162-163). Thus, learning to become a ‘good’ teacher is a further step on the journey of identity construction in which they are able to develop themselves.

The above-mentioned research findings have important theoretical implications for researching foreign language teacher identity. Previous research on interplay and interaction more often focused on teacher’s linguistic competency, teacher’s cultural background, and teacher’s vision (Danielewicz, 2001; Gao, 2012; Gao & Skum, 2010; Moloney, 2012). My studies though demonstrated that teacher’s identities can be shaped by teachers’ beliefs and be influenced by the context they work in. Classroom cultures are a part of the teaching cultures; and teaching cultures are the important part of the teaching context. They are not static. Through teaching, each CFL teacher creates his or her own classroom culture. As more and more teachers develop their own classroom cultures, they may form their own repertoire of practice, from which a teaching culture arises. This is also called “*shared repertoire of practice*” (Wenger 1998, p.82). Yet, unlike what Wenger (1998) claimed that shared repertoire includes common routines, tools and ways of doing things (p.83), I claim that the repertoire of TCFL includes distinctive routines, concepts and ways of doing things, through which they construct his/her identity as a teacher.

Based on the research findings, I will revisit the proposed research model and re-specify its constructs. The re-specified model is given below (See figure 3). The model is extended with the constructs developed and validated through the four empirical studies. Firstly, my studies confirm the role of domain-related prior experiences. Domain-related prior experiences have significant influence on teachers’ present beliefs in being teachers, and the domain-related experience is mediated by convergent and divergent cross-cultural knowledge. Secondly, I also discover that teaching cultures have an effect on teachers’ beliefs, but the effect of

teachers' beliefs on being teachers is mediated by the interaction between students' response and teacher's understandings. Evidence shows that the experienced teachers have inclination to develop their own teaching culture. It is individualized. These indirect effects are shown with curved and dotted lines in the figure. Lastly, two close relationships have also arisen from my studies. One is the direct influence between local students' responses and teachers' views/understanding about the students, which is reported in detail in Chapter 7. The other is the influence between teachers' altered beliefs and students responses in relation to CFL teacher and TCFL, which is reported in Chapter 8. Although the second influence did not deliberate on students' identity change, it is certainly interesting to be acknowledged, and therefore further research will be needed to explore the change and development of local students' identities. As foreign language learners, the students have to "*negotiate competing and contradictory identities in conflicting discourses while struggling to shape their practices of language learning*" (Canagarajah, 2004 cited in Gao & Skum, 2010, p.453). In summary, I believe that the revised and re-specified model is a useful model for taking account to local students and explaining teacher's beliefs in a TCFL context.

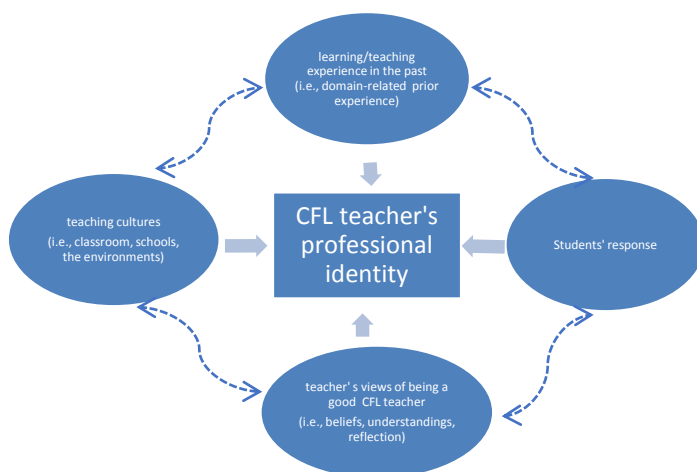


Figure 3: Revised research model

### 9.2.3. CONCLUDING REMARKS

To conclude the discussion, the findings from this dissertation can contribute useful understanding the rationale behind foreign language teacher identity research by linking theories of social identity (Wenger 1998) and the current literature studies of language teacher identity (see e.g., Gao, 2012; Gao & Skum, 2010; Moloney, 2013; Wang & Kirkepatrick, 2012; Wang & Jensen, 2013). Generally speaking, I strongly believe my findings can contribute to CFL teacher identity construction in the cross-cultural context. First, my studies highlight the importance of teachers' prior



