

‘Roots’ or ‘Routes’: A Case Study of Immigrant Chinese Teachers of Mandarin in a Canadian University

by

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Abstract

International immigrants often encounter tensions and struggles arising from differences between their home culture and their host culture. This thesis focuses on immigrant Chinese teachers in Canada and explores how they negotiate the relation between their 'roots' and 'routes' with reference to their feelings about Mandarin teaching, about their roles and authority in class, about their students in general, and about their pedagogical and social practices in the classroom. It also examines how the teachers position themselves and feel positioned within the university culture in interactions with their colleagues.

A case study was conducted with five immigrant Chinese teachers of Mandarin at a university in Greater Vancouver, and data consisted of semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. The study produced a number of key findings: the teachers adjusted their roles and sense of authority with students after teaching in Canada; they interpreted students' behaviours in cultural contexts and reacted to them adaptively; they purposefully and practically introduced Chinese cultural information to Mandarin classes; they practised student-centered pedagogies vigorously without diminishing their own teaching philosophies; they expressed dissatisfaction with the low status of language courses in Canadian universities and desired more support from the university administration; most of them saw their teaching profession as benefiting China and Canada concurrently; and they were all aware of their own changes along with their immigration but positioned themselves variably as to where they were and headed towards.

The main conclusions drawn from the study are that immigrant teachers frequently negotiate their self-perceptions and practices at the junction of their roots and routes, and that roots and routes are reciprocal to each other, playing out in harmony or in tension, and are intertwined with the negotiation of immigrant teachers' personal choices and their settings. I recommend that the links between ethnic identity and many other factors deserve further investigation and more inter-group and intra-group studies should be encouraged to enhance our understandings of the richness of immigrants' lived experiences.

Keywords: immigrant Chinese teachers; Mandarin teaching in Canada; ethnic identity; professional identity; roots; routes

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to all the people who give me help and support in my personal growth and to teachers, educators, and practitioners who care about the growth of our offspring.

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Chapter 1.

Introduction

'Roots' are about "where we came from";

'Routes' are about "what we might become".

(Hall, 1996, p. 4)

It is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore identity issues in an increasingly globalized world, particularly in the countries with the most immigrants, such as Canada, the US, the UK, and several others. Many new immigrants inevitably struggle with their roots and routes when faced with cross-cultural encounters. While often hearing the question "Where are you from?" from others who try to locate their ethnic identities, they probably ask themselves "Where should I be going?" on their immigration journeys. As for myself, I experienced the transformation from an international student from Mainland China to a landed immigrant of Canada and an instructor of Mandarin in a Canadian university. At the initial stage of my relocation, I found myself undergoing some tensions, which I describe in more detail below. As time went by, I gradually adapted to the Canadian university culture. In this process, I frequently reflected on my past and current teaching experiences, and compared my previous students in China and current students in Canada. These back-and-forth thoughts provoked my curiosity to know if other immigrant Chinese university teachers of Mandarin experienced the same tensions as I did, and how they looked at their lived experiences along with their immigration. It was this curiosity that propelled me to conduct a small-scale case study with five immigrant Chinese teachers, who were teaching Mandarin in a university of the Greater Vancouver area on the west coast of Canada, to explore facets of their identities.

When discussing the notion of 'identity', the British sociologist Stuart Hall (1996) endorsed a postmodern position that identities are increasingly fragmented and multiply

constructed, especially in the wake of globalization and growing migration, as against an essentialist view of integral and unified identities. He argued:

...actually identities are about questions of using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being: not 'who we are' or 'where we came from', so much as what we might become... not the so-called return to roots but a coming-to-terms-with our 'routes'. (Hall, 1996, p.4)

His remarks led me to wonder: Are all immigrants more concerned about their 'routes' than their 'roots'? How do people look at the effect of 'roots' and 'routes' on their migration? Through the study with the immigrant Chinese teachers, I endeavored to explore how roots and routes play out in their life trajectories, how these two aspects articulate with each other at certain moments, and how they impact on the participants' teaching practices and interactions with their students and colleagues in their workplace. Despite a rather small sample, the results are intended to provide revealing and useful insights for immigrant teachers, university policymakers, and teacher educators in the Canadian educational context.

1.1. Rationale of the study

1.1.1. Personal link to the research topic

The formulation of my research concerns was derived from my own learning and teaching experiences. I spent 28 years in a big city of southwestern China from my birth to my adulthood. I spoke a Chinese dialect with my parents and others in my daily life but could speak Mandarin well, which is the medium of instruction at school and is always used by the mass media. When I was in China, I had been considered as an "excellent" student throughout my schooling, from elementary school to university, in the eyes of my parents and of my teachers. I always studied hard and often obtained top examination scores, and I accepted my parents' and teachers' instructions most of the time. I was attentive to teachers in class, but perhaps because of my relatively introverted social behaviour, rather than volunteer to ask or answer questions, I would stay quiet and solve problems independently. After completing my Master's in Applied Linguistics in China, I worked as a language instructor in secondary schools and

universities there, teaching English to Chinese students, and sometimes teaching Mandarin to international students, for almost four years. During my teaching, I tended to see diligent students (like me) as good students and encouraged other students to learn from them.

In the fall of 2006, I embarked on my PhD journey in Education in British Columbia (BC), Canada's most western province, where I often felt challenged by the professors asking students to offer ideas freely in class, and to participate in discussions and presentations frequently. In the spring of 2007, I started to teach Mandarin part-time to undergraduates at a university in this province. While I was delighted to see Canadian students taking a more active part in class activities than my previous Chinese students, I sometimes felt frustrated by their casually interrupting me with questions or making requests when I was focused on explaining a language point, by their sharing snacks with the other classmates in the middle of class, by their rushing out of the classroom before I dismissed them, and so on. I was proud of being a native Chinese who could inform my students deeply about Chinese culture; at other times, I felt short of confidence owing to a distance between me and my students since I was not well acquainted with what they found familiar or interesting in Canada. I felt like a pendulum swinging between my roots and routes.

Hence, I began to wonder whether other immigrant Chinese teachers who were teaching Mandarin in Canadian universities felt the same way as me or how they felt differently from me if that was the case; in other words, I was interested in how they positioned themselves in the Canadian university culture in relation to the people around them and how their reactions were influenced by their roots and routes. I was especially interested in how such immigrant Chinese teachers constructed personal and professional identities in Canada.

1.1.2. Relevant facts in Canada

Why should identity issues of immigrant Chinese teachers be addressed? According to reports issued by Statistics Canada (2011a)¹, Chinese is the second largest visible minority group in Canada, numbers slightly over 1,324,700, and accounts for 21.1% of the visible minority population and 4.0% of Canada's total population. It is one of the 13 different ethnic origins in Canada that have surpassed the one-million mark. Vancouver alone is home to 31.1% of Chinese minorities (Statistics Canada, 2011b). The 2011 data also showed that of the roughly 6.8 million immigrants in Canada, 15.3% of the foreign-born population who reported being Chinese arrived between 2006 and 2011. 85.0% of them were immigrants born in Mainland China, 6.3% born in Taiwan, and 3.0% born in Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (Statistics Canada, 2011b). In addition, among the immigrants whose mother tongue is neither English nor French, Chinese languages are most common mother tongues. A total of about 852,700 individuals reported that Chinese languages were their single mother tongue, including Mandarin, Cantonese, and other Chinese languages (Statistics Canada, 2011c).

As these data indicated, a majority of recent Chinese immigrants landed in Canada from Mainland China, where Mandarin is the official language. The demand for Mandarin learning has taken precedence over that for Cantonese in recent years in Greater Vancouver (Lo, 2007). The increasing popularity of Mandarin and the growing enrolment in Mandarin courses thus call for more professional Chinese instructors. As Duff (2008b) pointed out, in North America "there is a sweeping new enthusiasm and urgency for high quality Chinese language education and Chinese teacher education" (p.3). In Canada, immigrant Chinese teachers serve as the backbone of Chinese language programs. How they position themselves with reference to their self-identification, and to their relations with colleagues and students, have significant bearing on their teaching effectiveness and their students' learning outcomes. As a result, there is a need to direct our attention to the identity construction of these teachers.

¹ These are the most recent Canadian Census data available from Statistics Canada.

Moreover, Canada is generally well known for its welcoming policies for immigrants, policies that advocate the values of diversity, respect, equity, and individuality (Wang, 2002). The British Columbia government has been launching significant initiatives, including the British Columbia Anti-racism and Multiculturalism Program, and the Skills Connect for Immigrants Program, to promote multiculturalism and assist immigrant skilled workers and professionals (British Columbia, 2009). Such a climate should encourage educational institutions in Canada to give more attention to diversifying their teaching force. Through a deeper understanding of the varied identities of ethnic minority teachers, we are likely to accommodate their specific needs better, to appreciate their work more profoundly and evaluate it more accurately (Wang, 2002), to cultivate an equitable, harmonious, and inclusive educational milieu, and to achieve togetherness-in-difference (Ang, 2001). Just as James and Shadd (2001) claimed, changes made at the individual level through increased knowledge of and respect for others can bring about changes in sociocultural structures.

1.1.3. Literature gap

To date, identity has been investigated in numerous fields – psychology, philosophy, sociology, anthropology, cultural studies, business, and so on. More recently, identity has become a concept examined in disciplines like education and applied linguistics. An increasing number of scholars have applied the notion of identity to their own research (e.g., Block, 2006; Lo, 2007; Norton, 1995, 1997, 2000, 2013; Phan, 2008; Wang, 2002). While there exists a collection of literature addressing ethnic minority teachers' experiences in countries of immigration (Wang, 2002), my extensive literature search reveals that little has been published about lived experiences of minority immigrant teachers in Canada, particularly immigrant Chinese teachers in Canadian universities.

The potential of minority language programs has not been fully recognized in North America (Lee & Bang, 2011). Although there are many studies focused on Chinese language teaching in North America (e.g. Duff & Lester, 2008; Duff & Li, 2004) and some studies of teachers of Chinese ancestry teaching in mainstream classrooms (e.g. Beynon, Ilieva, & Dichupa, 2001, 2003; C. Lam, 1996; M. Lam, 1996; Lo, 2007;

Wang, 2002), there have been relatively few studies that examine self perceptions and related practices of immigrant Chinese teachers teaching at the university level. Hence, my investigation seeks to fill this gap and share with readers stories and thoughts these teachers revealed about their lived experiences. The findings of my study are intended to contribute to understandings of sociocultural issues in education on the whole and to educational research in the domain of minority teachers' experiences in mainstream society.

1.2. Purpose of the thesis

1.2.1. Research questions

My study drawing on the concepts of roots and routes was inspired by Hall's (1996) argument regarding them, when he pointed to an increasingly globalized world that witnesses growing migration. Thus, I endeavored to investigate the negotiation of these two aspects, as shown in the thesis title, across the lived experiences of my research participants through the following five research questions:

1. How do immigrant Chinese university teachers negotiate the relation between their roots and routes?
2. What are the teachers' feelings about teaching Mandarin in Canada, about their roles and authority with students, about their students in general, as compared to their feelings about these matters when teaching in China?
3. What pedagogies do they use in Canada and what kinds of interactions do they have with students in their classes?
4. How do they position themselves and feel positioned in interactions with their teaching colleagues at the university and within the university in general?
5. What are the implications of the reports of their lived experiences for providing appropriate support for them and other immigrant teachers of second languages in the multicultural context of Canada?

1.2.2. Research objectives

First of all, this study is intended to offer insights into the complexities of teacher identity concerning ethnic minority immigrant teachers in Canada. In particular, it aims to

investigate identity issues of immigrant Chinese teachers in mainstream educational institutions. To be specific, the study will explore these teachers' thoughts on their ethnic identities, their social and cultural identities, and their professional identities, and how their thoughts in these regards were reflected in and impacted on their practices. Further, it will probe into the dynamics between their individual identities and their collective identities, and into the moments when either of these two aspects falls into prominence in relation to their roots and routes.

Second, this study is also an attempt to unpack the issues that Chinese language teachers are concerned with. There are still false assumptions and expectations leading to ineffective minority language programs for teachers and students in North America (Lee & Bang, 2011). By listening to minority teachers' stories, we are able to notice, appreciate, and act upon their voices, which may "help increase the visibility of minority teachers and minority programs, and help us understand diversity in teacher education as well as pose questions that would help redefine and stretch the definitions of professional development and teacher education" (Lee & Bang, 2011, p.394). Hence, this study aims to supply suggestions to stakeholders such as university administrators, policy makers, and teacher educators, so that they can give adequate assistance to ethnic minority teachers, create a better teaching and learning environment through deeper understanding and closer rapport with these teachers, make more informed decisions and implement sensible policies regarding faculty support, teacher preparation, teacher evaluation, and teacher education.

Third, as a Chinese saying goes, "The remembrance of the past is the teacher of the future". The findings of this study are expected to function as valuable references for other Chinese language teachers as well as for minority immigrant teachers of non-Chinese origin in Canada, and/or for mainstream teachers who are interested in comparing and reflecting on personal experiences. However, I should point out that my interpretations of my research data and the findings of my study may be biased since they inevitably relate to my understanding and perspectives. I remind readers to read my work with caution and prudence, because the way I communicate my participants' words and my observations of their practices may differ from what they really meant, or what meanings others may take from them. Furthermore, what they said and did during this

study should not be seen as representative of many others who seemingly have similar backgrounds as them.

Finally, face-to-face interactions between a researcher and her participants should, ideally, be beneficial to both parties. Research is a process in which the researched and the researcher co-construct knowledge (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). On one hand, this process may propel the teacher participants to re-visit their life histories, to reflect upon their self-positioning and daily practices, and possibly help them spark new ideas about language teaching by exchanging opinions with the researcher. On the other hand, this process may lead the researcher to compare her own experiences with the participants' and as a result modify her views on language teaching and teacher identity issues. Listening to others' stories may help improve the researcher's prior conceptions of the research and thus re-orient and expand her research inquiries.

1.3. Methodology of the study

I situated my research within a language institute of a university in the Greater Vancouver area, British Columbia. For approximately one year from 2010 to 2011, I conducted a case study with five immigrant Chinese teachers of Mandarin working at the institute, who were my colleagues at that time. Of the five participants, four are female and one is male. The participants all immigrated to Canada in their adulthood, with four of them coming from Mainland China and one from Hong Kong. All participants had at least five years of language teaching experience both in China and abroad, and they all had graduate degrees in the area of language. When I carried out the study with them, they all had been teaching for more than one year at the institute where I conducted the research. Upon their verbal agreement to be my subjects, I reviewed the Consent Form with them, assured them of the protection of their privacy, and witnessed them sign the forms (see Appendix C).

I chose the case study approach because it is an in-depth study of the particularity and complexity of instances of a phenomenon in its natural context from the perspective of the participants involved (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2005; Schutt, 2006; Stake, 1995). Another reason for choosing the case study approach is because it can be

instrumental in building theories and offering new insights (Duff, 2008c; Lo, 2007). I gathered data through one-on-one semi-structured interviews and classroom observations to ensure relatively more all-rounded and multifaceted investigations. I audio-recorded all of the interviews on a digital recorder, and took field notes during the classroom observations. The interview data were used as a primary source to address my research questions, and the observational data were used as a secondary source to mainly provide complementary information to understand what the participants said about their classroom practices.

As the interviews were mostly conducted in Chinese, I transcribed verbatim the conversations relevant to my research concerns, translated the Chinese transcripts into English, and sought my participants' feedback on the accuracy of the translations. In terms of the data analyses, my study employs a combination of discourse analysis, thematic analysis, and comparative analysis, coupled with sociocultural and poststructural perspectives. While research subjectivity is hardly averted in naturalistic research (Arnold, 1994) and I found it hard to refrain from inserting my own voice in the research and write-up processes, I still made great efforts to step back, and I tried to maintain a good balance between "emic" (participant) and "etic" (researcher) perspectives (Gall et al., 2005) in the data collection, analysis, and report of the study.

1.4. Definition of terms

There are some terms which frequently occur in the thesis. It is necessary to clarify them here before the details of the report proceed in the following chapters.

Immigrant Chinese teachers

The immigrant Chinese teachers being studied refer to individuals who meet the following criteria:

1. The individual is an ethnic Chinese, born, raised, and educated in People's Republic of China (PRC) (Mainland China and Hong Kong in this study) until at least the age of 18. In addition, the individual has now received the status of landed immigrant or Canadian citizen after arriving in Canada. In this sense, the focus of the study is not Chinese

descendants who immigrate to Canada from outside PRC, such as Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam, and so on.

2. The individual is teaching Mandarin in a Canadian university at the time the study is conducted, regardless of the position being full time or part time, with a focus on the language *per se* rather than Chinese studies or other subjects.

Canadian students²

Canadian students in the study are mentioned in comparison with the Chinese students the teacher participants teach in China. Hence, Canadian students in the thesis refer to students who are studying in Canada, including international students, exchange students, immigrant students, and native-born Canadian students regardless of their ethnicity.

Heritage students and non-heritage students

According to the teacher participants, these two terms are distinguished in relation to the students' home language(s) despite their ethnicity. Heritage students are those whose family speak Mandarin or a close Chinese dialect with them at home, whereas non-heritage students are those who fall out of this category.

Collegial relationship and colleagues

In this thesis I report the participants' relations with their colleagues. I use the term "colleagues" in a broad sense, which refers to teachers and staff working in the same department as the participants, at both the peer level and the superior-subordinate level.

² In this thesis occurs terminology such as "Canadian", "Chinese", "Caucasian", "Western", and "Asian". I am aware of the problems of essentializing these categories, but I still used them in the report as they were the words my participants originally used in their comments.

1.5. Overview of chapters

There are six chapters in this thesis. Chapter 1 describes the background and the rationale that led me to the present topic of research. It also outlines the five major research questions, research objectives, and methodology of the study. Detailed definitions of terms are also provided in this chapter.

Chapter 2 presents the theoretical frames of reference that inspired and guided me in my inquires, offering an extensive literature review on theorization of identity in general and on studies of immigrant Chinese teachers in Canada in particular. Following the overview, I elaborate on the specific aspects of identity I endeavor to investigate in my study.

Chapter 3 addresses the research design I used to explore immigrant Chinese teachers' lived experiences. It details my data collection and analysis procedures, introduces the background of the research site and study participants, and informs how I situate myself in the study with regard to some methodological concerns.

Chapter 4 reports the first five themes I identify through the study, centering on the participants' classroom teaching. It discusses the teachers' feelings about teaching Mandarin in Canada, about their roles and authority with students, about their students in general, as compared to their feelings about these matters when teaching in China. It also describes the pedagogies they use in Canada and the particular interactions they have with students in their classes. This chapter starts with a presentation of the interview and observation data and moves on to a discussion of the findings with reference to the conceptual framework. It ends with a conclusion that addresses my research questions.