domain-related experiences in relation to their beliefs in becoming “good” teachers by exploring the relationship between the experience and their reflection upon their experience. Secondly, I obtain a more theoretical understanding of the teacher identity construction process within “a practice of community” (i.e., Danish teaching cultures) by discovering the important stages the teachers explain, justify and create the meaning of becoming teachers and teaching. Thirdly, I can contribute at least some empirical footing for CFL teachers’ identity construction process, including teachers’ understanding of their students and conversely project their understanding to become “good” teachers in a local context. Finally, perhaps more important, I can start to detect the development of the CFL teachers in relation to their identities by showing the changed teaching methods and altered beliefs of being teachers, regardless of native and nonnative. And this may lead to a renewed understanding of CFL teachers in the domain of TCFL in that teacher identity is beyond native and nonnative, and what matters is their capability and willingness to challenge the “*monocultural point of reference*” (Kachru & Nelson, 1996), not only “*the ownership of linguistic capital*” (Gao & Skum, 2010, p.454 ).

### 9.3. EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

In this section, the educational implications of my research findings to CFL teacher educators, CFL teacher study programmers, and CFL teacher profession developers are listed. My findings suggest it is potentially important for future theoretical and empirical work in CFL teacher education to explicitly consider the impact of teachers’ identity-in-practice and teachers’ identity-in-context. In practice, CFL teacher program should pay more attention to teachers’ prior learning experience, especially examining teachers’ learning trajectory and listening to teachers’ views. As shown in my study, prior domain-related experience plays a significant role in shaping what kind of teachers they become. It is also shown that teachers with a critical view of their home culture and the host culture have a significant impact on what teachers they wish to become. As most CFL teachers are born and educated in China, for CFL teacher programmers, the first step is to strength teachers’ intercultural education *before* TCFL outside China. Strengthening intercultural education should not only center on imparting teachers to cultural facts and/or cultural knowledge. Rather, it should focus on teach teachers to understand the teaching cultures and educational cultures of the target country. When I heard from native Chinese teachers make comments like, “We never learned the concept of teaching cultures [when we studied MA degree in TCFL]” (Betty Bi), “We had a subject called ‘cross-cultural communication’, but we were only introduced the customs and festivals of America, Britian and Japan.” (Susan Shěn), or “Our subject on ‘cross-cultural communication’ was very much American-focused” (Mary Mǎ), you know they do not feel familiar to educational values of other countries, not mention that of the egalitarian country like Denmark. When they are unfamiliar with the new educational values and cultures, their confidence about themselves as teachers is low in teaching and handling the students that are different from they

used to. If the new teachers already doubt their capability to be teachers, they most likely will stop pursuing their career, or fail in constructing their professional identities. Some researchers claim that “*developing an identity as a teacher is an important part of securing teachers’ commitment to their work*” (Hammerness, Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005, p.383; Flores & Day, 2006). This can be done through strengthening cross-cultural and intercultural education to the Chinese teachers before teaching CFL outside China, or through a short-term course in intercultural language pedagogy after they begin teaching outside China. The purpose of using these methods is two-fold. First, native teachers can have a better understanding of being CFL teachers in a local context, and become aware of the cultural differences so that they can adapt to “*the expectations of a new educational environment*” (Moloney, 2013, p.225). Secondly, through the completion of a course, teachers can become aware of their own teaching and their own professional identity. By facilitating teachers to become self-aware of their own cultural and educational background, they might “*adhere to professional norms of practice*” (Flores & Day, 2006). These commitment and adherence to the practice are important in that it may help teachers identify with the profession of teachers.

Non-native teachers need to recognize their special merits that native teachers might not have (Braine, 2013). The shared mother tongue and similar CFL learning experiences between the non-native CFL teachers and their students is a useful pedagogical tool in teacher-student interaction (Tang, 1997), which could help make Chinese language more approachable. Yet, lacking pedagogical training in TCFL is a problem. I heard from non-native CFL teachers making comments like “we were never taught how to teach [TCFL] to Danish [while I was a student]” (Agnes), “I am not as good at speaking [Chinese] as my [native-speakers] colleagues, am I?” (Frank); or “I learned teaching methods when I was a ‘*Líxuéshēng*’ [exchange student]. But it was thirty years ago” (Ellen). When I heard these, I know that pedagogical content knowledge of TCFL is needed while they were the students. Also, it should be integrated in their teaching curriculum for educating local CFL teachers. Without the solid curriculum-based knowledge in TCFL, it is hard for the nonnative teachers to develop professional identities. Cross-cultural and intercultural education is also needed for nonnative teachers and it should foster teachers’ ability to question the values embedded in different cultures. Furthermore, it is vital that the recognition of new teachers’ competence in CFL learning was the major source of professional identity construction. For these new local teachers, going to work as a CFL teacher is a step on a journey of self-discovery in which they can evaluate themselves and be evaluated by others (i.e., students and/or other colleagues) in a range of personal and professional settings. They learned new teaching skills, developed new understanding and constructed new professional identities.

Based on the research findings in this dissertation, CFL teacher development programs should aim at nurturing teachers’ beliefs, as these self-perception and beliefs are closely related to constructing professional identities. For CFL teacher educators, the second step is to provide chances for the teachers to talk about their

beliefs and reflect upon them, besides offering cross-cultural and intercultural courses. Interview process is a reciprocal process (Groves, Cialdini & Couper, 1992), i.e., a process does not only give the interviewer a chance to collect data, but also give interviewees a chance to express their concerns. As Jenkins (1996) stated, *“identity is not just there, it must always be established”* (p.4). Therefore, it is very important to provide this opportunity through listening to their concerns and experiences. In fact, in the follow-up interviews, I heard “I never realize I was also teaching *culture* just because I asked the students to do a ‘peer assessment’ test” (Mary Mă), “Danish student should learn Chinese culture by learning how Chinese teachers teach Chinese” (Frank), or “Now you know everything about my journey [to become a Chinese teacher]; but I am happy you asked it [Laughter]” (Ellen). This self-reflection is necessary for their identity construction in that *“through self-reflection teachers are able to integrate what is socially relevant into their images of themselves as teachers”* (Nias, 1989; cited in D. Beijaard et.al, 2004, p.114). From a perspective of language teacher identity research, I think the following ways could have the potential to improve teachers’ identity construction. First of all, in order to encourage teachers to reflect upon their beliefs and experiences, CFL teacher program developers should ensure that teachers understand why they are encouraged to reflect upon their beliefs and experiences. Making reflection on beliefs and experiences is a central social teacher learning process (Borg, 2011, p.379). Secondly, teacher developers should provide teachers not only with chances to talk about their beliefs and experiences explicitly, but also with a space to question and doubt those beliefs and *“powerful alternative conceptions”* (Borg, 2011; Woolfolk Hoy, Davis, H., & Pape, 2006). Questioning and doubting those beliefs has the potential to gradually construct CFL teachers intercultural competency. When teachers feel that they cast doubt on the teaching methods and appreciating the new methods, their perceptions of capability will increase. The perception that they are appreciating others enhances their beliefs for themselves and other’s teaching. This can increase the willingness to adapt to other culture, and the sense of identification will have a good meaning for strengthening their professional identities.