Chapter 5 is a continuance of Chapter 4, reporting the remaining three themes with a view to the participants' feelings and practices outside the classroom. Mostly drawing on the interview data, this chapter presents the interactions the participants have with their colleagues in the workplace, their opinions on the work environment as well as the significance of their teaching profession, and their reflections on the negotiation of their roots and routes along their life trajectories. Using the same structure

as Chapter 4, I report the data in the first section, discuss the findings with reference to the theoretical and empirical literature in the second section, and conclude this chapter with my answers to the research questions as well.

Chapter 6 is the final chapter that contains a summary and conclusions of the thesis. I offer implications of the study for providing support for minority immigrant teachers of second languages in the multicultural context of Canada. Noting the limitations of this study, the chapter also suggests possible further explorations and advises other researchers of potential research areas. I conclude the thesis by conveying my personal feelings and reflections on conducting the study and writing up the final report.

Chapter 2.

Theoretical framework

This chapter presents the theoretical frames of reference that have significant bearing on my research concerns. I locate my study within the works of sociocultural and poststructural theorists who throw light on the concept of identity. I also examine studies that investigate lived experiences of immigrant Chinese teachers in Canada. The chapter is divided into three sections. In the first section, I offer a literature review of works that theorize identity issues related to my research focus; in the second section, I discuss empirical studies that report thoughts and practices of immigrant Chinese teachers in Canadian schools; based on the previous two sections, I identify, in the last section, the key notions that formed the basis of my study.

2.1. Overview of theories on immigrant identity

While the meaning of 'identity' is far from being adequately captured by dictionary definitions, this concept has been widely examined in a vast array of disciplinary areas. As my thesis is an attempt to study immigrant Chinese teachers in Canada, this section mainly offers a glimpse into identity theories in relation to migration.

2.1.1. Conceptualizations of identity

A perusal of academic literature on identity demonstrates that scholars conceptualize the notion of identity in diverse ways with reference to their research interests. Identity may be construed as "the distinctive character belonging to any given individual, or shared by all members of a particular social category or group" (Rummens, 2000, p.1). This definition reveals that identity can be seen as an individual attribute or a collective quality. I found this definition illuminating as it prompted me to inquire about

when and how immigrant Chinese teachers identified themselves with or distinguished themselves from people around them and which collective identity they chose to connect with. This conceptualization of identity has been criticized as “essentialistic”, but it is a conceptualization that is widespread and is part of many people’s understandings of themselves and their respective membership in particular groups.

Few scholars offer a general definition of identity but describe it in overlapping categories. For example, drawing on the theory of identity outlined by Côté and Levine (2002), Lo (2007) presented three types of identity that an individual might hold: *ego identity* that reveals the individual’s personality, *personal identity* that an individual has established in interactions, and *social identity* that signals the individual’s positions in a social structure. Elsewhere, Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) differentiated between three types of identities — *imposed identities*, which are not negotiable in a particular time and place, *assumed identities*, which are accepted and not negotiated, and *negotiable identities*, which are contested by individuals and groups. In addition, Blommaert (cited in Block, 2007) suggested *achieved identity* (the identity that people themselves claim) and *ascribed identity* (the identity that is assigned by someone else). The latter coincides with *social identity* in Lo’s discussion mentioned above. Similarly, Norton (1997) understood *social identity* as the relationship between the individual and the larger social environment mediated through institutions like schools, families, and workplaces. In contrast to *social identity*, she distinguished *cultural identity*, which, from her point of view, refers to the relationship between individuals and members of a community that have commonalities in history, language, and ways of understanding the world. Here I would like to add that *social identity* and *cultural identity* should not be considered dichotomous because the borderline between these two types is rather blurry — human beings and community cultures are often enmeshed in social settings.

As a cultural theorist, Hall (1996) mainly focused on *cultural identity*. He defined identities as “points of temporary attachment to the subject positions which discursive practices construct for us” (Hall, 1996, p. 6), emphasizing that identity is implicated in *representation*, which is about how others represent us and how we represent and might represent ourselves. According to Hall (1997), there are at least two different ways of thinking about *cultural identity*. The first way defines it in terms of ‘oneness’, a sort of

collective 'one true self', which corresponds to Anderson's (cited in Hall, 1992) 'imagined community' that ideologically unifies people into one cultural identity, a national identity; the second way acknowledges that lying under the many points of similarity are also critical points of deep and significant difference, the unstable points of identification or 'suture'. At the beginning of the thesis I quoted Hall's (1996) position on 'identity', in which he stressed *becoming* and *routes* over *being* and *roots*. In light of his discussion of the two ways of considering *cultural identity* here, it seems to me that Hall related the first way to people's *roots*, which suggests relatively stable and constant *being*, whereas he associated the second way with people's *routes*, which indicates movement and change, similar to *becoming*.

The notion of identity is commonly studied with regard to personality, race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, migration, gender, language, social class, profession, and so forth (Block, 2007; Brott & Kajs, 2001; Rummens, 2000). For many researchers, ethnicity, language, and culture are inextricably intertwined with identity. By one definition, ethnicity is interpreted as "a form of collective identity based on shared cultural beliefs and practices, such as language, history, descent, and religion" (Puri, as cited in Block, 2006, p. 30). Recently, professional identity has moved to the fore for investigation by researchers. According to Beijaard, Meijer, and Verloop (2004), professional identity is conceptualized in many different ways surrounding concepts such as professionalism, self-conceptualization, professional role, professional image, and professional socialization. It is formed at the intersection of the 'structural' and 'attitudinal' levels, or say, at the junction of occupational requirements and the self-conceptualization associated with the role (Brott & Kajs, 2001). Despite the different foci of analysis, these definitions of identity are all associated with social identity and cultural identity.

Rather than use the term identity, some authors, who tend to view identity as an ongoing process instead of a final product, prefer to adopt terms like identification (e.g. Gilroy, 1993; Hall, 1996), *subjectivity* (Weedon, 1997), or *positioning* (Davies & Harré, 1999). *Identification* is distinct from *identity* (a label of an end product) in the way that it refers to the classifying act from a processual angle, including identification preferences and choices by the self and/or by others (Rummens, 2000). Embracing a

poststructuralist view of the self in opposition to a humanist emphasis on a fixed and coherent human nature, Weedon (1997) referred to *subjectivities*, which she defined as “the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her sense of herself and her ways of understanding her relation to the world” (p. 32). In her opinion, subjectivity is complex, multiple, and changing across time and space responding to changing discourses. Davies and Harré (1999) situated people in interactions with others while discussing identity and thus put forward the concept of *positioning*, which they termed “the discursive process whereby people are located in conversations as observably and subjectively coherent participants in jointly produced storylines” (p. 37). Regardless of such a plurality of terms, ‘identity’ is still the most popular term and frequently appears in recent researchers’ and scholars’ publications. Therefore, I use this term, which is aligned with *identification*, *subjectivity*, and *positioning*, in the thesis. It is owing to all these conceptualizations of identity that I attempted to explore how immigrant Chinese teachers constructed their sociocultural and professional identities in the new educational setting and what transitions they were undergoing in their self perceptions and practices as teachers.

2.1.2. Construction of identity

Aside from the various conceptualizations of identity, there has been debate about the construction of identity among scholars. From a historical perspective, Hall (1992) commented that identity has seemingly undergone transformation, responding to the structural change of modern societies, from a unified and fixed subject to a sociological subject within the interaction between self and society, and then to a contradictory and fragmented postmodern subject. While he alerted us to the danger of simplifying these notions, he also suggested that we should see the structure of identity as open and complex. A scrutiny of the literature on identity reveals that most contemporary Western scholars celebrate the poststructuralist approach that depicts identity as a shifting, hybrid, conflicting process as opposed to the essentialist view of it as a fixed and unified product (Hall, 1996). Yet meanwhile, there are various attitudes among Western scholars towards a relatively stable inner core underpinning identity, even though they favour *becoming* over *being* in the theorization.

Many Asian scholars, or to be more accurate, scholars of Asian origin, such as Ang (2001), Phan (2008), Lo (2007), and Wang (2002), agree with the Western view of identity to some degree, but they seem to show more appreciation of shared, unified identity characteristics. For example, Phan (2008) claimed that Vietnamese thinkers emphasize the importance of a national identity and thus tend to view cultural identity as one united element with a core sense of wholeness, which each Vietnamese should maintain and develop. Likewise, Ang (2001) contended that underneath the changing nature of identity lies some core, some immutable essence that clings to an imagined past heritage and to the tendency of conservation; that is why *Chineseness* still becomes salient sometimes even for those who have Chinese ancestry but do not speak Chinese at all. However, similar to Western scholars, Asian scholars also call attention to the interlinking and reciprocity of *becoming* and *being*: *becoming* presupposes *being*; *being* is enhanced by *becoming*.

In my research, I intended to also examine immigrant Chinese teachers' perspectives on their *being* and *becoming*, on the relation between these two aspects, and on how these two aspects interacted to affect their choices and practices. I wanted to find out whether their perspectives agreed with, rejected, or complemented the Western and Asian scholars' views on the construction of identity.

2.1.3. Contextualization of identity

Being and *becoming* are normally discussed in conjunction with social environments. Rummens (1993) claimed, "Identity is ...best conceived of as being both relational and contextual" (p. 157). Identity formation is relational in that people's "identities [are] shaped through their perceptions of others. By making others, they [make] selves" (Phan, 2008, p. 154). Moreover, people often find themselves in the situation where others ascribe identities to them. Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, and Cain (1998) also reminded us that identity combines "the intimate or personal world with the collective world of cultural forms and social relations" (p. 5). What these scholars meant to communicate is that the self is personally, socially, and culturally constructed, and one's identity is formed as a result of the interplay of one's inner world and outer world.

It is noteworthy that 'inner world' and 'outer world' here should not be conceived of as opposite because these two aspects are reciprocally intertwined to make a human being. Bakhtin (1981) stressed that we come into being in our relation with others. For Bakhtin, individual consciousness is intersubjective and actualized in dialogue with other subjects through various ideological encounters. Since an individual's existence in the mother's womb, a variety of alien voices have entered into the struggle for influence within an individual's consciousness; the individual selects and internalizes the surrounding voices and gradually formulates his or her own voice in relation to, but independent from the authority of others' voices (Bakhtin, 1984). In Holland et al.'s (1998) words, "an identity becomes habituated" (p. 190) at this point and the individual becomes a unique being.

Related to 'outer world' is the notion of 'discourse'. Identity cannot be examined in isolation from particular discourses; it is shaped by the sociocultural contexts that people experience, and also by the contexts within which people express themselves. Many philosophers and sociologists see 'discourse' as something more than language. To discriminate Discourse from linguistic discourse, James Gee created the term "big D" (Discourse) that relates to personal practices and interpreted it as follows:

A Discourse is a socially accepted association among ways of using language, of thinking, feeling, believing, valuing, and of acting that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group or 'social network', or to signal (that one is playing) a socially meaningful 'role' (Gee, 1990, p. 143).

In the same vein, Holland et al. (1998) brought forth the term "figured worlds", which they used to account for the contexts of meaning and action in which social positions and social relationships are granted and enacted. According to them, figured worlds present an arena for people to develop identities and the "social positions [people occupy] become dispositions through participation in, identification with, and development of expertise within the figured world" (p. 136).

Parallel to superstructure, Foucault's notion of 'discourse' concerns "the whole gamut of cultural practices which 'speak' to persons but which they also 'speak'" (Poynton, 2000, p. 34). To Foucault (1972), discourses are power/knowledge systems

within which people take up subject positions; historically and socially contingent discourses position human subjects, simultaneously producing and constraining their possibilities for thinking and acting. Within discourses, subjects may identify with positions constructed for them owing to their inevitable attachment to their specific social existence (Ilieva, 2005) or resist/challenge such positions as they intend to preserve their old practices or initiate changes.

2.1.4. Negotiation of identity

The fact that socially ascribed identities do not always coincide with the individual's self definition reveals not only possible existing societal tensions, but also the power dynamics underpinning many identification processes (Rummens, 1993). Power issues are also central to Foucault's thinking concerning the relations between individuals and society (groups and institutions). According to Bălan (2013), Foucault understood 'power' as more a strategy than a possession of the powerful and oppression of the powerless, and as a potentially positive and productive factor that is co-extensive with resistance, causing new behaviours to surface; his analysis centered on the capacity of human individuals as active subjects, not just as objects of the power; therefore, power relations pervade the whole society, and are volatile, unstable, and subject to renewal and reaffirmation.

Power imbalance under changing circumstances often incurs and necessitates the negotiation of one's 'inner world' and 'outer world'. The result of such a negotiation can be explained by Foucault's concept of 'discipline' and Bourdieu's notion of 'habitus'. Foucault defined 'discipline' as "structure and power that have been impressed on the body forming permanent dispositions" (Eriksen & Nielsen, 2001, p.130). For Foucault, *discipline* initially imposes institutional norms on the individual externally as a means of control. The norms direct individuals to regulate their general thinking and behaviour and are eventually internalized by individuals as self-discipline leading to different identities (individuality) (Bălan, 2013).

Analogous to Foucault's 'discipline' and Holland et al.'s 'habituated' identity, Bourdieu (1977) used 'habitus' as a central idea in analyzing how social structure and

human practice help shape each other. *Habitus* is our dispositions that connect our past, present, and future, the individual and the social, the objective and the subjective, and structure and agency (Maton, 2008). Although Bourdieu developed this notion to capture “the permanent internalisation of the social order in the human body” (Eriksen & Nielsen, 2001, p. 130), Maton (2008) suggested that the structures of the *habitus* “are durable and transposable but not immutable” (p. 53) and evolving alongside the evolving social landscape.

Influenced by Bourdieu’s philosophy, Giddens (1984) proposed the theory of *structuration*, in which he claimed that identity is a process that functions at the crossroads of structure and agency. He defined ‘structure’ as “sets of rules and resources that individual actors draw upon in the practices that reproduce social systems” (Giddens, 1984, p. 21), including traditions, institutions, moral codes, and other established ways of doing things. Traditionally, ‘agency’ refers to one’s self-expression in regard to individual freedom and choice. More recently, this notion embraces a relational, social self that is contextually constructed, allowing for the ability to reflect on and challenge the status quo (Frie, 2008). Giddens refused to grant primacy to either structure or agency, arguing that while social structure establishes conventions for individual agents, it can be altered when individuals choose to ignore them, replace them, or reproduce them in a different way. For authors like Bourdieu and Giddens, individuals do not carve out an identity from the inside out or from the outside in; rather, individual identity is constituted by and at the same time constitutive of social interaction and social structure (Block, 2007).

I found these notions and theories significantly helpful in investigating how immigrant Chinese teachers negotiated/reconciled their ‘inner world’ and ‘outer world’, how they dealt with power relations in the university, to what extent they felt freed and/or constrained by the ‘outer world’, and to what extent they brought their agency into play in the hope of influencing the ‘outer world’. I was alert to any sign that their ‘habitus’ could be identified and how such ‘habitus’ might affect their thoughts and practices.

2.1.5. Multidimensional and hybrid identities

The notions of 'discipline', 'habitus', and 'structuration' all concentrate on the controlling power of structure and human reactions to the power structure. In this section, I look more closely at how agents coordinate ongoing contexts and accordingly perform actions. There appears to be consensus that people possess multiple identities simultaneously based on the multiple roles they are fulfilling in sociocultural settings (e.g. racial identity, ethnic identity, linguistic identity, professional identity, gender identity, etc.) (Omoniyi, 2006). Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) observed that negotiation of these multiple identities results in a preferred identity (a one-or-the-other end product). By contrast, Omoniyi (2006) proposed "Hierarchy of Identities" with a view to the identity production process (identification), and argued that an individual's various identity options are co-present at all times but hierarchized based on their salience in a particular moment: under different circumstances the identity options may have dynamic shifts and compete with one another (Omoniyi & White, 2006). In Omoniyi's opinion, the degree of salience is determined by the interplay of several social factors and individuals' responses to these factors that concurrently take place in an identification moment. He also pointed to the recognition of 'moment' as a unit of measurement within a stretch of social action, which he construed as "points in time in performance and perception at which verbal and non-verbal communicative codes (e.g. advertisements, clothes, walk style and song lyrics, among others) are deployed to flag up an image of self or perspective of it" (Omoniyi, 2006, p. 21).

One product of identity negotiation is 'hybridity' — a blending of multiple cultural elements that comprises "partial identities, multiple roles, and pluralistic selves" (Iyall Smith, 2008, p. 5). People often experience sudden confusion about aspects of their ethnicity, language, and culture, which rises to the surface when involved in confusing cross-cultural experiences. Many develop hybrid identities to cope with new situations. According to Nikolas Papastergiadis, *hybridity* is the "negotiation of difference" in "the presence of fissures, gaps and contradictions" during which the past and the present "encounter and transform each other" (as cited in Block, 2007, p. 21). This concept is celebrated by postcolonial cultural theorists like Stuart Hall, Paul Gilroy, Homi Bhabha, and others as a critical political force that jeopardizes or subverts the dominant (Ang,

2001), and as an insistent affirmation of the diversity and creativity of cultural pluralization (Kalra, Kaur, & Hutnyk, 2005). Yet meanwhile, it is criticized as a rush to “name and fix otherwise oscillating positions and perspectives” (Kalra et al., 2005, p. 84) and as a conceptual tool that camouflages or obliterates questions of politics and histories of inequality, a tool that reproduces and even reinforces the extant dynamics of power, overlooking factors such as colonial violence, white supremacy, exploitation, and oppression (Hutnyk, 2005). Some critics also express apprehension about the commodification and hegemony of hybridity in the increasingly globalized world, in which difference seems to gradually dissolve into a pool of homogenization and becomes branded as a new form of ‘global identity’ (Ballinger, 2004; Kalra et al., 2005). They caution that the notion of *hybridity* should be analyzed carefully with a view to historical, cultural, and political contexts (Ballinger, 2004; Hutnyk, 2005; Yousfi, 2014).

In a multicultural society, *hybridity* may tend to be endorsed as a platform for a comfortable multicultural harmony; however, we should remember that it is not only about fusion and synthesis, but also about friction and tension, about ambivalence and uneasiness (Ang, 2001), and that hybridization is fluid and shifting as well. In this sense, hybrid identities are produced and performed through difference and exclusion, fashioned on the move (Hall, 1996; Rapport & Dawson, 1998). The theory of hybridity is generally helpful in liberating diasporas that scatter around the world, allowing them to continually negotiate between their inherited culture and their adopted culture. But as already noted, hybridity often appears in various guises seemingly celebrating multiplicity, equality, and creativity. It may hinder diasporas from examining the hidden power structure of the host society critically and challenging their status quo.

When cultural boundaries meet and blur, a new type of hybrid identity may come to take shape. This negotiated production is what Bhabha (1994) called a ‘third culture’ or a ‘third space’, a state of in-betweenness. The individual occupying a third space navigates between the home culture and the host culture and secures space within both cultural groups. To diasporic individuals and collectives, this space holds both a challenge and a privilege. It is more likely for members of diasporized groups to adopt a hybrid identity when they endeavor to fit in within their new homeland. Alternatively, it might be less likely for them to adopt a hybrid identity if they attempt to cling to the

imagined border — their shared national identity tied to their motherland. Or, it may be more likely for them to become distinct from those who remain in their motherland as they assimilate elements of the host society they currently inhabit. The third space allows such members to distance themselves somehow from both cultures, but affords them a chance to form a reflexive perspective and see the self through the lenses of others (Iyall Smith, 2008). In my research, whether and how immigrant Chinese teachers exhibited hybrid identities, whether they saw their hybrid identities as a challenge and/or a privilege, which identities they tended to project among their multiple identities, and at what moment they projected such identities, were also the aspects I endeavored to inquire into.

2.2. Empirical studies of identity and immigrant Chinese teachers in Canada

As some researchers (Beynon et al., 2001) observed, studies of teachers of Chinese ancestry are rare in Western educational literature, and ethnic Chinese, according to US research findings, were not as significantly represented in the domain of teaching as were individuals in mainstream US society. In my literature search I noted there has been little work that studies immigrant Chinese teachers in Canada. The few studies that present lived experiences of immigrant Chinese teachers working in Canadian schools largely elaborate on the following aspects with regard to teacher identity issues.

2.2.1. Hybrid identities and managing differences

With a view to teacher identity, Wang (2002) focused on eight immigrant teachers from Mainland China who were teaching in Toronto elementary and secondary schools and examined their experiences of cultural dissonance and adaptation. Her research found that these Chinese teachers assumed dual cultural identities that were blended within each other — a shared collective cultural identity that they brought with them from China and a more current cultural identity resulting from their immigrant and teacher status in Canada. This kind of duality caused them to adjust their original beliefs and practices associated with education in the Chinese culture and to rationalize some

Canadian values and teaching practices that they encountered. Conducting research with one ethnic group, I wondered if my study participants also demonstrated dual cultural identities and how they resembled or differed from Wang's participants.

A collection of several studies compiled in a book titled *Making a Difference About Difference: The Lives and Careers of Racial Minority Immigrant Teachers* written almost 20 years ago (Thiessen, Bascia, & Goodson, 1996) presented life stories of four ethnic minority immigrant teachers who taught in Toronto and London, Ontario, and Vancouver, British Columbia. Through extensive interviews and some field observations, these studies primarily examined how race, ethnicity, and cultural transition contribute to immigrant teachers' developing professional identities. The book entailed review of lived experiences of two Asian female teachers: Rose, who immigrated to Canada from Hong Kong in her childhood, and Mei, who landed in Canada from Taiwan in her adulthood. These two teachers both articulated a sense of 'difference,' of 'otherness' – the consequences of looking differently, speaking or acting differently from what native-born Canadians expect of a Canadian, of a teacher in a Canadian school. Their discomfort arose when they were seen as tokens by their colleagues who had rarely encountered visible minority teachers in their schools. They felt some degree of “the existence of stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination”, as portrayed in the work of Cindy Lam (1996, p. 24), one of the researchers engaged in these studies. Here is an example from C. Lam's (1996) report: Rose, working as a teacher of French in a Canadian school, described that she felt humiliated when the principal often took visitors to her office, flaunting her linguistic competence in both English and French in addition to her Chinese. The studies also included an autobiographical account of a researcher — Mei Lam (Mei), who recalled her early schooling in Taiwan and graduate school education as well as teaching experiences in Toronto; after examining her relationships with both parents and students, she commented, “I find myself in the role of a mediator between two cultures” (M. Lam, 1996, p. 71).

How one responds to 'authoritative discourses' (Holland et al., 1998) – dominant discourses that are prevailing in a social setting — has the potential to shape and (re)create an individual's identity (Hodge, 2005). Providing an overview of the studies mentioned above, Bascia (1996a) pointed out that hybrid identities of ethnic minority

teachers were made manifest in their responses and reactions to 'difference' which placed them in the spotlight within a new country, and that to acquire the linguistic and cultural norms of the host country, the minority teachers devoted their efforts to making themselves sound and behave more like Canadians. However, unlike language and cultural differences, racial and ethnic differences cannot be negotiated through learning and conformity (C. Lam, 1996). That is why the question "Am I Canadian?" often hovers in immigrant teachers' minds when they find that their *achieved identity* (gained by oneself) and *ascribed identity* (given by others) are at odds. C. Lam (1996) speculated that the immigrant teachers perceived themselves as citizens of Canada, residents and employees in Canada, but they felt they were treated as foreigners rather than as Canadian. They felt that they received poor public services and their language ability was often automatically doubted.

Bascia's (1996a) overview of the few studies also indicated that the immigrant teachers, who were becoming more conscious of self-identity, came up with various strategies to manage enduring racial and ethnic differences. According to Mei (M. Lam, 1996), when asked about her ethnic background, she tended to answer "Chinese" regardless of her Canadian citizenship, for she reckoned that her appearance did not fit in with the commonly accepted norm for Canadians; she also varied answers based on who asked the question — maybe "Taiwanese" to Canadians, including Canadian-born Chinese, or "Taiwanese-Canadian" to the native Taiwanese and Chinese mainlanders. C. Lam (1996) related that Rose, the Chinese teacher of French mentioned earlier, chose to leave the school because she felt hopeless at people's continually seeing her as an outsider despite her best efforts to integrate. In contrast, Mei wanted her ethnic differences to be recognized, but at the same time managed to build harmony with people around by seeking commonalities with them (M. Lam, 1996).

As a result, Bascia (1996a) concluded that experiencing 'difference' across a spectrum of social settings caused ethnic minority teachers to struggle with cultural dissonance and to construct a 'third space' in a particular way that they saw as appropriate for themselves, and that many of the teachers fought others' stereotypes while striving continuously to do the things each believed in. In summarizing these teachers' life stories, Thiessen (1996) compared their reactions to managing the various

forces in a manner that was like stepping in two boats with one foot in each, occasionally in tension and perpetually in motion; their respective perceptions of adaptation in a new country and subsequent actions, as depicted above, accounted for some of the ways they straddled their multiple identities. The findings of these few studies propelled me to consider how my study participants positioned themselves and felt positioned when exposed to ethnic differences in the host country, and what stances and strategies they pursued to cope with ethnic differences.

2.2.2. Shifting identities and teaching practices

Bascia (1996a) reminded us that our self-awareness usually becomes more acute when we step outside our own cultural frames of reference and have a chance to compare them within and across cultural boundaries. M. Lam (1996) also commented that teaching in Canada created an opportunity for her to reflect on her personal values and re-learn numerous things that she used to take for granted. As Laurence (as cited in M. Lam, 1996) noted, “Living away from home gives a new perspective on home” (p.58). In addition, Mei identified a dramatic ‘change’ in her personality, expressing much pleasure in her transformation “from being very shy and quiet to bubbling and humorous”, but added, “That is, in fact, the real me [the latter]” (M. Lam, 1996, p. 65).

Mei’s belief in her “true self” raises questions for me about the meaning of ‘being’. It seems to me that subjects are not always certain about their inner core. One’s self-defining of ‘being’ may be influenced by the ‘being’ interpreted or imposed by others but may also be asserted by oneself at a later stage of life, which was reflected in this teacher’s repositioning of herself as an essentially outgoing person rather than staying with the stereotyped image as a reticent Chinese woman (Beynon, 2008). It is my understanding that this case also substantiates the dynamics between *being* and *becoming* — *being* (enduring but evolving) inspires *becoming* whereas *becoming* revives *being*, which also correspond to Asian scholars’ opinion that *becoming* presupposes *being* while *being* is enhanced by *becoming*.

Ethnic minority immigrant teachers’ feelings about the teaching profession are their professional identities, their cultural conceptions of teaching, which often oscillate

between *being* and *becoming* responding to particular contexts. These contexts include teachers' families, critical incidents early in their life histories, school structures and cultures, 'intermediate institutions' (Goodson, 1992) such as churches, communities, political organizations, activities and relationships within and outside of school, and so on. Bascia (1996a) claimed that all these contexts jointly help shape immigrant teachers' fundamental orientations to teaching, their preference for particular resources and pedagogies, and their implementation of roles and responsibilities in schools; in particular, the dialogic teacher-student relationship contributes to the teacher's conceptualization of what it means to be a good teacher and what teaching means in current contexts.

In addition, Bascia (1996a) argued that the life experiences of immigrant teachers make them more understanding and empathetic teachers, who are prone to acknowledge their minority students' cultures and teach them how to successfully negotiate the Canadian system without compromising their own heritage. One example (from C. Lam, 1996) is the subject, Rose, who introduced ways of dealing with racism to her class, sharing her own experiences with students to let them know that they were not alone, and teaching them how racism could be handled.

I found these stories and findings considerably inspiring as they directed me to explore how my study participants looked at their overseas experiences, whether they felt positive, negative, or neutral about such experiences, whether living and working abroad made them more self-conscious like the teachers reported in the studies above, and how they located their ethnic identities in their teaching practices and in their interactions with students and colleagues.

2.2.3. Negotiating identities and initiating changes

When moving from one country to another, immigrants often lose certain advantages they possess in their home country and they are challenged by unfamiliar historical, social, cultural, and political settings that call for adjustment of their values, behaviours, and attitudes. M. Lam (1996) noted that in most cases, she felt she was treated differently from her native-born Canadian counterparts by people around her,

differently in the sense that she was not granted the status as she had expected, and that she felt like a marginalized person who was only “given a ‘mainstream’ job” by the mainstream society (p. 63). Lo (2007) and Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) claimed that, in order to overcome inequality in power relations and connect with local others, immigrants have to undergo an interactional process of repositioning, in which they search for a certain position in the new society by contesting, altering, redefining, and asserting their own and others’ desired self-images. As Mei stated, “Living in a new country is a valuable experience if one is willing to be challenged; otherwise, it may be easily turned into an uprooting, painful experience” (M. Lam, 1996, p. 56). However, this does not mean immigrants are entirely divested of power in their cultural transition. Johnes (2000) argued that the symbolic, economic, and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1991) that some immigrants bring along to the host country can serve as a crucial source of power to help them settle down in the new social environment, especially in an immigration country that encourages multiculturalism like Canada.

As described previously (e.g. Bascia, 1996a; C. Lam, 1996; M. Lam, 1996), ethnic minority immigrant teachers invoked various strategies to negotiate their racial and ethnic differences from Anglo-Canadians. Confronted by norms and rules as well as some educators’ prejudice in the immigrant-receiving society, most immigrant teachers voiced their desires or acted out their agency to initiate some degree of change in school structures, though some of these teachers deemed it essential to change their own mentality and practices. Feuerverger (1997) carried out extensive interviews with twenty heritage language teachers from Toronto elementary schools, the majority of whom are immigrants or children of immigrants, including some teachers of Chinese origin. These teachers articulated frustration about being marginalized within the Canadian educational system and expected the heritage language classroom to be acknowledged by their mainstream colleagues and administrators as much as the mainstream classroom. Again, Rose, the Chinese teacher of French mentioned in C. Lam’s (1996) study, adopted a resigned attitude towards discrimination, arguing for the cultivation of survival strategies to deal with racism. Sceptical of the likelihood of eradicating racism, which, she thought, was engraved in the people who grew up with these ideas, she believed in her individual efforts to develop a strong sense of entitlement for rights. She dealt with racism by confronting the offender and by remaining marginalized, associating

with very few colleagues. On the contrary, Mei communicated her experiences with her colleagues of the same or other ethnic backgrounds, and sometimes voiced her opinions on behalf of them (M. Lam, 1996). She realized that “expression”, beyond a matter of language proficiency, revealed “a sense of independence” and “a comfort with one’s individuality and diversity” (Thiessen, 1996, p. 142). But how and when to express opinions was still entangled with her negotiation of identity. Mei acknowledged, “Very often, I am divided between the desire to defend my culture by explaining it and the desire to be accepted as part of the mainstream. Usually, I compromise by waiting patiently for an opportunity to state my own view” (M. Lam, 1996, p. 73).

Thiessen (1996) noted in his review of the studies of several ethnic minority teachers that some of these teachers stood up to confront conditions and assumed roles as agents of reform. Although expected to restrict manifestation of the language and cultural facets of their identities that did not comply with the mainstream, these teachers chose to claim for their own identities and to challenge or subvert the school power in their teaching. Bascia (1996a) also observed that some immigrant teachers not only offered constructive feedback to administrators and policymakers, but also acted as mediators and critics themselves in schools. As Mei remarked, “I do feel that my existence in this society requires me to fairly present my culture and my language. I accept this as the duty and obligation of a visible minority member in this country” (M. Lam, 1996, p. 73). However, as Bascia (1996b), Beynon and Toohey (1992), and Thiessen (1996) suggested, despite the moderate reform that teachers’ endeavors can bring to the school cultures, a fundamental change in social systems and practices never comes about without real disruption, largely depending on the willingness of the institutions for participation in the change and their capacities for actualization of the change.

Through my study, I also intended to explore how my teacher participants looked at power relations in their previous and current surroundings, whether and how they managed to have their voices heard by the authority in power, what measures they took to strive for their rights and desired changes, and what they did when their requests and efforts were turned down.

2.2.4. Conflicting identities and multiple perspectives

By Hall's (1996) account, identity is implicated in *representation*, which concerns how others represent us and how we represent and might represent ourselves. Representation is tremendously complicated in reality. Most of us have the experience of our self-positioning varying in different contexts and at different times, and there are many moments throughout our lives that require our repositioning when the situation changes. Moreover, among the multiple identities that we occupy, some may be visible and some invisible. In Wang's (2002) research, one of her participants disclosed his mindset about his teaching at a Toronto school. Although he was seemingly using some teaching methods commonly practiced by Canadian teachers, he strongly adhered to a teaching philosophy that he was accustomed to back in China. Wang (2002) termed this strategy "egression", which refers to "adaptation of convenience" for the purpose of "functional expediency" (p. 316) rather than "internalization of the receiving society's values and cultural essence" (Zhang, as cited in Wang, 2002, p. 353).

Undeniably, others can act as our mirror, offering us examples to emulate or propelling us to examine and regulate our speech and behaviour. We thus position and modify ourselves in interaction with them. But can others truly represent us or make us believe that they truly represent us so that we can accordingly take action to make adjustment in our practices? It is not unusual that people make different judgments about the same person and represent the person differently depending on how frequently, how long, and on what occasions they are in contact with the person. There are also chances that how others represent us differs from how we represent ourselves. For example, Mei related this anecdote: she always worked hard and usually remained in her office to mark students' assignments after everyone else left work; but one morning her primary associate teacher saw her hurrying to her office a few minutes late and soon reported this to her faculty advisor, implying that she was a lazy teacher, with no recognition of her overtime work every afternoon (M. Lam, 1996). How frustrating this situation must have been, no matter whom it happens to!

Also, one's self representation may encounter conflicting moments, which is sometimes not recognized by the individual *per se*. Take the example of Rose in C. Lam's (1996) study again. She tried to minimize the connections between her ethnic

identity and her teaching, thinking that an identity that highlighted difference got in her way of securing a place for herself in the mainstream society. So she placed high on her agenda integration with the mainstream culture and students' academic success. As she confessed, this reaction resulted from her earlier negative experiences with difference in her social and educational circumstances after coming to Canada, which hindered her from seeing her ethnic identity as a positive influence on her work. But on the other hand, Rose taught her students how to combat racism, which revealed that she could not escape from her ethnic identity regardless of her intention to avoid it. Her ethnicity and immigration experience imprinted indelible marks on her teaching practices. Rose told Lam that she did not want facets of her identities to interfere with her work and social interactions. Nevertheless, her identities were inseparable from her social practices (Frie, 2008; Toohey, 2000). For me, what Rose wanted to separate from her teaching was merely part of her *being*, the racial difference that she could not change. She attempted to replace it with her *becoming*, but it turned out that her *being* endured. In this sense, individuals' behaviours are normally identity practices. People often selectively draw resources from their multiple identities that co-exist in their lives to cope with varying situations. Therefore, analysis of identity issues calls for in-depth investigations from multiple perspectives in order to reach more reliable and valid conclusions.

These findings also provoked my interest in exploring how my study participants represented themselves, felt represented, and/or wished to be represented across their interactions with students and colleagues, whether they identified or were identified with any conflicting moments in terms of their self perceptions, and how they looked at and dealt with the relation between their ethnic identities and teaching practices.

2.3. Focus of my thesis

Although there is a growing body of qualitative research that examines how racial and cultural characteristics affect ethnic minority teachers' teaching, both at the school and in the community (Basica, 1996b), my literature search reveals that there has been a relative paucity of studies on the identity issues of ethnic minority immigrant teachers in Canada, including such matters as challenges that confront particular ethnic groups in

career development (but see Beynon & Toohey, 1992), and a similar lack in research that explores the lived experiences of immigrant Chinese teachers in Canada.

I have found a small number of studies that relate to what I was looking for. One example, as mentioned earlier, Wang's (2002) case study focused on several immigrant Chinese teachers in Toronto schools. Another is Beynon et al.'s (2001) project, which examined the perceptions of 25 Canadian teachers of Chinese ancestry about their professional 'roles' and career choices. These teachers were from diverse national backgrounds — China, Taiwan, Vietnam, Singapore, the US, Canada, and so on, and they taught different subjects (e.g. ESL, Math, Home Economics, etc.) in BC secondary schools. Of them, six teachers had immigration status in Canada. Compared with these studies, my research is smaller in scale but more concentrated in the way that all my participants were born and raised in People's Republic of China, immigrated to Canada as adults, and taught the same subject — Mandarin — at the university level.

While there have been many studies focused on Chinese language teaching in North America (e.g. Duff & Lester, 2008; Duff & Li, 2004) and some studies of teachers of Chinese descent teaching in mainstream classrooms (e.g. Beynon et al., 2001, 2003; C. Lam, 1996; M. Lam, 1996; Lo, 2007; Wang, 2002), there are very few studies that examine self identifications and related practices of immigrant Chinese teachers teaching Mandarin. My case study seeks to fill this gap and probe into the interplay between self perceptions and professional practices of a small group of immigrant Chinese teachers of Mandarin in a Canadian university. The point of departure guiding my investigation is these teachers' perspectives of their roots and routes and whether their perspectives in this regard confirm or deviate from Hall's (1996) views. Among multiple dimensions of identity, I primarily explore these teachers' identities that normally become salient in transnational experiences such as their ethnic identities (Chineseness), their social (individual and the institution) and cultural (individual and others in the community) identities, and their professional identities (individual's self-image, perceptions of professional roles, and socialization in the work environment). I focus on the negotiation of their multiple identities and also discuss the dynamics between individual identity and collective identity in the immigrant Chinese teachers' career life — when their ethnic identities ('oneness' and Chineseness) rise to

prominence and when their individual uniqueness/difference looms large, diverging from their ethnic identities. I believe that all these aspects are closely related to and interwoven in the lived experiences of my participants. A close scrutiny of these aspects will contribute to unveiling nuances and complexities in the identity construction of ethnic minority immigrant teachers and to raising our sensitivities to the issues they often wrestle with in the mainstream culture. By doing so, we may give them more support and engage them more effectively in Canadian educational enterprises.