#### 9.4. LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Inevitably, there are certain limitations that have been imposed on the current studies that should be acknowledged at this point. These have to do with the need to extend the more follow-up interviews and the need to incorporate other inquiries to understand teachers’ professional identities. Therefore, this last section of this dissertation will list these limitations, and meanwhile point out a number of potential areas for future research.

First of all, the limited number of teacher participants and the findings from them within one country should be interpreted with caution. The studies presented in this dissertation have only dealt with ten CFL teachers within a period of 2011-2015. For this reason, it might be fruitful to carry out longitudinal studies. The statements

made in this dissertation have referred to a particular type of teachers. The teachers in these studies were teachers teaching Chinese as a foreign language with a specific focus on the acquisition of CFL listening, speaking, reading and grammar at an elementary and intermediate level. These teachers are primarily responsible for teaching subjects in CFL proficiency. Although they are categorized as language teachers, questions still remain as to whether the findings advanced in this study would hold for CFL teacher identity in other language-related subjects and in other countries. Equally important, future research on new CFL teachers may look at the development and changes of professional identities by following them over a number of years. It is also important to investigate collaboration between native and non-native teachers in a particular cultural and educational setting. In order to extend the theoretical constructs and findings in this dissertation to other contexts, more empirical studies are needed that change the context, involving other language-related CFL subjects and more different countries. For example, how do the CFL teachers' beliefs about teaching and their views on the utility of their teaching experiences stand the test of time? What is the effect of a native-speaker teacher of Chinese return to his/her home country? And what role does a different place play in the nonnative CFL teachers' identity? Studies are also needed to examine how other teacher-related factors, e.g., teachers' motivation, personality, and emotions etc., interplay with their beliefs under different country and different teaching context. In addition, students' identities should also be taken into account, not just about what teachers understand who they are, but more about what students' views and understanding of their teachers. In order to examine these questions, qualitative studies including students' questionnaires and interviews should be adopted.

Secondly, I have to acknowledge the inherent limitation of the qualitative research adopted in this dissertation, i.e., interviews, observation and researcher's journals. One of the limitations is that these methods used in specific research context can never be totally "*value-free or objective*" (Griffin, 2002, p.6). Although as researcher, I strive to be distanced and be an objective observer, the influence of my own experience and my own identity can hardly be ignored. Some research critics have raised doubts about the validity of semi-interview data, participant observation and researcher's journals (see e.g., Beijaard, 1995; Mawhinney & Xu, 1997; Samuel & Stephens, 2000) as compared with researches using portfolio analysis to emphasizing the role of "*autobiographies*" and "*life history*" (see e.g., Antonek, McCormick, & Donato, 1997). Future research may consider teachers' use of working portfolios as tools to facilitate reflection and the construction a new professional identity. However, researchers should also be aware that these methods also have certain limitations. A portfolio conceived of as autobiographies may reflect the process of identity construction, in which the teacher is given ample time to reflect upon and describe his or her thoughts. However, it has drawbacks too. First, it may not be practical method of collecting data for a time-limited project. Second, autobiographical data were analyzed either using "*phenomenographic*

*procedures or in a more interpretative way*" (cited in Beijaard et.al, 2004, p. 114). These studies can be characterized as "*too interpretative to be value-frees*" (ibid.). Although teachers noted down their reflections and stories, most of their reflection cannot be explicitly described. Therefore, using teacher's autobiography as a research method is also questionable. Finally, the findings of my study revealed some evidence that teachers create and develop a new teaching culture. The new teaching culture forms a part of the context. Thus, while reconsidering research methods, it is worth mentioning that in the future, it would also be important to pay special attention to fluid nature of the context, or a "*professional landscape*", a metaphor used by Connelly and Clandinin (1999, p.175), a landscape of which teachers are the essential part. As I near the end of this dissertation, I hope my study will shed light on the significance of CFL teachers' professional identity study and call for more research, so as to allow more solid conclusions to be drawn.