2.4. Summary and conclusion

As discussed in the sections above, the theoretical and empirical literature has revealed how complicated identity issues are. In the overview of identity theories, I examined various aspects surrounding 'identity', including conceptualizations of identity, identity construction, contextualization and negotiation of identity, multiplicity, hierarchy, and hybridity of identity.

Scholars conceptualize the notion of identity in diverse ways and categorize it into types according to different criteria (e.g. Block, 2007; Lo, 2007; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004). Among these types, social identity and cultural identity are the concepts that many authors grapple with in their scholarly research (e.g. Hall, 1992, 1996, 1997; Norton, 1997). In addition, the construct of identity is often discussed in conjunction with research on race, ethnicity, migration, language, profession, and so on (e.g. Beijaard et al., 2004; Block, 2006, 2007; Brott & Kajs, 2001; Rummens, 2000). In the postmodern era, while many Western scholars direct attention to the shifting, hybrid, and conflicting structure of identity, some Asian scholars remind us of the importance of a unified, collective identity to Asian descendants (e.g. Ang, 2001; Lo, 2007; Phan, 2008; Wang, 2002). There seems to be unanimity of opinion that identity is formed contextually (e.g. Hall, 1997; Phan, 2008; Rummens, 1993) and that it is carved out at the junction of one's 'inner world' and 'outer world' (e.g. Bakhtin, 1981; Holland et al., 1998). The 'discourse' (Foucault, 1972; Gee, 1990; Poynton, 2000) and 'figured worlds' (Holland et al., 1998) that a subject experiences may contribute to the formulation of his/her self 'discipline' (Bălan, 2013; Eriksen & Nielsen, 2001) and 'habitus' (Bourdieu, 1977; Maton, 2008). Meanwhile, individuals may also enact their agency to impact on the social

structure (Block, 2007; Frie, 2008; Giddens, 1984). A changing situation often leads to a shift in power relations between individuals and social structure and accordingly calls for identity negotiation (e.g. Bălan, 2013; Rummens, 1993). To cope with such a situation, people tend to make choices among their multiple identities (Omoniyi, 2006; Omoniyi & White, 2006; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004). Those living in diasporas and immigrants may cultivate hybrid identities (Ang, 2001; Block, 2007; Hall, 1996; Iyall Smith, 2008; Rapport & Dawson, 1998) or inhabit a 'third space' (Bhabha, 1994) to negotiate cross-cultural differences and tensions.

In this chapter I also reviewed some aspects of identity issues of immigrant Chinese teachers in Canadian educational institutions investigated by a limited number of researchers. These studies demonstrated that Chinese teachers in Canadian schools normally assumed dual cultural identities related to education in the Chinese culture and the Canadian culture (Wang, 2002) and adopted their own strategies to manage the differences they experienced in the host society (Bascia, 1996a; Thiessen, 1996). These teachers articulated reflective voices and saw their teaching in Canada as opportunities to examine and adjust their personal values and practices (Bascia, 1996a) as well as their redefinition of 'true self' (M. Lam, 1996). The historical and current contexts they inhabited framed their fundamental orientations to teaching, their preference for pedagogies, and their implementation of roles in schools (Bascia, 1996a; Goodson, 1992; C. Lam, 1996). As immigrants and new employees in a host country, these teachers often had to reposition themselves when confronted by cultural dissonance and power inequality (M. Lam, 1996; Lo, 2007; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004). And some of them voiced their desire and even took action to initiate changes to their school structures (e.g. Bascia, 1996a; Feuerverger, 1997; M. Lam, 1996; Thiessen, 1996). Further, the studies found that the immigrant Chinese teachers' identities were not always in concord: how they implemented their teaching might be in conflict with what they believed in (C. Lam, 1996; Wang, 2002), and at times others' representation of them might contradict their self representation (M. Lam, 1996). Thus, it is worthwhile for us to look at identity issues through different lenses.

All the theories and studies I have reviewed in this chapter provided inspiration for my research and informed my data analysis. I was unable to review all the literature

on each aspect of identity because of its volume, but I have chosen the literature that I find most useful to include in this thesis. My focused study aims to fill the gap in current empirical studies and to corroborate, dispute, or complement extant identity theories. In the following chapter, I will elaborate on the procedure, foci, and ethical issues of my specific study.

Chapter 3.

Methodology

In this chapter I present the research design I used to investigate immigrant Chinese teachers' lived experiences. I also describe my data collection and analysis procedures, and provide background information about my research site and study participants. This chapter also sheds light on the gradual formulation and modification of my research concerns as well as methodological perspectives.

3.1. Formulation of research questions

Contemporary researchers take the stance that the researcher's personal biography cannot be detached from the research and that the period of time during which the research takes place, the researcher's social location, and access to theories are crucial to the motivations and framing of the research (Skeggs, 1995). This is particularly true with my study reported in this thesis, which was gradually formulated in relation to my own teaching and learning experiences. As pointed out in Chapter 1, I found myself wrestling with some tensions in my campus life: on one hand, I tended to cling to my established Chinese cultural ways of learning and teaching; on the other hand, I had to adjust my cultural beliefs and practices in order to learn and teach more effectively within the Canadian university culture. Accordingly, I wondered how other immigrant Chinese teachers in a similar situation to mine identified themselves along with their immigration. I thus saw identity as a valuable vehicle to explore their self-perceptions and practices in terms of their teaching careers. As identity is a broad concept, I was initially at a loss as to what to probe concerning the lived experiences of immigrant Chinese teachers in Canada. I thought of looking into the challenges these teachers were faced with and the factors that caused these challenges. However, these

thoughts still sounded very overwhelming and ambiguous since there were a great many factors, be they psychological, social, political, or cultural, involved in such issues.

While I was in confusion groping for clues, I took a course in Research Methodology, which came to my assistance in good time. At the end of this course I was required to write a report on a research project I was interested in. Hence, from March to April in 2010, I did a pilot study on teacher identity with two immigrant Chinese teachers of Mandarin working in a Canadian university. Thanks to the hands-on instructions and insightful suggestions of my course supervisor as well as helpful peer review of my classmates, I was able to narrow down my research focus and smoothly completed the pilot study. Based on this small-scale study, I modified and reformulated my research questions, which are central to the investigation of this thesis (see Chapter 1, 1.2.1). These questions continued to be revised and refined during my write-up process before they were finalized.

3.2. Case study

To address my research questions, I employed the qualitative methodology of case study in my project. There are a number of definitions of “case study” given by researchers. Stake (1995) interpreted the case study approach as “the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances” (p. xi). The definition of a “single case” may be variable, of course, and later researchers have not used this language. According to Gall, Gall, and Borg (2005), “Case study research is the in-depth study of instances of a phenomenon in its natural context and from the perspective of the participants involved in the phenomenon” (p. 436). As Schutt (2006) understood it, case study is “a setting or group that the analyst treats as an integrated social unit that must be studied holistically and in its particularity” (p. 293). This approach aims to investigate the uniqueness, complexity, and dynamic nature of a particular entity, and to discover systematic connections among phenomena. Therefore, it is an effective approach that can lead to building theories and generating new insights (Duff, 2008a; Lo, 2007). Although the case study approach is sometimes criticized for lack of objectivity, Duff (2008a) agreed with most qualitative researchers that subjectivity should be seen as an essential element of understanding

the world, and thus is an inevitable part of case study. Case study is an appropriate methodology for my research because it is conducive to exploring the interpretive and subjective dimensions of educational phenomena (Cohen & Manion, 1994), and it can provide an in-depth understanding of the experiences of subjects in their natural context.

Commonly used in case studies are six sources of evidence: documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant observations, and physical artifacts (Duff, 2008a). In my study I utilized two of these data generating methods — interview and direct observation, which, in my opinion, were the most constructive means to connect my participants and me. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) define interviewing “as a craft, as a knowledge-producing activity, and as a social practice” (p.17). They prefer the term ‘inter-view’ to ‘interview’ because it is an inter-exchange of views between the interviewer and the interviewee, a process of co-constructing knowledge through the interaction between the two. Nonetheless, researchers remind us of the challenge in choosing this method in that qualitative interviewing is difficult intellectually, practically, socially, and ethically, involving the development of interpersonal relationships between the researcher and the researched, and requires a high degree of trust and confidence (Mason, 1996). Interviews are classified by different criteria. Fontana and Frey (1993) divided interviewing methods into structured interviewing, unstructured interviewing, and group interviews. Yin (1994) distinguished between interviews with open-ended natures, focused interviews, and interviews alongside formal surveys. During my data collection, I conducted semi-structured interviews, leaving room for open-ended questions.

The term “observation” is usually used to refer to methods of generating data that involve the researcher “immersing herself or himself in a research setting, and systematically observing dimensions of that setting, interactions, relationships, actions, events and so on, within it” (Mason, 1996, p. 60). It is hoped that through naturalistic observation, participants’ awareness of the researcher’s presence may be minimized to the extent that they can act and react “naturally” (or in ways that are not substantially different from when the observer is not present). Hence, the information that researchers collect can reflect the situations and may enable researchers to gain a deeper understanding of participants’ feelings and thoughts and to interpret phenomena from

the participants' point of view (Lo, 2007). But as Mason (1996) argued, observation is rarely viewed or experienced by researchers as an easy method in the process of data collection. Observers' previous knowledge or bias affects how participants are observed; and the researcher's presence influences participants' performance more or less (Lo, 2007). In my first few visits to my participants' classrooms, I worried that my presence might cause uneasiness in the teacher and his/her students. So I always seated myself at the corner or in the last row of desks, trying to make myself as "invisible" as possible so as to reduce my intrusiveness.

Because social phenomena are usually more than one-dimensional (Mason, 1996), I combined interview and direct observation plus some informal exchanges with the participants to ensure more all-rounded and multifaceted data. Drawing on several sources of information for analysis is referred to as triangulation, which has been argued to increase the internal validity of the study (the accuracy of representing the phenomena) (Duff, 2008a). The integration of multiple methods is believed by some to enable researchers to observe the phenomenon from a broader and deeper perspective so that the occurrence of errors may be minimized (Lo, 2007). Mason (1996) has argued that multiple data sources encourage researchers to approach their research questions from different angles. During the processes of my data collection and analysis as well as write-up, I took pains to constantly examine the relevance of the data to my research questions and to ensure the accuracy and adequacy of the selected data through within-case and cross-case examinations as well as member-checking. I considered my study as a case study because my goal was to capture the particularity, complexity, and dynamics of teacher identity with recourse to some typical methods often used in case studies; and I tried to situate my study in a natural context and explore my teacher participants' perspectives of identity issues.

3.3. Negotiating access to the research site

Targeting immigrant Chinese teachers of Mandarin in Canadian universities, I decided to select Chinese colleagues working at a language institute to be my participants. I did so mainly for two reasons. They were sampled based on their convenient access and availability. Since I had worked with them for several years, I

reasoned that the personal ties that I had forged with them might make it easier for them to open up to me and allow me to delve into their lived experiences. They were also selected as purposeful sampling because of their information-richness in relation to my research purposes (Gall et al., 2005). This sampling strategy falls under the rubric of theoretical sampling as well: a study group was selected on the basis of their relevance to my research questions, my theoretical position and analytical practice, and most importantly, to the explanation that I was developing and testing (Mason, 1996).

Although the convenience sampling sounded feasible, I was afraid that my colleagues might decline my research invitation to them for fear of the disclosure of their private information and thoughts as well as the possible negative effect on the relationships among colleagues. Despite such worries, I began to approach them in May 2010. To my delight, the four women Chinese teachers of Mandarin working at the institute at that time all agreed to be my participants, expressing their support of my study and curiosity to learn about the research findings I would reach at a later stage. Upon their verbal agreement, I submitted Request for Ethical Approval of Research and received approval from the university's Research Ethics Board in the same month (see Appendix A). Soon after this, I started to arrange interviews and observations with these teachers. As the research process advanced, I made minor amendments in the project title and study details, which were approved by the Research Ethics Board in August 2011 (see Appendix B).

However, I felt that a sample of four participants was too small for a doctoral project. While I was struggling with the dilemma between the idea of involving myself as a participant, and the fear of possibly imposing excessive subjectivity on my findings, I was fortunate to find a fifth participant — a male colleague who had returned to the institute and resumed a teaching position in the first semester of 2011. Researchers are usually apprehensive about “attrition”, which is also called “experimental mortality”, referring to the loss of research participants over the course of the research process (Gall et al., 2005). By contrast, during my research period, I encountered “accretion”, a term I created to describe the addition of new participants taken on after the formal recruitment period and whose participation might significantly enrich the research findings. Because the other four participants I had initially involved in my study were all

female, I wondered whether my research would possibly lead to somewhat different conclusions if it was done with male teachers. Therefore, the participation of my last subject, the male teacher, could undoubtedly help me dissolve some doubts and clarify my research concerns. After this teacher accepted my research invitation, I abandoned the thought of involving myself as a participant, but focused on these five participants and added my personal voice only when necessary.

3.4. Data collection procedures

After each of the five teachers agreed to be my research participant, I informed them of my research schedules and signed with them the Research Ethics Board-approved Consent Forms (see Appendix C). With a view to the confidentiality of their personal information and conversations with me, I assured them that their names would be changed in both my data record and final report in order for their privacy to be well protected. With each teacher, I had initially intended to conduct three interviews in the fall semester of 2010 — at the beginning of the term, at the middle of the term, and at the end of the term respectively. However, realizing how busy the teachers were with their teaching and lives, I finally scheduled one semi-structured one-on-one interview that lasted about 60 minutes and three observations in their Mandarin classes, each observation continuing for 110 minutes. Eventually I collected data from 5 interviews totaling approximately 5 hours and 15 observations totaling 27.5 hours. In addition to these formal contacts, I also sought the participants' clarifications of some of the thoughts they had shared in the interviews through casual chat after class, phone calls, and emails.

Appreciative that my participants agreed to accommodate my research interests despite their busy routines, I left interview times and locations, the language(s) to use in the interview, and the class sessions to observe at their discretion. After the formal interviews and observations were done, I gave each of them a gift as an expression of my gratitude. Because all these teachers came to campus only on certain weekdays and shared their office with one or two other teachers, most of them chose their office hours

to have the interview in their offices. There were two exceptions. Cindy³ chose an empty classroom to have our talk in order not to be disturbed by any student or staff who might knock at her office door. As she had a tight teaching schedule, my interview with her had to be completed in three 'takes'. During my data collection period, Jane did not teach at the university often. So I met her in a quiet shopping plaza near her home and had the interview with her in her car. Although all my participants were proficient in English, they still chose to talk with me in Mandarin most of the time, saying that it was easier for them to express their deep thoughts in their mother tongue. They only switched to English occasionally for a few words or phrases. With these participants, I completed the formal interviews by early November 2010 except with Henry, whose interview was done in January 2011 when he returned to the university.

Many researchers claim that observations are best made in a natural context. I had intended to randomly choose and observe these teachers' classes. These teachers did voice their welcome to my visits at any time but meanwhile suggested to me the sessions I could observe, as they considered that there would be nothing valuable for me to observe if I happened to sit in on a class session in which they were simply administering a test for students. Jane also asked me to give her a notice of my visit in advance, explaining that she was somewhat nervous about a visitor's presence in her class. I respected these teachers' decisions and followed their advice. I conducted observations in their suggested classes once a month from October 2010 to November 2010. As they administered tests for students in early December, I had to postpone the last observation in each of their classes until early January 2011 when a new semester began. Having Henry included as my last participant, I made observations in his class once a month from January 2011 to March 2011.

With my participants' consent, I audio-recorded all our interview conversations into a digital recorder and saved the e-files in my computer and in a portable hard disk. At the beginning of the interview, I provided each participant with the script of my interview questions (see Appendix D), though I normally plunged into conversations directly rather than have them read the print to follow a question-answer mode. For the

³ To protect the participants' confidentiality, all names used in the thesis were pseudonyms.

observations, I prepared observational protocols (see Appendix E), on which I took detailed field notes, including the course title, the observational time and site, a sketch of the room layout and the seating arrangement of the class, teaching procedures, teacher-student interactions, analytical notes, and the researcher's notes. Not audio-recording the observed classes, I used my observational data as a secondary resource to triangulate the data I had collected from interviews to "avoid dependence on informants' accounts alone", and to function "as a means of checking the validity of observations" (Flynn, as cited in Halfpenny, 1979, p. 814). After each interview and observation, I wrote a research log, in which I commented on our interactive procedures and my participants' reactions towards the interview as well as some of my own reflections. For example, in her first interview with me on my pilot study, Lisa appeared quite nervous, frequently glancing at the digital recorder I placed on the table in front of us and lowering her voice at times when she was talking about something "sensitive". She told me later in the interview for my formal study that she had felt anxious in the previous interview but felt much more relaxed when it came to her second time. By keeping research logs, I alerted myself to the interpersonal dynamics in the interview and gave myself chances to improve interview techniques with the subsequent interviewees. I also typed a research journal that kept track of my research progress and that kept me moving towards the research goal.

After listening to the interview recordings a few times, I transcribed verbatim the conversations relevant to my research concerns. As most of the conversations were held in Mandarin, I translated into English the transcripts that were used for analysis in this thesis⁴. Afterwards, I offered my participants these translations to seek their feedback on the accuracy of my interpretation of their words and on the confidentiality of their personal information⁵. I wrote memos to note down the key ideas of the interviews as

⁴ Some researchers prefer verbatim translations. But with a Master's degree in Chinese-English Translation, I take the stance that no two languages are completely equivalent and translation should follow the principle of faithfulness and expressiveness. So when I translated the interview transcripts, I tried my best to comprehend the participants' original remarks in Chinese and put them into English in the way that can reach English readers faithfully and expressively.

⁵ These participants have read and generally approved my translations of what they said. I was grateful that some of them replied to me even with comments and edits about the translations. I thus made some changes to my translations according to their feedback.

well as any thoughts and questions that occurred to me in this process. Then I typed and printed out summaries of each interview in search of recurring topics and themes. For the observational data, I read the field notes several times and annotated the information that identified with the participants' remarks in their interviews. In this way, I was able to examine the data from both sources for the data analysis.