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# APPENDICES

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## Appendix A. Letter of inquiry

Dear colleagues and teachers

I am writing to invite you to participate in a research aiming to finding out identity construction of Chinese as foreign language teachers (henceforth CFL teachers) in non-Chinese teaching contexts. The goal of my research is to develop a theory of CFL teachers' identity. I am a PhD student in the department of philosophy and learning, Aalborg University, Denmark.

In this part of the research, I wish to document the views of CFL teachers about factors influencing their perceptions of the self as teachers in teaching and learning. To do it, I plan to conduct email questionnaires, an interview, and an email follow-up. If you agree to participate in this research, please be kind to complete the questionnaire, which will take approximately 20 minutes. Your completion of the questionnaire will regarded as consent to participation in the research.

Your answers to the questionnaires, your emails, and interviews scripts will be kept confidentially and will be stored in a special folder in my PC. No one can have access to it except me. Your name and personal information will be kept absolutely confidential. This research will result in publication of various types, including journal articles, books and proceedings. But your name will not appear in any publication unless you wish to do.

If you have any questions about this research, please feel free to contact Chún Zhang at [ostzc@hum.au.dk](mailto:ostzc@hum.au.dk).

Best wishes,

Chún Zhang (Ph.D. student)

Department of Philosophy and Learning

Aalborg University, Denmark

## Appendix B. Questionnaire 1

This language of the questionnaire 1 is in Chinese. The answers from the participants are in Chinese.

年龄

性别

教育程度

工作单位 丹麦大学

教学年限

1. 你在中国时在那所学校担任教学任务? 你教什么?
2. 你担任对外汉语教学担任了多长时间?
3. 你认为好的对外汉语教师应该具备什么职业标准?
4. 你认为教师与学生之间的 关系应该怎样?
5. 丹麦学生 跟你教过的其他国家的学生一样吗? 举例说明
6. 你在丹麦教中文时, 你是怎么开展课堂活动的? 比方说以授课为主还是以迎合学生需求为主. 为什么那么做
7. 你认同教师职业需要一份高度自律心吗? 你认同教师职业 也需要他律吗,比方说受社会约束, 文化影响吗? 举例说明.
8. 你认为教师对自己的自律态度会影响到你对待丹麦学生的行为上吗? 你的丹麦学生认同你 对他们的压力, 约束吗? 为什么?
9. 你觉得在丹麦做中文教师所要注意的什么?
10. 在丹麦做中文教师所注意的地方跟你平常 认同的教师职业 要求一样吗? 有没有冲突或者矛盾?

## Appendix C. Questionnaire 2

(Questionnaire 2 is particularly to the beginning NCFL teachers)

问卷调查

1. 在对外汉语教学上，你对于跨文化交流是如何理解的？
2. 你在国内本科或者硕士时，有没有上过这类的课 如有，这类课一般是如何授课的 内容是什么？
3. 你在丹麦教学实践中，如何应用你对跨文化交流的理解的 有没有误解的时候 或者处理不当的时候？
4. 你觉得丹麦的师生关系跟国内的师生关系一样吗？
5. 你认为丹麦的师生关系会不会影响你的教学方法？
6. 你提到在丹麦，学生对老师的信任度不高。你觉得怎么会这样的？
7. 你提到教师的应变能力，你会根据学生的要就来改变自己的教学方法吗？请举例说明
8. 请结合你自身经历谈谈你自己的跨文化交流中的感受

## Appendix D. E-mails

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Please note that your participation and answer to this questionnaire will be viewed as consent to participation in my research. Please check the following box to indicate that you'd like to participate.

Yes, I understand it. By completing this questionnaire means consent to participation in the research of Chún Zhang's study.