3.5. Data analyses

To sort out the data, I utilized a combination of discourse analysis, thematic analysis, and comparative analysis. Thematic discourse analysis refers to a wide scope of pattern-type analysis of data, ranging from thematic analysis within a social constructionist epistemology (i.e., where patterns are identified as socially produced, but no discursive analysis is conducted), to forms of analysis similar to the interpretative repertoire form of Discourse Analysis (Clarke, 2005). I found Gee's approach to discourse analysis particularly powerful in addressing my research concerns. According to Gee (2005), "Discourses" are language plus "other stuff", reflecting people's "ways of thinking, valuing, acting, and interacting" (p. 26). Discourse analysis considers how both spoken and written language enacts social and cultural perspectives and identities, or "how social and cultural factors frame the production and interpretation of messages" (Riggenbach, 1999, p. 8). Such an approach speaks well to my study in that the interview data present what my participants said and the observational data reveal what they did, both of course, in the specific circumstances of an interview with me and of several class sessions observed by me. The integration of their utterances and actions could be further associated with their historical and current sociocultural contexts. Hence, teachers' words, practices, and situated contexts were combined through discourse analysis to shed light on the key concept of my study — teacher identity.

Thematic analysis is a poorly delineated and rarely-acknowledged, yet widely-used qualitative analytic method. It is primarily an inductive process of organizing data, coding and categorizing, and pattern seeking for plausible explanations (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). However, it is often not explicitly claimed as a method of analysis as it does not appear to exist as a "named" analysis in the same way that other methods do (such as grounded theory and discourse analysis). As most qualitative data analysis

is essentially thematic, many researchers simply see thematic analysis as a process performed within “major” analytic traditions. But some researchers argue that thematic analysis should be considered a specific approach in its own right (Braun & Clarke, 2006). As Braun and Clarke (2006) observed, “One of the benefits of thematic analysis is its flexibility...Through its theoretical freedom, thematic analysis provides a flexible and useful research tool, which can potentially provide a rich and detailed, yet complex account of data” (p. 81) and “thematic analysis is not wed to any pre-existing theoretical framework, and so it can be used within different theoretical frameworks (although not all), and can be used to do different things within them” (p. 85). Closely connected to thematic analysis is comparative analysis. When thematic analysis is conducted, data from different cases are normally compared and contrasted. The analytical process continues until the researcher is satisfied with the saturation of data (Afroze, 2010). In my study, I exploited cross-case analysis and examined similarities and differences among my participants regarding their thoughts and teaching practices. Use of comparative analysis allowed me to detect subtleties and complexities of teacher identity.

McMillan and Schumacher (2006) suggested that the researcher can conduct the interim analysis in the phase of data collection. I started to manage the data for analysis after my first interviews. Yet the intensive data analysis began only after my formal data collection was completed. At the initial stage I used thematic analysis in an inductive manner, focusing on the data proper while putting research questions aside temporarily in order to get the most out of the data and identify meaningful categories and interesting themes without distractions. At the later stage I employed discourse analysis and comparative analysis in a deductive manner, examining how my data responded to the theoretical literature I had framed and applying these data to interpret and verify the theories; I kept research concerns in mind and selected most relevant data for a focused examination and writing.

As data analysis is a recursive and reflexive process (Chambliss & Schutt, 2006; Ely, Vinz, Downing, & Anzul, 1997), I moved back and forth between my transcripts, memos, field notes, and the research literature. I even modified and refined research questions several times in light of my theoretical and empirical data. Throughout these

phases I integrated manual and electronic data analysis, typing the original handwritten field notes and interview transcripts into computer using Microsoft Word processor. Afterwards, I printed them out and wrote codes in the margin of the field notes and highlighted by different colors data items in the transcripts and interview summaries, marking the content addressing the same theme in the same color within and across data sets. This method helped me locate data for analysis and write-up more effectively.

3.6. The research site and study participants

3.6.1. Research site

All my participants were Mandarin instructors working for a language institute (LI) of a public university, located in Greater Vancouver, BC, Canada. The institute offers comprehensive preparations in several world languages. Nina, who had worked at the institute for many years, gave me a brief account of the development of the Chinese program. When she began her teaching at the university, the institute offered only three Mandarin courses for beginners of non-Chinese origin. Mingled with miscellaneous courses, Mandarin courses were not framed as a special program at that time.

After Nina's arrival, enrolment for Mandarin courses started to expand. Many undergraduates of Cantonese background studying in the university asked to get enrolled. To meet their needs, two courses in spoken Mandarin for speakers of other Chinese dialects were opened. A few years later Jane and Cindy joined Nina. Jane took charge of Mandarin courses for Cantonese speakers and soon offered to open one more course of a higher level for such students as she felt the existing courses were not sufficient. Cindy took charge of Mandarin training for a dual diploma program. She developed Intensive Mandarin courses for beginners and Heritage Mandarin courses for Canadian-born Chinese students.

By the time I conducted the study with these teachers, the Chinese program had a history of over 20 years and Mandarin courses offered by the program had outnumbered any other foreign language courses opened at the institute. Nina, Jane, and Cindy were permanent Mandarin teachers teaching these courses. Yet when budget

allowed and more sessions were opened, teaching assistants (TA) and sessional instructors (SI) were also employed to help teach some Mandarin courses. The size of language classes was restricted according to the university's policy. The number of students for a TA's Mandarin class was no more than 15 and for a SI's Mandarin class no more than 25. The majority of these classes met 4 hours a week for 13 weeks except that Intensive Mandarin classes met 8 hours a week for 6 weeks. Students who completed any Mandarin course were given 3 credits.

3.6.2. Study participants

Cindy. Cindy, 41 years old at the start of the study, had experience in teaching Mandarin for 16 years. She came from Eastern China, where she began her internship in Mandarin teaching in 1992 while studying for a Bachelor's degree in Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language. After graduation, she spent three years teaching Chinese to international students for the International Communication Institute of the university she graduated from. As her husband enrolled in a PhD program in another country, she accompanied him to this country, where she embarked on a Master's study in Applied Linguistics. During the five years of this journey, she offered to open Mandarin courses in the language center of her university. Upon her completion of MA degree, she had started a new job as a Communication Officer at a big company, which sent her to work at a representative office in China for over one year. This job also accorded her a chance to give Chinese lessons to her co-workers at the management level. At that time her husband had begun to work in the university where he completed his PhD. Yet influenced by his Chinese friends around, he applied for immigration to Canada. Eager to reunite with him and to seek more job opportunities, Cindy gave up her job in China and immigrated to Canada with her husband and their 2-year-old son in 2002. They obtained Canadian Citizenship in 2007. It happened that the Chinese university where she had studied and worked had a dual diploma program with the Canadian university to which she applied for a position. Owing to her close ties with the former university, Cindy initiated intensive Chinese courses in the latter university to help improve the Chinese proficiency of Canadian undergraduates so that these students were able to succeed in their study in the counterpart Chinese university. And soon afterwards, she also opened

heritage Chinese courses for Canadian-born Chinese students who spoke English at home.

Jane. Jane was 34 years old at the beginning of the study. She was born and raised in a big city in Eastern China. Majoring in Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language, she had tutored international students in Mandarin since her second year at the Chinese university where she studied for a Bachelor's degree. After she graduated, she taught Mandarin to foreign children of kindergarten to Grade 8 in an international school located in her home town for three years. In 2002, Jane came to Toronto, Canada, and studied for a Master's degree in second language education. In the second year of her graduate study, she worked as a TA at the East Asian Department of her university, teaching undergraduates Mandarin. She continued this job as an instructor for a year after completing her Master's. In 2005, Jane was employed by her current university in BC and had been teaching over five years by the time I interviewed her. She became a Canadian citizen in 2007. After teaching beginner level undergraduates for a year, she developed and taught Mandarin courses to Cantonese-speaking students. Aside from her part-time teaching as a Mandarin tutor, Jane had experience in teaching Mandarin full time for 9 years.

Lisa. At the time I interviewed Lisa, she was 30 years old and had experience in teaching Mandarin for almost 5 years. She came from Southeastern China. In 2006, Lisa and her husband immigrated to Canada while she was still studying for a PhD in a Chinese university. She had Bachelor's, Master's, and PhD degrees all in the major of Chinese Language and Literature. Yet during her Master's study, she occasionally taught English to Chinese students studying in her university. While doing her PhD in China, Lisa started to work as an instructor for her university, teaching Mandarin to Chinese students and then to international students. After she became a landed immigrant in Canada, she taught Mandarin at a private international school in BC for one year. Then she returned to China to complete her PhD degree. I met Lisa in Spring 2009 when she was employed as a TA by the institute for the first time. She was then teaching introductory Mandarin courses to undergraduates in the university.

Nina. At the beginning of the study, Nina was 57 years old. Of all the participants, she had the richest educational background and work experience. Having moved among a few countries, she had experience in teaching English for two years and Chinese for 23 years. She was born and raised in Hong Kong. In 1973, she went to another Asian country and attended a university where she majored in second language education. She completed an internship teaching English in this country. After graduation, she went to Europe and obtained a Master's degree in comparative education within one and a half years. Then, she returned to Hong Kong and taught English in a secondary school. As she had a good mastery of Japanese as well, she was also asked by her acquaintances to teach Japanese at times for a continuing education program. After immigrating to Canada with her family in 1983, she continued English teaching for one year and did some social service work afterwards. At that time the BC government launched a program called Asian-Pacific Perspectives and invested heavily in it to promote Asian languages. So Nina joined in the program and helped a local secondary school develop Chinese and Japanese curriculum. In 1987, she resigned from her position in this school and began Mandarin teaching at a local college, which allowed her to have flexibility and spend more time at home taking care of her children. She came to the institute in 1993 and had been teaching Mandarin there since then.

Henry. Henry was 47 years old when he joined the study a trimester later than the rest of the participants. From Northeastern China, he received his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in English Language and Literature in Chinese universities. After completing his undergraduate study, Henry started to work for the English Department of his university, teaching English major students English courses such as Linguistics, Phonology, Spoken English, English Reading, and so on. Two years later, he went to study for a Master's degree in another Chinese university. He spent three years completing this degree and then returned to his original university to continue English teaching. In 1997, sponsored by British Council China, Henry got an opportunity to be a visiting scholar for one year at a university in Europe. After that, he resumed his teaching in the Chinese university he had worked for until 2001. During this period, he secured a position of Associate Professor in this university. Aiming to become a professor in the near future, Henry decided to further his education in Canada. In 2001, he came to pursue a PhD in BC and planned to complete the degree within 3 years before returning

home. Yet while studying for his PhD, Henry felt like staying in Canada for the rest of his life. So he applied for permanent residency and became a landed immigrant in 2004. He also sponsored his wife and children for immigration to Canada in the same year. His family were granted Canadian citizenship in 2007. From the second year of his PhD study, Henry began to teach undergraduates Mandarin for the institute. Right after he graduated in 2008, he found a teaching position in the European university he had visited and taught Linguistics there for two years. Upon his family's request, Henry came back to Canada and resumed his teaching as a Mandarin instructor in the institute, for which he had previously worked for about 6 years.

Based on their personal stories above, these five teacher participants demonstrated some similarities and differences with regard to their age, gender, educational background, and work experiences. Table 1 below presents their demographic information that I gathered from my data collection.

Table 3.1. Profiles of the five immigrant Chinese teachers of Mandarin

Teacher Participants	Cindy	Jane	Lisa	Nina	Henry
Gender	F	F	F	F	M
Age	41	34	30	57	47
Place of Origin	Mainland China	Mainland China	Mainland China	Hong Kong, China	Mainland China
Languages Spoken or Studied	Mandarin, English	Mandarin, English, Japanese	Mandarin, English	Mandarin, English, Japanese	Mandarin, English, German
Educational Background					
B.A.	Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language (CFL in China)	Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language (in China)	Chinese Language and Literature (in China)	Second Language Education (in neither China nor Canada)	English Language and Literature (in China)
M.A.	Applied Linguistics (in neither China nor Canada)	Second Language Education (in Canada)	Chinese Language and Literature (in China)	Comparative Education (in neither China nor Canada)	English Language and Literature (in China)

Teacher Participants	Cindy	Jane	Lisa	Nina	Henry
Ph.D.	In progress (in Canada)	In progress (in Canada)	Chinese Language and Literature (in China)		Linguistics (in Canada)
A Teacher in China	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Years in Canada	9	9	6	28	10
Status in Canada	Canadian Citizen	Canadian Citizen	Permanent Resident	Canadian Citizen	Canadian Citizen
Occupation Prior to Landing in Canada	Mandarin Teacher, Communication Officer	Mandarin Teacher	English Tutor, Mandarin Teacher	English Teacher, Japanese Teacher, University Researcher	English Teacher
Occupation in Canada	Mandarin Teacher	Mandarin Teacher	Mandarin Teacher	Mandarin Teacher	Mandarin Teacher
Subject Taught	Intensive Mandarin, Heritage Mandarin	CFL, Heritage Mandarin	CFL, Mandarin as a First Language	ESL, Japanese, Mandarin	ESL, Linguistics, Mandarin
Level Taught	University	K-8, University	Private School, University	8-12, College, University	University
Years of Mandarin Teaching	16	10	5	23	6

The profiles of these participants showed that all these teachers immigrated to Canada from Mainland China except Nina, who came from Hong Kong. They had Mandarin as their native language, though their first language might be a home dialect. While born and raised in China, they all had a good command of English owing to their education and profession. In regard to educational background, all of these teachers received their higher education in the area of language, notwithstanding variations in their foci. Among the teachers, Lisa focused on Chinese language and Henry on English language, whereas Cindy, Jane, and Nina were dedicated to the study of second language education. In particular, both Cindy and Jane had a major that was closely related to their current profession of Mandarin teaching.

All of these teachers had years of teaching experience in China. Before moving to Canada, Cindy, Jane, and Lisa already taught international students Mandarin. Lisa also had experience in teaching Mandarin to Chinese students as a first language due to her major in Chinese Language and Literature. They three continued the same type of teaching after settling down in Canada. Henry taught English for over 10 years in China before coming to Canada and took up Mandarin teaching since the second year of his PhD study in BC. He also taught Linguistics in his subject area during and after his PhD journey. Similarly, Nina mostly concentrated on English teaching as well as Japanese teaching while she was in Asia. After immigrating to Canada, she transferred to Mandarin teaching and was devoted to it for more than 20 years by the time I engaged her in my study. The teaching of these participants primarily targeted university students, though Jane and Nina had experience in teaching K-12 children for 3-4 years. With a minimum of 5 years of teaching, these teachers had much to say about their professional trajectories, which will be discussed in the following chapter.

3.7. Situating myself in the study

The issue of ethics and power relations is what researchers are mindful of when conducting research with humans. Aware that I was the one who would reap personal and professional benefits from the study, I was grateful to my participants and took care to maintain caring, friendly, and equitable relations with them. As one way of reciprocating, I gave them gifts and offered them help when needed, such as being an assistant on my visit to their classes or a substitute teacher when they had to be away from class due to sickness or emergency. To be respectful and thoughtful, I always sent them a reminder by email before meeting up with them for the interview or observation as scheduled. While I was collecting data from them, I showed concern for these teachers. Here are two examples from my interview notes:

I knocked at Nina's office but nobody answered the door. Wondering where she was or whether she forgot our appointment, I saw Nina walking towards me with a few books in her hands. She had just finished teaching a class. After we sat down in her office, I asked her if she had had lunch. She said "no" but intended to start the interview with me immediately. Knowing that she was probably hungry as it was already lunchtime, I suggested her eating lunch first before we started. She took

my advice and finished her lunch she had brought to office in a short time.
(IN⁶, 10/20/2010)

Once I came to the door of the staff room, I saw Cindy having her meal at the round table, another two Anglo-Canadian women teachers eating and chatting beside her. By her meal box, there lay a fashion magazine, which Cindy was browsing over lunch. The other two teachers were excitedly talking about some new fashions. Cindy asked me to give her five minutes to finish her meal. I replied with a smile, "Take your time, please."
(IN, 11/04/2010)

Being a novice researcher, I was conscious of interview techniques and tried to engage my participants in conversations in a way that could make them feel at ease and not intimidated. As mentioned earlier, Lisa expressed her nervousness and anxiety during my first interview with her on my pilot study. So when I conducted this case study, I became more cautious in my approach to the teachers, endeavoring to create a relaxing and cheerful climate. I normally started the interview with warm-up questions, such as whether they enjoyed the weather that day or how they felt about their classes. During the interviews, I often smiled at the teachers and offered clues when they got stuck with some question. My efforts paid off by my participants' positive comments on the interviews. Most of the teachers saw the interview as a chance to exchange their thoughts with me and reflect on their lived experiences. I selected Henry's and Nina's feedback here.

Henry: About this interview, I do not feel anything uncomfortable. Conversing this way is quite pleasant...I think so. Some of the questions you brought up have never come into my mind before today. This interview propelled me to ponder issues like my roots and routes. Right? I spent a few minutes thinking about them. A kind of reflection.

Nina: That is right. It is very nice for us to chat this way. We finally found a chance to chat with each other. Otherwise, we would not know when we could get together for some chitchat, hehehe...Ah, I began to teach here so many years ago. If you had not asked, I would not have realized that it has been such a long time...eh...really a long time.

⁶ "IN" is the abbreviation of "Interview Note", dated in the form of "month/day/year".

On the days I observed my participants' classes, I always arrived at their classrooms a few minutes ahead of class to make preparations. After class, if the teacher did not hasten to leave or did not have to deal with students, I would escort her/him to the office. I also took the chance to chat with the teacher about her/his class and teaching on the way back to the office. The following excerpt from my field notes gives such an example:

I talked with Lisa on the way to her office, asking, "Which student do you have the best impression of?" She answered, "I think all the students in this class are good. They are active and like asking questions." She then stressed that she paid particular attention to fine-tuning students' pronunciation, which, as I noticed, was evidenced by the pedagogy she employed in class. (FN⁷, 10/15/2010)

Ethical considerations and power relations were relevant not only with the teachers but also with the students in the classes I happened to observe. Although my focus was on the teacher and her/his interactions with the class, I was conscious that the students in the class had subsidiary awareness of what was going on in the room and I was part of such dynamics. In fact, in one or two classes a student asked the teacher who I was. Lisa and Nina took the initiative to briefly introduce me to their students at the beginning of class in my first observations. They did so to help ease students' anxiety as the class might think I would keep an eye on them all the time. I "hid" myself in the classroom busy taking notes, either in the corner or in the last row, hoping to minimize my possible disturbance to the teacher and students.

As I wrote down in each of my observational protocol notes, it appeared that both teachers and students behaved at ease and were not bothered by my presence throughout the observational period. From my second observation, students seemed to be accustomed to my visit. Several started to initiate contact with me. My field note reads:

In Nina's class, when the last two students — two Caucasian boys who were seated by me — were leaving the classroom, they said "zài jiàn" ("goodbye" in Mandarin) to me. (FN, 01/25/2011)

⁷ "FN" is the abbreviation of "Field Note", dated in the form of "month/day/year".

Although I reminded myself that I was conducting observations and I tried not to participate much in the observed classes, I found it rather hard to refrain from helping teachers out when I saw a need or when they invited my participation. Being a Mandarin teacher as well, I could not help offering help to the students who were seated close to me when seeing them struggling with learning tasks. Having learned about my identity, some students appeared to see me as someone they could trust and seek help from. During our occasional interactions, I asked them casually how they felt about the course. Here are some examples.

In Henry's class, my presence seemed not to bother the students. I sensed that some of them already felt familiar with me. One girl student came to ask me the meaning of “啊” (à: interjection) when she was reading a dialogue from an exercise in the textbook (FN, 02/04/2011).

When doing an exercise, a Korean boy seated nearby got confused about a sentence structure. I offered my help, giving him the translation and explanation. Later on he felt at ease to confirm with me the usage of some measure word (FN, 10/22/2010).

Since I came to visit Nina's class last time, the Korean boy who sat close to me has remembered and recognized me. During the break, he asked me to help him explain the usage of some words such as “太” (tài: too) and the grammar on affirmative-negative questions. So I took the chance to ask him a few questions about the course. He told me that he felt there were too many words to memorize and grammar was a bit difficult for him in an introductory course like this (e.g. He sighed, “Structures are used in so many different ways!”). He felt somewhat nervous when asked by the teacher to do some tasks in class. For example, he was afraid of Oral Test. Nevertheless, he found it interesting to listen to his Chinese friends in this class talking in Chinese. What he learned the most from this class were Pinyin (Mandarin Phonetics) and meaning of words so that he could also sometimes talk to his friends in Chinese. On the whole, he liked the teacher's teaching methods (FN, 11/12/2010).

In the classes I observed, I also identified several students I had previously taught. They appeared excited to see me again and carried on the teacher-student bond with me when chances allowed. The following excerpts give such evidence.

After coming into Lisa's classroom, I saw two familiar faces, who said “hello” to me and asked me if I was still teaching Chinese. Later I noticed that there were three students (two boys and one girl) in this class who had taken a Chinese course with me. (FN, 10/15/2010)

In Nina's class, I spotted three or four students who had attended my Chinese class before. They recognized me, looked excited, and even greeted me quickly while the class was going on. During the break two girls asked me what I was doing. I told them the reason for my presence in their class and asked them about their feelings for this course. They both answered, "Getting harder!" I smiled and tried to build up their confidence, saying, "You are good students. I am sure you will do well in this course." (FN, 01/25/2011)

In the last five minutes of Henry's class, I moved my chair close to the Caucasian boy who had been in my Chinese class before and who was familiar with me. He offered me his textbook to look at and then asked me the meaning of some phrases and sentences he was trying to figure out from the dialogues in the textbook. I helped him translate and explain those things he asked me about and directed his attention to the assignment the teacher was announcing at the end of class. (FN, 02/04/2011)

I found my teacher participants very supportive of me. Owing to their collegiality, they expressed particular understanding and support to my research. For example, after I sent out the email inviting these teachers to be my participants, Lisa replied to me by email as follows:

It's my pleasure to help you out. Actually, being a participant is a rare opportunity of learning from you. Here are my class schedule, you can come in any time at your convenient!" (Email, 10/14/2010)

Lisa was the only teacher who tried to involve me in her teaching process. On the first day I visited her class, the students were learning position words. Lisa recalled a Chinese pop song, which contains some position words, and intended to have me sing it for the class. Here is the field note:

Familiar with me, Lisa invited me to sing *Girls Over There, Look Over Here*, but unfortunately I forgot the lyrics. So she went on to sing the song by herself and encouraged students to follow her. (FN, 11/12/2010)

Another two examples showed the participants' concerns with me.

After the class ended, Nina asked if I felt tired after sitting there for 2 hours. I said I was ok, thinking to myself, "What a friendly and thoughtful teacher she is!" (FN, 10/22/2010)

During the break, Henry had a casual talk with me. He asked whether I had collected enough data for my research and when I planned to graduate. I told him my progress and plan.... (FN, 2/4/2011)

It is believed that in naturalistic research “the inquirer and the object of inquiry interact to influence one another, and that the knower and known are inseparable” (Mehra, 2001, p. 69). My study also assured me of the belief that qualitative research benefits both the researcher and the participants as it can bring about co-constructed knowledge. The teachers’ active responses motivated me to know more about their lived experiences and reciprocated my endeavor to discover meaningful implications of this study. Some of the participants even offered their opinions on what I could do for my future research:

In the interviews, Cindy underscored that lesson plans for a class should be based on the learners and the curriculum. In the end, she also wondered how profession was related to an immigrant’s identity. (IN, 11/04/2010)

After I turned off the digital recorder, we chatted for ten more minutes. Nina suggested I do research on Taiwanese teachers as they may have some unique perspectives, which differ from those of the teachers from Mainland China. (IN, 10/20/2010)

In all phases of the research, reflexivity is what researchers need to heed (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983). Qualitative inquiry offers opportunities for the researcher to inquire into oneself while inquiring into the personal world of others (Sears, as cited in Mehra, 2001). Bearing the dual identity of teacher and researcher, I conducted the study that was not only geared to gathering data from teachers but also constantly prompted me to reflect on my own teaching practices and pedagogical development. Acknowledging my participants’ strengths in teaching, I gained inspiration from them to experiment with new didactics and class management. To reveal my thoughts on this point, I chose to present a few excerpts from my field notes as follows.

Using translation method in teaching can assist students in deepening their understanding and memory of the usage of expressions in the target language. (FN, 11/09/2010)

I think we teachers should talk with students more often after class in order to know more about their pop culture. (FN, 01/21/2011)

This was a very active and impressive class. With Jane's flexible pedagogies, students appeared quite cooperative and enthusiastic. Such a harmonious class atmosphere made me feel that the teacher and students could mutually inspire each other across the exciting interactive process. (FN, 03/04/2011)

In Cindy's class, I was very impressed by her students' presentations about the four places in China: Hong Kong, Shanghai, Yunnan, and Taiwan. As an instructor from China, I do not know so many details about these places. This class is the very evidence that we teachers have a life-long learning journey and can also learn new things from our students while we teach. (FN, 11/30/2010)

Because of my own experiences, I found that I completely identified with the teachers under study; after each interview and observation I also wondered if I had walked in their shoes. To these participants, with me being a Mandarin teacher from Mainland China and speaking the same language, they tended to see me as an insider just like them and thus often assumed that I could understand their opinions thoroughly. During our interviews, they had such comments as "perhaps you feel the same", "your students are like that too?" and so on. When they appeared at a loss over a question, I sometimes used my own examples to give them cues. Just as Lisa mentioned, she felt like learning something about teaching from me as well through the interview. Our common identity as Chinese teachers of Mandarin undoubtedly brought us close to each other and enabled me to understand many of my participants' beliefs and behaviours. As a matter of fact, studying people from my own ethnic group rendered the case notably intriguing as I could explore the ways that my identity interacted with that of the participants and the research setting (Mehra, 2001).

While being an insider in many ways to the culture of my participants gave me an edge in understanding their perspectives, I tried to step back and position myself as an outsider at the same time. Although these teachers shared similar backgrounds to me, each of them lived unique experiences and had their own ways of perceiving, interpreting, and enacting realities. My goal was to capture their subjective worlds and make sense of their constructions of those experiences and realities. So I tried not to project my own experiences onto those of my participants or to interpret data based on my personal experiences. During the interviews, I intentionally restricted my own stories but concentrated on what the participants were saying about their living and teaching

experiences. I also asked for more examples following their statement of viewpoints. Being an outsider this way propelled me to be more reflective and critical of what I heard from the teachers and what I observed in their classrooms.

Arnold (1994) observed that researcher subjectivity is unavoidable in naturalistic research and incorporating a researcher's voice into research reports should be endorsed and practiced. I embraced this view and modulated it in my own study. On one hand, I did not preclude my personal worldview and my understanding of life as a Mandarin teacher in the process of analyzing data and writing the report. On the other hand, I tried not to allow my bias and subjectivity that accompanied me into the research setting to discount the participants' perceived realities on living and teaching. In other words, I tried insofar as possible to keep a good balance between "emic" (participant) and "etic" (researcher) perspectives (Gall et al., 2005). Writing about others with reference to myself made me feel engaged in the research and more confident about its significance. It is my hope that this study provides my readers with an enhanced understanding of the experiences of immigrant Chinese teachers working at Canadian universities, and that it may also have some effects on other ethnic minority teachers in Canada if my report of this study and reflections on its implications for second language teaching become available to in-service teachers and prospective teachers in the field of education.

Chapter 4.

Teaching Mandarin in Canada

Through the analysis of the data I collected for about one year from March 2010 to March 2011, I identified eight themes that related to my research concerns. In this chapter I examine my interview and observation data to address two of my research questions: What are immigrant Chinese teachers' feelings about teaching Mandarin in Canada, about their roles and authority with students, and about their students in general, as compared to their feelings about these matters when teaching in China? What pedagogies do they use in Canada and what kinds of interactions do they have with students in their classes? This chapter discusses the first five themes: teachers' attitudes towards Mandarin teaching, their feelings about teacher roles and authority in class, their feelings about students' attitudes towards the teacher, their pedagogical practices of teaching Chinese language together with Chinese culture, and their interactions with students in class.

I explore whether and how my participants' self-perceptions as teachers have changed since they moved to Canada, and how these changes impact on the pedagogies they use in class and the particular kinds of interactions they have with students. These five themes are threaded together in this chapter because they specifically discuss the participants' thoughts and practices centering on their classroom teaching. The content in each set of the data presented below may be found to overlap with one another as the themes are, more or less, intertwined. For clarity, however, each data section foregrounds one topic. In terms of the structure of this chapter, I describe the data at the beginning to give a general picture of what my participants said and did about their teaching, and then cross-reference the data to discuss my findings in reference to the literature I have reviewed earlier. I conclude the chapter with a summary providing my answers to the two research questions.

4.1. Attitudes towards Mandarin teaching

The five teachers in my study all received higher education related to language. During the interviews with me, they expressed varying degrees of interest in teaching Mandarin and in motivations for their positions as Mandarin teachers.

Among the five teachers, the four women teachers articulated a keen interest in Mandarin teaching.

Lisa: You serve as a bridge between Chinese culture and Western culture ...I think that should be very interesting. I feel like a bridge. I like enriching...you know, when students show their curious, mmm...interest in Chinese culture, I am very glad to help them and fulfill their interest.

Jane: Definitely, I like the work of Mandarin teaching. I have been doing it so long. I have not even tried doing any other kind of jobs...That, initially, I selected TCFL as my major was because I am interested in Chinese literature. I also enjoy being a teacher.

Nina: I really like teaching Mandarin here. I feel that going to the classroom and teaching Chinese there is a very pleasant thing. ...In general, I am truly keen on language teaching.

Cindy: Teaching Mandarin is quite interesting, I think. Because I majored in TCFL, I feel at ease when teaching Mandarin. After all, I have been teaching it for many years. This is a good feeling, of course. Another reason why I enjoy teaching Mandarin is my personal interest. I like language and literacy. Even if I once did a job that was irrelevant to teaching for a short period of time, it was still related to language and literacy, which caters to my personal taste, or say, to my own expertise. If you asked me to do the accounts, I would feel awkward, hehehe...Besides, I find another strong point about teaching, that is to say, "Teaching benefits teachers and students alike." Each time, actually, you learn something from your teaching process. Though you may teach the same lessons or use the same textbook each semester, your students are different, which can make you still feel refreshed and hardly get bored. After all, classes vary from one to another and each student differs from one to another. So this is something I feel good about.

Like the four women teachers, Henry also expressed his interest in language teaching. But unlike them, he voiced his preference for English teaching to Mandarin teaching. For him, Mandarin teaching was a way of making a living.

Henry: For Mandarin teaching, I think it is ok, not bad, because I like teaching on the whole...But I prefer teaching English. I think this is related to the training you have received. As your training is focused on a specific subject area, you would hope to apply what you have learned from the training to your work, right? After all, our original intention to teach Chinese is to earn money for our living, right? Just as times go on, we gradually get used to it. This is true. But if there are options, for example, one Chinese course and another linguistics course or English course are offered at the same time, then I will certainly choose the latter but less likely the former. Such a choice is mostly related to one's own background, right? ...Yes, I think it is totally fine to teach Mandarin...But as to my "interest", it does not mean I am particularly keen on Mandarin teaching but generally on teaching itself, because if I was asked to do other work rather than teaching, I would have no interest, I feel.

4.2. Feelings about teacher roles and authority with students

As all these participants had experience in teaching both in China and in Canada, they communicated their perceptions of teachers' social status and teacher roles in each country. They also talked about their sense of authority in their classes, generally about all teachers and specifically their own experience as teachers. In terms of teachers on the whole, all the participants voiced awareness of differences in the two countries. With regard to their own experience, it seemed to me that Jane, Henry, and Nina perceived more changes in their feelings as teachers than did Cindy and Lisa. While all the teachers portrayed themselves as learning facilitators, Jane and Henry in particular emphasized Chinese notions of teachers as role models. The rest (Nina, Cindy, and Lisa) spoke about deploying learner-centered mentality in Canada. My observation data also supported some of the comments they made in the interviews.

4.2.1. About being role models

Jane and Henry related in their interviews that the teacher is seen as a role model and accorded high social status in China, and thus naturally assumes authority in class. As Jane put it:

In China, traditionally, teachers must be role models. In class, they are normally authorities who transmit knowledge of a certain subject.

Students rarely challenge teachers' prestige in this regard and always follow what they say. Even out of school, teachers usually enjoy a very high social status, I feel. Anyway, they are highly respected; students always appear obedient to them.

Henry also remarked that shaping students into morally good citizens is one of the key roles that a teacher takes on in China. He said, "Right, morality is publicly promoted in China. Teachers may talk about morality in public and encourage students to practice it". Yet he added that although being a role model was not necessarily required in Canada, a professor could still set a good example for students by his everyday conduct such as being punctual for class, being well-organized in class, giving clear answers to students' questions, replying to students' emails in time, and so on.

In the conversations, Cindy, Lisa, and Nina did not call attention to the ethical role of teachers but primarily underscored their roles in facilitating students' learning.

4.2.2. About being learning facilitators

During the interviews, all the teachers endorsed the learner-centered teaching philosophy and practices they thought were prevalent in Canada. They pointed to their perception of the equality between teachers and students at Canadian educational institutions. Conscious of the educational milieu in Canada, the participants did not conceive of themselves as the sole authority in class. For Henry, endorsing the teacher's ethical role did not reject his learner-centered practices. Cindy, Jane, and Nina expressly positioned themselves as guides and facilitators of learning, and Lisa saw herself as a friend to students and as an organizer of teaching materials and class activities. The four women's comments on how they fulfilled these roles were in evidence when I observed their teaching practices.

Cindy related that she depicted herself as a learning facilitator all the time, both in China and abroad, indicating that she was influenced by Western educational philosophy before she went overseas. She criticized some Mandarin teachers' mechanical teaching practices in China she had observed during her internship. She stated:

I have always been dissatisfied with their practices in the Mandarin Listening class because I have never dedicated so much time to my class like them, who spend four hours a week in the language lab simply playing audio recordings to students, who are seated all the time, and checking answer keys with them after their completion of listening exercises. I think this is very uninspiring practice. For me, I can upload the audio recordings to a website so that students have freedom to practice with them anytime they want. Afterwards, I can randomly check their completion of the listening tasks. If they have any question or difficulty, I will help address it in class, or just let students look it up on their own. I won't allow it to take up plenty of time in class.

Cindy commented that these teachers in China were mainly responsible for lecturing, compelling students to complete a heavy load of exercises, and preparing them for examinations; following the syllabus stipulated by the State Education Commission of China, they used unified course materials, strictly implemented the curriculum subject to their school's requirements for standardized examinations, and adjusted teaching pace according to the syllabus without considering the receptivity of their students. Nevertheless, she called my attention to her awareness of the changes of teaching practices in China in the past decades and her support for the Communicative Approach, which she thought had been in effect in China for years⁸.

During my observations, Jane frequently interacted with her students in class, constantly checked their understanding and reaction to her lecturing, and organized what appeared to be interesting activities to facilitate their Mandarin learning. For example, in one of Jane's classes, she divided the students into four groups and handed out a fashion magazine to each group, asking them to select from it the best fashion for men and women respectively and to give reasons in Mandarin why they thought their selected fashion looked the best. When the students were doing the task in small groups, Jane walked around to offer suggestions, provide help, and check their pace of completion.

⁸ Chinese foreign language teaching was previously dominated by the grammar-translation approach before communicative language teaching (CLT) approach was introduced to China in about 1979. Since the early 1990s the adoption of CLT in foreign language education has witnessed substantial progress and had an impact on millions of Chinese learners of English. However, constrained by a variety of special circumstances in China, the CLT approach is not found invariably effective in Chinese foreign language classes (Yu, 2012).

To me, Nina looked friendly and amiable with her students and carried out class activities based on what might be familiar to the class. On the first day of my observations in her class, I arrived at her classroom early. Shortly afterwards, Nina walked into the classroom with a big smile, asking students, “忙不忙? (Máng bu máng: Are you busy?) ” The students answered together excitedly in Chinese, “很忙。 (Hěn máng: Very busy.) ” Nina continued, “很多 midterm exams 吗? (Hěn duō : many; Are there many midterm exams?) ” Some students nodded. Seeing me seated in the corner of the classroom, she introduced me briefly to the class, saying in Chinese in a joking manner, “她来看看你们是不是好学生。(Tā lái kàn kan nǐ men shì bu shì hǎo xué sheng: She came to see if you are good students.)”

Afterwards, Nina guided the class through a list of the new vocabulary. When they stopped at the expression ‘工作’ (gōng zuò: work), she got students to ask each other, “Do you work?” and “Where do you work?” After that, she gave another question to the whole class, “Who works?” With two girls putting up their hand, she asked them in Mandarin, “Where do you work?” “Is your work good?” “Are you busy with work?” In addition, she managed to help students memorize new Chinese characters by describing the pictures vividly and modelling writing on the board at the same time. For example, showing the stroke order of the character ‘坐’ (zuò: sit) one by one, she invited students to envisage the image as such, “One little man, two little men, and sit on a land.” Following her, students practiced writing the character in their notebooks or on pieces of paper.