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Name:

Gender:

Age:

Schools of graduation:

Years of teaching: from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

1. How do you define a good language teacher?
2. How do you identify yourself so far, as a student, as a teacher or something else?
3. Do you think your identification influence your way of teaching, f.x., relationship between students and teachers, teaching methods, etc.?
4. Do your previous experience (learning and /or teaching experience in Denmark and/or China etc.) influence your way of teaching?
5. How do you manage the teaching in the classroom? For example, how do you deal with classroom attendance, quick /slow students, and noisy/quiet students?
6. What challenges do you have when you teach Chinese at Danish university? Examples.

Other comments: Thank you very much. All your responses are to be kept confidential and only used for academic purpose.

## Appendix E. Notes of one classroom observation

In one lesson (Example 1)

Teacher: Grace Gù

Date of observation: Nov.9, 2012

Before the observation

Before I observed this particular class at University C, I looked up their textbook and study program. This class is designed for students who wish to expand their Chinese for business communication. The program offers four core courses. The core course I observed was an intermediate reading lesson, which meets every Tuesday and Thursday from 14-16.00. I met the teacher, Grace Gù and talked about my purpose of the observation. Grace Gù told me briefly about the goal of that day's lesson. She mentioned that there were only 22 students in the class and almost all of them were between the ages of 19-25 (with the exception of one man who is above 25) and were Danes (with the exception of two females who are not).

During the observation

Grace Gù starts the class by picking up one assignment that was due and they checked three other assignments together. All of the students called out the answers in unison. (The topic of that chapter in the textbook was about transportation in China). Then she handed out strips of paper with five discussion questions pertaining to the topic of transportation, for example, 'why do you think biking is a good means of travelling around in a city?' 'What means of transport do you prefer to?' They were required to answer the questions in Chinese. Students get into groups of two /three to discuss their opinions on these questions. Grace Gù walked around from group to group and listened. It seemed as though she used an integrated focus on form approach to error correction. She appeared to be genuinely interested in hearing their thoughts and she laughed with them when they made funny remarks. Students appeared to be comfortable and engaged. She seemed to be creating a positive environment in which to learn. After the students discussed these questions in groups, they shared their ideas with the rest of the class. Grace Gù stood in front of the class, rather than going around the room, and each student answered one of the questions. The instructor elicited more responses with each student. If the students made any errors (syntactically and/or semantically), she

corrected them immediately. One girl student flushed. It seemed Grace Gù was more concerned with having the students speak correctly than freely.

Next Grace Gù gave students handouts for reading practice. The first section is on how to use guidewords in a written text. The section was on using these guidewords to make new sentences, and the third section was on writing a short paragraph from the information given. After the students completed each section on their own, they went over the answers together.

After the break, students began to check the paragraphs they had written. This exercise was individualized. Grace Gù picked up some of the students to read out theirs. She corrected the syntactical errors immediately. The last activity involved textbooks the students read and answered questions on for homework. Grace Gù also explained students' questions in an affirmative tone, leaving little room for further questioning from the students. During this activity, Grace Gù remained standing in the front. The students appeared not to be fully engaged on the explanation the teacher provided. Some students began to look at their laptops, some were scribbling at a piece of paper, and the others looked tired. For the last fifteen minutes of the class, Grace Gù asked one student (alias: John) read through a short essay that he had written for homework on the subject of 'my favorite city'. After John had finished reading out his rather obviously skimped piece of work, Grace Gù sighed and said, rather crossly:

Grace Gù (the teacher): John, we'll have to put you away if you don't change your ways, and do your homework. Is that all you've done?

John (the student): píng guǒ jiàng, píng guǒ jiàng (laughter)

Grace Gù proceeded to ask John on this, "Shouldn't you do something about it if you know it as 'píng guǒ jiàng'?" John did not answer and looked very indifferent, and slightly annoyed. One female student said abruptly, "Time is over". It was now 16:04 and class was over. Before the student left Grace Gù reminded them what they needed to have done for class next Tuesday and wrote them on the board.