When introducing a new chapter in the textbook, Lisa told me that her usual practice was to write the language points on a transparency in a summative way, give an example before explaining the structure, and then encourage individual students to make new sentences with that structure; by doing so, she tried to provide students with ways to understand and remember the words and the new grammar. As she claimed in the interviews, I witnessed her organizing many interactive activities among students. One day, for example, she designed a scenario, in which Spade and Club were going to have their first date. Showing the scenario written in Chinese characters on the transparency, she asked the students to prepare a dialogue in pairs on behalf of Spade

and Club. While students worked on it actively, displaying great enthusiasm for this task, Lisa walked around to provide assistance, answering students' questions or offering expressions they asked for.

4.2.3. Exercising 'authority' strategically

All the participants admitted that they felt their authority in class had been challenged when starting to teach non-Chinese students, but that after years of teaching in Canada their attitudes towards authority had changed in some ways. The five teachers gave examples to illustrate how they looked at and dealt with their authority in their classes. Jane related that she generally did not position herself as an authority in class due to her mild temperament, but that she had to push the Canadian students to learn when she felt they were not working hard enough. Henry recalled anxiety at the beginning of his teaching in Canada.

Henry: So at that time when I began to teach here, I thought to myself, "How wonderful it would be if they were Chinese students!"

Yujia, Henry: Hehehe...

Yujia: You also had such a feeling?

Henry: Yes.

Yujia: Did you feel like your authority being challenged somehow by them?

Henry: Right, because it is relatively more difficult to teach abroad. It's easy to teach in China, isn't it? Because you already occupy the authority. What you say is what it is. Nobody challenges you. But the situation is different here. While you are abroad, you must make full preparations for your class, right? Yet even so, students may still challenge you.

In the conversation with me, although expressing his preference for the active learning of his current Canadian students, Henry did not deny his discomfort about his authority being challenged and hoped that these students could be as obedient as Chinese students at the start. I asked him how he dealt with his students challenging him. He confessed that he felt embarrassed at first but tried not to argue with students in class. Having listened to more of his stories, I found what sounded most interesting was

that he felt his authority particularly challenged by students in the linguistics classes he had tutored as a teaching assistant but not so strongly in his Mandarin classes.

Henry said that afterwards he felt it normal when his students gave him challenging questions in class and saw it as a natural way for learning to take place:

But at the second thought later on, they challenged you just because they did not understand you or disagreed to what you had told them. ...Having taught here for so many years, I feel students' challenging teachers is a normal thing. In other words, my attitude has changed....Learning occurs under such circumstances, right? So challenge is totally normal.

In addition, Henry added that if he had returned to China now and taught there again, he would have definitely sensed the change in his own teaching.

Nina had an interesting account of her way of looking at authority. She said that when she taught in Asia, she felt that she enjoyed strong authority and her students also highly respected her authority.

Yujia: Did you have a feeling like this when teaching in Hong Kong, say, students respected teachers more there?

Nina: Yes, right. More, much more. Isn't it the same as how you felt in China? As soon as you entered the classroom, students all stood up (to salute)? Hehehe...

Yujia: Our students would say...

Nina: They would say, "All rise!" or "How are you, teacher?" Right?

Yujia: Yes, correct.

As she had majored in Comparative Education in Europe, Nina said that she applied Western educational theories to her teaching of students in Hong Kong and that she intentionally did not exert strong authority in order to encourage her Chinese students to speak out. However, when she found Canadian students more casual and proactive in class than Asian students, she said she felt she had to become more authoritative so that she could manage her class more effectively.

According to Lisa, she enjoyed the equality between her students and her in Canada, but at the same time expressed her fear that the students might fail to be well disciplined if they sensed that the teacher was losing authority. Also, she told me that students in Canada sometimes argued about their marks or grades with her, which rarely happened with students in China. However, she did not believe that students did so on purpose to challenge her authority, but that they simply demanded fairness. She tended to view such behaviour as a result of the educational system in North America, rather than students' intention to cause trouble. By her account, she usually felt relieved about the fact that most students accepted her explanations about her marking and stopped arguing with her about it.

Positive about the teaching environment in Canada, Cindy voiced her content with the autonomy teachers were granted by the university culture, which she said made learner-centeredness possible and feasible. Not seeing herself as an unchallengeable authority in class, she confessed that she saw her own occasional mistakes in her teaching as natural and would invite the whole class to discuss the mistakes when they occurred. She said that both the students and the teacher, by doing so, learned something from the mistakes.

4.3. Feelings about students' attitudes towards the teacher

Teachers' feelings about their authority in class were related to how they felt about their students' attitudes towards them, and particularly to what extent they felt students respected them, which was also noticeable in my interview data.

4.3.1. Different understandings of 'respect'

As discussed in the previous section, Nina had the impression that students in Hong Kong showed much more respect to teachers than students in Canada. She recalled that she had experienced culture shock at the beginning of her teaching in a Canadian high school when seeing students eat snacks in class and hasten to leave the classroom before she dismissed them. For her, at that time, class management and discipline was crucial. However, she added that she gradually developed more flexibility

and managed to end the class before the bell rang, once she realized that some students had to rush to another class. At the end of my first observation of her class, a boy student came to fetch his jacket he had left on the window sill by me. Learning that I was also a Mandarin teacher and visiting their class for a research project, he gave a compliment to Nina in Mandarin in front of me, "She is a very good teacher!"

During the interview, Henry stated that he missed the close relationship with his students in China:

Generally speaking, I feel that teacher-student relationships in China may be more harmonious. Although some students give gifts to their teachers for instrumental reasons, their relationships with teachers are still closer. This may be affected by Chinese culture.

Henry attributed the close teacher-student relationship in China to Chinese tradition and the long established social practice of underscoring respect for teachers and education. He even reminisced about a time when he asked his students for help. Recognizing that such kind of help was hardly possible with his students in Canada, he voiced his understanding of cultural differences:

In the West, human rights and privacy are often talked about, right? This is also related to culture. For example, in China, you can ask your students to give you a hand. I remember when I was teaching there, my family were living on the sixth floor. One day my fridge broke down. I just got a few students to help carry it downstairs for repair and later upstairs back to my home. Such sort of thing is absolutely impossible here, right? What if the student's arm was injured while he was carrying the fridge?

Henry mentioned that it was not unusual in the past that Chinese students gave him gifts on holiday occasions and sometimes invited him to dinner in a restaurant but this situation rarely happened during his teaching in Canada. He said:

In my memory, only years ago, it was at the end of one term that several students invited me to have a meal at some food store near the learning complex. They treated me. This could happen occasionally. But of course, it is still related to culture. These students are often those of Asian origin. None of them are Caucasian students.

Some of the teachers felt that attendance could be seen as a sign of respect, denoting whether students were interested in the course and the teacher's instruction.

When I asked whether Asian students, on the whole, were more respectful to the teacher than Western students, Cindy replied:

Almost the same...Many of my students are of Asian background, such as Korean and Japanese. They appear respectful but still skip classes. European and Canadian students seemingly do not show so much respect as expected but some react quite enthusiastically to the teacher...Almost the same.

Cindy said that she did not include “attendance” in the grading profile when teaching non-heritage classes, which mostly consisted of Caucasian students, for nobody was absent from class except for one or two occasionally asking for sick leave.

4.3.2. ‘Respect’ versus ‘reverence’

Interestingly, in response to the same question on respect as given to Cindy, Jane brought up the difference between ‘respect’ and ‘reverence’, which was illustrated in the following dialogue.

Jane: The students I teach in Canada are all university students, all grown-ups. Generally speaking, you can feel that they do not always follow what you say. But in other aspects, mmm...perhaps they do not have ‘*zunjing*’ (reverence), but they do have ‘*zunzhong*’ (respect), I feel.

Yujia: What is the difference between ‘*zunjing*’ and ‘*zunzhong*’? Hehehe...

Jane: As to ‘*zunjing*’, they may see you as an authority, always listen to what you say, and would not challenge you. As to ‘*zunzhong*’, it is what ordinary people would practice.

Yujia: Oh, I see. It (*zunzhong*) is a kind of manner?

Jane: Yes, right, right.

Yujia: That is to say, courtesy is shown but it is questionable whether they admire you from their bottom of heart and see you as authority...

Jane: Definitely not (authority). I feel they do not have such kind of sentiment towards the teacher. They just feel you might know more in some aspect but it does not mean what you say is necessarily right.

Following her clarification of this distinction, Jane offered an example of one of her previous colleagues who had taught foreign students Mandarin in the same department as had she in China. From Henan Province of Central China, this teacher taught Mandarin with a strong regional accent. One day students questioned his pronunciation directly in class, “Should we follow your pronunciation or the pronunciation on the official audio recording?” This anecdote soon became known to the entire department and made the teacher a laughing stock. This example, Jane commented, revealed that North American students in China neither blindly followed nor considered saving face for the teacher simply because he was their teacher, but more likely focused their attention on the learning material proper.

4.3.3. Enjoying respect in Canada

Perhaps because she was the youngest among the participants, Lisa had a different feeling about her relationship with students from the other teachers. She said:

Comparatively speaking, the distance between teachers and students in China is seemingly bigger. Here in Canada, it appears easier for teachers to communicate with their students. Because comparatively speaking, students here feel they have much freedom. Whenever they have questions, they ask you directly, very straightforward. So there aren't too many barriers between teachers and students...I even feel people here respect you more than those in China...Yes, in class, my students respect me very much. ...I feel students here attach great importance to fairness. They just hope, “We can be treated fairly.” Right? ...But Canadian students seem to act inexpressively, not demonstrating a special sign of respect for you. I think the reason may be they don't show their emotion openly.

Although she felt that the respect from her Canadian students was not particularly conspicuous, Lisa said that she was delighted to see some students bid farewell to her at the end of class. “For example, they would say, ‘Teacher, I am leaving. Bye!’”, she told me with a smile. In her class I also noticed that she often asked students in a mild tone about their impression of the difficulty of their texts, quizzes, and tests. Students articulated their feelings and interrupted her with questions from time to time. One day while I was observing, she dismissed the class earlier than usual. Packing their things to leave, some students said to her happily, “See you next week!”

Despite her students' friendliness, Lisa still expressed some dissatisfaction with her Canadian students for their lack of motivation to work hard on Chinese grammar. She complained about the fact that these students seemed to study primarily for grade and credit, commenting, "They looked like falling asleep when I explained the 'boring' grammar to them!" And she said that they seldom took initiative to ask her questions about grammar, leading to her assumption that the students probably wished she had explained less so that they did not need to memorize so many language points for examination. She continued that her foreign students in China, by contrast, had shown keen interest and enthusiasm for Mandarin learning and always brought plenty of questions for her. But in general, Lisa stated that she did not demand high respect from students in reference to her own behaviour in the past back in China. She said:

When I was an undergraduate, we did not offer help to teachers, such as cleaning the board for them. I feel we did not respect teachers that much, either. I never had a strong feeling that teachers are high above us, never. We were then majoring in Literature. Perhaps for people who major in this area, they are very self-conceited. It is very rare that we think about respecting or looking up to someone. For every single works the teacher talked about, we have read them all. To the opinions the teacher held, we did not necessarily agree....So we seldom respected our teachers, or to be more accurate, admired them. Unless there is someone who is really knowledgeable, we might accord her/him our respect. Perhaps this is what people often say, "Scholars tend to despise one another." Hehehe...

To Lisa, it seemed that the common wisdom that Chinese teachers in China supposedly receive utmost respect from their students might be a generalization that was no longer true, or too simplistic.

4.4. Teaching Chinese language together with Chinese culture

All the teachers reported that they dealt with cultural and language content hand in hand when teaching Mandarin. Some expressly reported that they differentiated the depth of cultural information they presented depending on whether students were heritage learners or non-heritage learners; others, during my observations,

demonstrated in their teaching that they compared Canadian and Chinese cultural practices.

4.4.1. Incorporating cultural information into language teaching

Considering language and culture inseparable from each other, the participants all stated that they integrated information about Chinese culture with their language teaching, though they rarely dedicated a particular time to explaining cultural information but mostly commented on those cultural matters pertinent to the words, grammar, or exercises, with which the class happened to be dealing. For instance, while I was observing, Henry mentioned his explanation to students of the Chinese character ‘家’ (jiā: home). He told that this word is composed of two parts — a ‘roof’ top and a ‘pig’ bottom, pointing out the fact that China is an agricultural country in its long history. Another example of this ‘incidental’ cultural teaching was when teaching the expression ‘不敢当’ (bù gǎn dāng: dare not take such compliments) to her students, Jane said that she drew their attention to the Chinese traditional value of ‘humbleness’.

Cindy talked about her emphasis on the appropriate use of language in a cultural context. She gave some examples during my interview with her:

Because you may find that if you don’t introduce the related culture, the student may use the language very unnaturally, even though he knows the language. For example, I had such a student in my class. Responding to whatever I said to him (he is a non-heritage student), he always replied, “Thanks!” In class I often give verbal feedback to students, like “Not bad!” “Very good!” He always said “thanks” right away. So he could repeat it dozens of times in a period of class. Then I told him, “Chinese people don’t use it so often. Or they may think you are weird. This doesn’t mean what you say is not right, but means it doesn’t sound natural. Of course, I don’t mind if you talk to me that way since we are in the language class. But if you are in an authentic language environment, people would wonder why this person acts so eccentrically. This will be true.”...Another example. I had some other students, who learned the question “你去哪儿？” (Nǐ qù nǎr: Where are you going?) but didn’t understand that it is a common way of greeting among Chinese people. Then you must give them a clear explanation, right?

4.4.2. Differentiating between heritage courses and non-heritage courses

For all of the teachers, to what extent cultural content was introduced depended on the level of the course and of the students the teacher was teaching. During the interviews with me, two of the participants, Cindy and Jane particularly stressed the differences between how they taught heritage courses and how they taught non-heritage courses⁹. For non-heritage beginners, Jane said:

There are many times that I show them some video clips and add some cultural information, which relate to the corresponding content of our textbook...As they have limited knowledge about Mandarin, you may have to explain simply in English or give a visual presentation.

By contrast, with the heritage students, particularly those at the intermediate and advanced levels, Jane would deal with the cultural content in a different way. She commented:

Normally I don't go deep into cultural information unless it is a heritage class. I also engage such a class in more culture-related activities...For example, in one of my heritage classes, one text touches upon parents' expectations of their children. One of the exercises we do is to get my students to find out the meaning of their names at home, asking their parents how their Chinese names were given. Thus, I take the opportunity to discuss with students some conventions of giving Chinese names and the origin of the students' surnames.

With regard to the knowledge about Chinese culture, Cindy also expressed higher expectations of her heritage students than of her non-heritage students. She remarked:

Why did I select that textbook for my heritage students? In fact, that textbook is aimed to provide them with a deeper understanding of China and Chinese culture. What they know about Chinese culture is actually

⁹ Heritage courses are Chinese courses designed for students of Chinese ancestry while non-heritage courses for those of non-Chinese ancestry. However, regarding the placement in these two kinds of courses, Cindy argued that the divide should be based on students' Chinese language background instead of their race. She suggested that a Caucasian student who went to China with his parents at an early age and learned Chinese there should be enrolled in heritage courses.

quite superficial. For instance, all the students know the fact that they receive “red envelopes” during Chinese New Year and go eat in Chinese restaurants, but what lies behind these practices?

I made my first observation in Cindy’s class with heritage students when they were studying the text *China’s North and South*. During the interview with me, Cindy happened to bring it up as an example to demonstrate her way of guiding these students through the cultural content:

Today I asked them, “Our text talks about the difference in Chinese people’s eating habits — the northerners like eating noodles whereas the southerners like eating rice. Why is so?” When I carried the question further as such, they couldn’t answer it, looking utterly puzzled. Seeing this, I naturally led them this way, “This is associated with climate and geography. Our habits never come out of the blue, right? For instance, paddy rice is massively produced in Southern China. Why? It relates to climate and soil, namely, geographical environment in the South. That the text describes the North and the South in a comparative manner helps link geographical and weather conditions with people’s eating habits reasonably, not combining factors just randomly.” Thus, students can form an inner logic in mind and understand the text better; moreover, they gain a deeper insight into China.

Then Cindy voiced her lower expectations of non-heritage students in their mastery of Chinese culture:

For the non-heritage students, their understanding needs to go a long way to reach this extent. However, their primary task is to communicate effectively. Communicative function certainly involves cultural factors. So for these students, I think suffice it to say that we can help them actualize effective communication by teaching some cultural information.

4.4.3. Employing comparative methods

I observed two of the teachers, Nina and Henry, trying to help students understand Chinese culture better by comparing Chinese and Canadian cultural practices. Nina, who had compiled a series of course materials for non-heritage students studying in the university, told me that she had intentionally incorporated cultural information into the Chinese language curriculum, including many more introductions to Chinese culture in the textbooks for advanced learners than for beginners. My visits to her classes also showed that she directed her students’ attention to cultural differences

from time to time. In one class the students were studying the vocabulary and sentence patterns for asking people's names. Following their practice, Nina incidentally talked about people's different reactions to a newborn baby. She joked that seeing a baby, a Canadian mother-in-law would say, "What a lovely baby!" But a Chinese mother-in-law would say, "What an ugly baby!" "Isn't it a culture shock to you?" she asked, which immediately aroused the students' curiosity. "Do you know why?" she continued. As no student provided a right answer, she explained that in case compliments might attract evil spirits' attention to the baby, Chinese people thought using negative comments instead would keep the evil spirits from killing the baby, who thus could be well protected and survive risks¹⁰.

During my data collection period, Henry was teaching a higher-level Mandarin course and using the textbook compiled by Nina, which highlights a cultural topic in each chapter. As well as discussing with the students the cultural content occurring in the text, Henry carried the content further and led the students to a deeper insight into cultural differences. On the day when I visited his class for the last observation, they were dealing with the text on giving gifts. After the students read the text by themselves, Henry asked them, "What do Canadian people normally bring as gifts when they visit the host?" He then asked a female student to answer and she replied, based on the text, "They normally bring flowers, chocolate, and alcohol." "How about Chinese people?" he continued, picking another female student. She answered, "Chinese people normally bring candies, fruit, but do not need to bring flowers." "Then when do they bring flowers?" he questioned. Another student took the turn, "They bring flowers when paying a visit to a patient." Showing agreement, Henry said, "The same with Canadian people, right?" Students nodded and added that Canadians also bring flowers as gifts when visiting a cemetery. Henry then summarized the two cultural traditions and invited the students to think further, "Look, as guests, Chinese people normally bring something to

¹⁰ From my understanding, the teacher used such an example in order to arouse students' curiosity about Chinese culture and encourage them to explore reasons for a cultural phenomenon underneath. But I want to remind readers that this cultural practice mentioned above is old fashioned and only prevailing in certain areas in China. Thus, teachers should be alerted to regional differences and evolution of cultural practices and be cautious in choosing examples for students; and they could give unique examples with explanations and warnings to keep students from overgeneralizing cultural practices.

eat and Canadian people something to eat or drink. Think about it. What could the drink be?” “Alcohol!” replied the students according to the text. “Like what?” Henry carried on, “Very strong one? Liquor? Or something like coffee, tea, ‘白酒’ (bái jiǔ: white wine literally, such as Chinese rice wine), and ‘红酒’ (hóng jiǔ: red wine)?” He wrote down the characters and Chinese phonetics for ‘白’ and ‘红’ on the board, explaining that the ‘white wine’ he was referring to is like Vodka but not the same as that in Canada. “What food can they bring?” Henry encouraged students to answer more. After the students brought up the words like ‘candies’, ‘cakes’, and ‘dishes’, he reminded them, “They are usually home-made dishes, not those cooked and bought in the restaurant.” It seemed that, through this process, Henry endeavored to refresh his students’ memory of some Chinese vocabulary and supplement the lesson with a few new words as well as additional cultural information.