After the observation

Immediately following the class, I stayed and talked with Grace Gù about how she felt the class went. When I asked whether the activities went as expected, she mentioned that there wasn't enough time for deep elaboration on the texts, which she had planned on doing initially. She also said that the students were so poorly prepared before they attended the class, which left her to change her teaching plans at the last minute because during the group discussions of the texts, she walked around and realized that the students talked the topics mostly in Danish, which was not supposed to be, and she wanted to 'break it down to help process it'. Therefore

she went through them again together as a group to clarify details, which appeared to have been missed.

One part that she said she didn't like was the fact that some students did not do the homework properly. She felt that the other students lost focus as she spoke with each student about their answers. She also felt that the students felt uncomfortable when she corrected their errors immediately.

For the most part, Grace Gù felt that she accomplished her goals; however, with regards to teaching practice on error-correction and classroom atmosphere, etc., she realized that this was harder for her than she thought it would be. I noticed that on her original lesson plan, she had intended on doing more teacher's explanation and students' reading in choir. However she ended up switching to other activities. She said that it was because she noticed that some of the students were beginning to feel fatigue. She also said that she was actually irritated by students' attitudes towards the homework. She said that she had been acting very lenient and if she had been in China, she would have advised more homework to the students.

## Appendix F. Rounds of interviews/observations

Participant	Questionnaire	Interview 1	Interview 2	Observations	Researcher's Journal
Ellen	June 17, 2012	March 8, 2012	Sept. 8, 2012; Nov. 21, 2012	April 25, 2012; Nov. 29, 2012; March 27, 2013	Spring 2012-2014
Agnes	June 18, 2012	April 18, 2012	Sept. 12, 2012	Sept. 26, 2012	Spring 2012- spring 2013
Sara	Aug. 13, 2012	-	Oct. 31, 2012	-	Autumn 2012 to spring 2014
Rebecca Rèn	June 16, 2012	Nov. 8, 2012	-	-	Autumn 2012 to spring 2013
Grace Giù	Oct. 13, 2012	Nov. 8, 2012	-	Nov. 8, 2012; Nov. 9, 2012	Autumn 2011
Thomas Tào	March 29, 2012	Sept. 20, 2012	Jan. 18, 2013	Nov. 13, 2012 Nov. 27, 2012;	Spring 2012 to Jan 2013
Mary Mả	Sept. 6, 2012	Nov. 2, 2012;	Feb. 28, 2013	Sept. 23, 2012; April 2, 2013	Autumn 2012 to summer 2013
Susan Shên	March 5, 2013	April 18, 2013	June 2, 2013	Feb. 12, 2013; March 5, 2013 Nov. 1, 2013;	Spring 2013 to 2014
Betty Bì	Sept. 22, 2013	December 5, 2013	Feb. 14, 2014	Sept. 17, 2013; March 11, 2014	Autumn 2013 to spring 2015



Frank      Sept. 30, 2013      October 30, 2013      Oct. 27, 2014      -      Autumn 2013 to Jan 2014

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## SUMMARY

Discover what Chinese language teachers experience while teaching Chinese as a foreign language (abbreviated to CFL) at Danish universities. Are they teaching CFL in a 'Chinese' way? Are they teaching CFL in a 'Danish' way? Focusing on professional identities, this PhD project explores the relationship among teachers' beliefs, prior CFL-related experiences and the influence of different teaching cultures. Six native-speaker teachers of Chinese and four non-native-speaker teachers of Chinese from three Danish universities joined the project. Through a qualitative study made up of researcher's journals, classroom observations and semi-structured interviews over four years (2011-2015), the author explains the process of being and becoming 'good' Chinese language teachers in a Danish educational setting, concentrating on the factors which are associated with influencing the construction of teacher identity. Filled with teachers' narration and their personal reflections, the project argues that claiming what 'Chinese-styled teaching' or 'Danish-styled teaching' entails will serve these teachers well in that they opt for an alternative identity and an alternative form of teaching in an intercultural context.

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