4.5. Interactions with students in class

How much these teachers considered themselves to be authoritative in class may dictate their ways of interacting with their students. My data gathered from both the interviews and observations also demonstrated that all the participants, to varying degrees, kept certain teaching objectives in mind and applied a student-centered approach to their teaching practices. As well, they seemingly modified their teaching practices based on their observations of students as well as on students’ oral and/or written feedback.

4.5.1. Targeting teaching objectives

When I asked the participants about their teaching objectives, they replied to the question in varying ways. Four stressed the importance of students being able to communicate in Mandarin.

Nina: For the fundamental beginner courses, my hope is to teach students all the basic grammar and sentence patterns, on the basis of which they can figure out how to express whatever they want to say. Once they know the grammar, they won’t put the expressions in disorder. The basic grammar that keeps them on the right track is there...Some

students complain to me, “It seems that what you are teaching is not practical.” But I feel if I simply taught them those popular things, which they may see as practical and common among many people, it would not be systemic or lay a good foundation for them.

Cindy: I think students’ goal of learning the language is to be capable of communicating in Chinese. Thus, what I want them to master most is to realize smooth communication...Yet if one asked to teach only simple words, plus some body language, I don’t think that could be the goal of our Chinese course... Even if you spent time trying to signal your meaning through gestures, others might not get it at all. So I think attaining effective communication within sufficient verbal competence is the most important goal. No matter what purposes the students hold, be it pursuing their interest, or furthering their education, or looking for jobs, they all want to apply their Chinese to practical use, right? In this way, they can understand others’ talk and get their own messages across.

Lisa: To me, the teaching objective is comprehensive...But for the focus, I think it is still on the language skills, such as their listening, speaking, reading, writing, and their communicative competence.

Henry: I think the four aspects of language skills — listening, speaking, reading, and writing — should be all stressed. The goal is to expand students’ vocabulary based on what they have learned in the beginner courses...Our current textbook is compiled according to cultural topics...Of course, it is also about introducing cultural information.

Somewhat differently from the other teachers, Jane defined her teaching objectives as including developing a positive disposition towards and interest in Mandarin:

As far as I am concerned, what is important is to help students develop their interest in learning Chinese. I hope they will not only make progress in the four skills like listening, speaking, reading, and writing, but also further their interest in learning Chinese, and master some effective learning tactics. In this case, they won’t be scared off by the difficulty of Mandarin learning but can carry it forward on their own. Meanwhile, they may find Chinese characters quite interesting. In addition, regardless of their original learning objectives, I hope they will have a positive impression of China and Mandarin in the end.

In this excerpt from our interview, Jane was not only concerned about students’ academic performance but also attended to their affective factors in learning, which was associated with her understanding of the meaning of ‘education’:

I think education is not only about acquiring knowledge. It is a life-long learning experience. It is an experience proper. It should be all-embracing, including the social factor, the psychological factor (students' feelings), and of course, the academic factor as well as their outlook on China and the like...

Therefore, Jane expanded her teaching goals beyond learning itself and put forward another perspective:

Right, the most important is, I hope, they can develop their interest in learning Mandarin and understanding China...There is another aspect, which, however, may be not closely related to Mandarin learning. I hope a bond can be fostered among students, like a community, that leads them to become friends. Our classes are small-sized. So I think this is feasible. In terms of a big class, as students have told me, comprised of hundreds of students, they merely attend the class and then go home right after that. They turn out to know nobody else. They do not have a sense of belonging. So I hope students in my classes, who come from similar background and have similar interests and so on, can become friends, help one another, and cherish a passion for their community.

4.5.2. Practising student-centered pedagogies

With a view to reaching their intended teaching objectives, these teachers all seemingly adopted a student-centered approach in their teaching and interacted with students in their own unique ways. I describe below in detail for each participant my observations and their remarks about their pedagogical practices.

Cindy. Cindy said that she employed different methods according to her students' different language backgrounds, Chinese proficiency, and learning styles. By her account, she paid special attention to the influence of students' mother tongues on their learning of Mandarin phonetics and made efforts to clarify to students the similarities and differences of the sounds in both language systems. During the interviews, Cindy frequently emphasized distinctions between heritage and non-heritage students. She said that she found it hard to maintain a good balance in a class composed of both heritage and non-heritage students, for the latter demanded more explanations of Mandarin and normally felt intimidated by their 'more knowledgeable' heritage peers. According to Cindy, owing to the different language families, chances were that many students from Japan or Korea had learned writing characters in their

own countries, whereas students from Europe or Americas had gained little or no knowledge about characters; to help out the latter group of students, she would take care to highlight the construction of Chinese characters and encourage these students to speak out in class.

When teaching heritage and non-heritage students separately, Cindy told me that she tended to use different strategies: in her non-heritage classes, she was focused more on the teaching of basic language skills but less on the teaching of Chinese cultural information except the cultural factors that significantly interested the students¹¹; yet in her heritage classes, she held the view that these students needed to learn about Chinese culture at a deeper level than non-heritage students, and so she would spare no effort to introduce to ethnic Chinese students more of Chinese history, Chinese idioms, and so on. Cindy related that she had been adjusting her teaching methods for different learners thanks to the development of modern technology as well. An example she gave in the interview was the fact that she had stopped teaching non-heritage beginner students to consult Chinese dictionaries because she thought students could access online dictionaries via computer, iPhone, iPad, or other electronic devices; however, she still deemed it necessary to teach heritage students to use Chinese dictionaries at a later stage since she had higher expectations of this group of students.

During my observational period, Cindy happened to be teaching a heritage class. I observed that she took care to frequently associate what the class was learning with students' authentic life situations. For instance, when dealing with the text *China's North and South*, Cindy reminded the class of the sign that reads “南北货”(nán běi huò: goods from Southern and Northern China) in 'T&T', a popular Asian-style grocery store in Canada. Another day the class came across the expression “枇杷”(pí pa: loquat) in an exercise, whose meaning was hard for students to guess simply by looking at the radical component ‘木’ in these characters. So Cindy offered her students the English translation and suggested they purchase and taste this kind of fruit in T&T when Mid-

¹¹ Cindy also added that non-heritage students usually displayed more enthusiasm and curiosity in learning Chinese culture than heritage students.

autumn Festival (a traditional Chinese festival) arrives, adding that Chinese people usually eat loquat during this festival.

Cindy also employed visual methods to familiarize students with the learning content. When introducing China's geography to the class, she talked about the Yangtze River, the longest river in China that divides China into the North and the South. She drew a picture as follows and gave it such a description at the same time, "Yangtze River is a 'V' plus a 'W' and then a tail!"

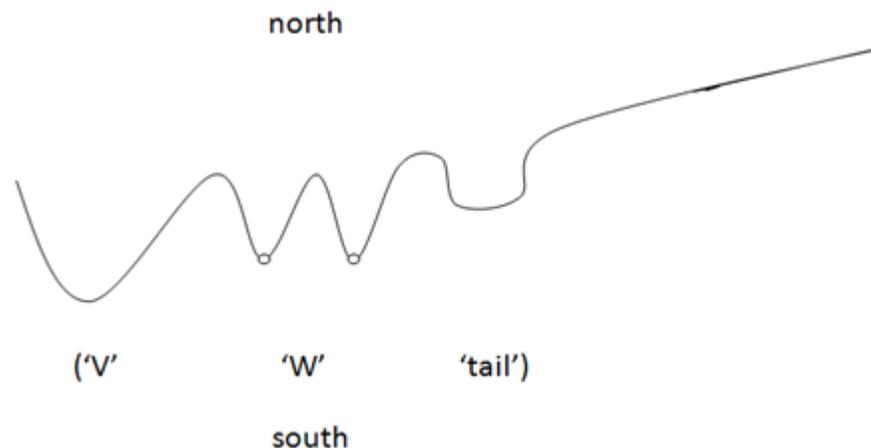


Figure 4.1. The drawing of the Yangtze River by Cindy

The last observation I made in Cindy's class coincided with a session when students gave presentations about places in China. In this class Cindy functioned as a helper, guide, and facilitator, leaving most of the time to students for their performances. At the beginning of class she announced the procedure for that day — four groups would take turn to give their presentations and each student ought to give an evaluation to the other groups. Having handed out the evaluation form, she told students how they would mark it, saying that she would consider the audience's evaluation when marking each group's presentation, in spite of her role as the final decision maker. She helped students set up the technical equipment and then took a seat in the corner of the classroom. Active and excited, the four groups of students utilized stories, slides of pictures and words, background music, and mini-plays to introduce Hong Kong, Shanghai, Yunnan, and Taiwan consecutively. While they were engaged in the presentations, Cindy listened to them carefully, took notes at times, kept time for them,

and also joined the audience in answering the presenters' questions. The class appeared interactive and relaxed. After all the presentations were done, Cindy briefly reviewed students' performances and pointed out their strengths, weaknesses, and things that needed improving, such as accuracy of diction and the logical order of their presentations. In the end, she encouraged students to learn something from these presentations and expressed her wish that they would gain a deeper understanding of their heritage culture.

Henry. Henry endeavored to facilitate interactive class activities among students. When students made a mistake or had difficulty in completing the sentences they had made, Henry responded by giving a clue to help them finish or improve their sentences. Each student in his class was given the chance to make sentences. For the same sentence to translate, he would normally ask a few students to share their different answers. Once the answers were given, he often gave feedback like "Good!" or "Make sense!" And then he turned to the whole class, "Got it?" or "Understand?" One day he invited students to check their answers together to an assignment from the textbook. Realizing that many students had forgotten to do the exercise in advance and thus had difficulty in giving the answer quickly, he asked students to work on it in pairs for a few minutes and offered them translation for the sentences in which students failed to recognize some characters or forgot the meaning of the words.

Henry reported (and I observed) that he often used translation methods in his teaching. During my observation, sometimes he asked students individually to pick any sentence from the patterns they had just read and get another student to repeat and translate the sentence so that each student would concentrate on and understand the sentences. If they failed to catch the sentence by listening, they were encouraged to ask their classmate to repeat, requesting in Mandarin “请你说一遍！(Qǐng nǐ zài shuō yí biàn: Please say it one more time!)” In addition, Henry exhibited a sense of humour when helping students make sentences. For example, to practice the superlative degree, he got students to translate a sentence like “The teacher I hate most is my Chinese language teacher”, which amused the class immensely. I noticed that as that semester went on, his students looked more relaxed and less nervous than had they in the first

class I had observed. From time to time they burst into laughter because of the teacher's humour or their classmates' funny reactions.

Jane. During my observation, Jane exhibited her stated sense of equality with students. In the interview, Jane told me that she embraced mutual learning between the teacher and students. She mostly taught Cantonese-speaking students, whose Mandarin listening was generally adequate enough to understand the teacher's utterances in Mandarin. Occasionally during the break students showed Jane the fashion magazines they were reading for fun. She took the chance to ask them about the brand names and the fashion styles. I asked her, "Won't it be embarrassing if the teacher does not know much about the newest fashion and is unable to tell students the corresponding Mandarin words? For instance, I know little about brands." With a big smile, Jane answered, "Don't worry. Students are usually very nice. They are happy to tell you the fashion they like." And she continued to say that students took much pleasure in teaching her to pronounce the fashion words in Cantonese, and in return she would tell the students the corresponding Mandarin pronunciation. Jane also stated that although doing exercises by rote memorization and repetition was necessary at times, she managed to arrange more interactive activities in class and keep them in a logical order, and that it was crucial for a teacher to think from students' perspectives rather than simply implement teaching plans according to her own beliefs.

I was struck in Jane's classes by the apparently harmonious relationship between her and her students. On the day when I visited her class for the first time, I found the students quite friendly with one another. During the break, a girl proposed to the class, "Guys, do you want to have dinner together?" "Yes, yes!" The students who responded positively also extended the invitation to the teacher. Smiling at the class, Jane suggested that they should practice Mandarin while eating together in a Chinese restaurant, which provoked a burst of laughter among students.

At the start of the second observation session, it began to snow outside, mixed with drops of rain. Jane talked to the class, "Look out! What is this kind of weather called in Mandarin?" Having not heard a right answer, she offered the Chinese description of this weather "雨夹雪" (yǔ jiā xuě: sleet) and alerted students to drive carefully to avoid

accidents that occasionally happened in such a weather condition. Then they began to learn a new lesson about human body parts. Pointing at different parts of her body, such as neck, arm, nose, and so on, Jane got students to name them in Mandarin precisely. When it came to her knees, she asked the class for the Mandarin expression. One or two students replied in Cantonese, “菠萝杠!” (Bō luó gàng: Pineapple-shaped lever!), which made the class burst into laughter again. With a smile, Jane remarked, “Does it look like a pineapple? In Mandarin, we say ‘膝盖’ (xī gài: knee).” Following this demonstration, Jane named the body parts in Mandarin and students pointed at certain parts of their bodies correspondingly. Meanwhile, she directed the students’ attention to her pronunciation of these words as well. Afterwards, each student was asked to name one body part in Mandarin, getting the rest of the class to point at their body parts accordingly. In this process, Jane was hoping to fine-tune students’ pronunciation in Mandarin, particularly tones. She also took the chance to supplement a number of nouns regarding body parts and diseases that people often mentioned in daily life. Deeply engaged in various interactive activities, students appeared cooperative and enthusiastic.

Lisa. During the interview, Lisa said that she generally applied similar methods in her Mandarin classes both in China and in Canada, such as exchanging opinions with students individually, thanks to the small size of foreign language classes¹². Nonetheless, she stated that what she taught students in Canada somewhat differed from what she had taught students in China. To the students in China, she would read the latest news she had found on popular Chinese websites and discuss with students the sociocultural issues that were taking place around them. As well, she used some teaching objects that she easily found within or near her home, such as photos, paintings, handicrafts, and so on. In Canada, she tended to introduce traditional Chinese culture to students, particularly the cultural elements that Canadian students might be aware of in Greater Vancouver; but because teaching props such as pictures and

¹² Lisa had experience in teaching Mandarin to both Chinese students and international students in China. In the interviews, she mainly compared her experiences of teaching Mandarin as a foreign language to non-Chinese students in China and in Canada.

handicrafts were not easily available, she was seldom able to use them in her current classes.

Throughout my observations, Lisa often used written Mandarin to teach her Canadian students. Regardless of the whiteboard installed in every classroom, she usually wrote words on the transparency of the overhead projector and projected the content onto the screen for the whole class to view. The content could be a summary of grammar points, Mandarin words or pronunciation she wanted to highlight, sample sentences, additional exercises she designed, and so on. By doing so, she attempted to leave a strong impression of the important content upon her students.

Lisa had in the interview described herself as a facilitator and guide for students' learning. During my observation, her teaching ideology was evident in her efforts to organize diverse in-class activities. Under her guidance, there were multiple interactions between her and her students and among her students themselves; and such interactions were common in her practices, which she felt greatly engaged her students in language learning. In one of her classes I visited, students were learning position words. Having written down “向...转” (xiàng...zhuǎn: towards ... turn), Lisa invited a girl student to be a commander giving directions by means of this pattern and asked the rest of the class to follow her orders and make corresponding movement. Then the students were assigned to practice this way within smaller groups. It seemed that they had great fun in this activity. Some commanders even gave such challenging orders as “turn to the side of ...” (named one of their group members) and “turn to the opposite side of the east”.

At the beginning of another class, Lisa offered each student a scrap of paper, on which was printed either a Chinese syllable with its Chinese character or a Chinese syllable with its English definition. Then she asked students to walk around in the classroom and check with their classmates, looking for the definition or the character that could match the word they had in their hands. Immediately students took an active part in this activity and soon completed the match with their classmates. In this way Lisa helped her class not only review the old vocabulary and strengthen their memory of it but also build connections among students.

Nina. Nina was distinctive in her beliefs and actions of diversifying and alternating teaching methods in class. Just as she told me in the interview, “In case the students get bored, the teacher has to change her didactics frequently.” I observed her belief in action. She often combined the explanation of language points with exercise completion and urged students to apply what they learned to what they wanted to express. For example, after the class learned “请问 (qǐng wèn: may I ask)” and “...汉语怎么说? (Hàn yǔ zěn me shuō: How to say...in Chinese?)”, Nina encouraged students to send her emails in Chinese in order to ask questions like “请问老师, ‘criminology’ 汉语怎么说? (Qǐng wèn lǎo shī, ‘criminology’ Hàn yǔ zěn me shuō: May I ask you, teacher, how to say ‘criminology’ in Chinese?)” Following this step, she projected an exercise on the screen and asked students to translate seven questions into Chinese by using “请问” and have short conversations in pairs. After teaching the language points, Nina switched to teach students to write the new characters stroke by stroke, explaining the meaning of the components of each character with the hope that this would make memorization of characters easier for students.

Nina also seemed adept at integrating language learning with questions that likely intrigued students. One day when her class was learning new vocabulary like “从 (cóng: from)”, “第 (dì: prefix for ordinal numbers)”, and “喜欢 (xǐ huan: to like)”, she got students to ask each other questions in Chinese such as “Where are you from?” and “What kind of people do you like?” Students seemed to be highly motivated to practice in pairs and enjoy searching for each other’s answers. I heard a boy saying, “我喜欢很漂亮的女人和聪明的男人。(Wǒ xǐ huan hěn piào liang de nǚ rén hé cōng míng de nán rén: I like pretty women and smart men.)” Upon his answer, the classmates seated next to him giggled; Nina turned around and smiled at him before walking away. After introducing more adjectives and the pattern “又...又... (yòu...yòu...: both...and...)” via the projector, Nina invited students to describe their ideal boy/girl friend by asking “What kind of boy/girl friend do you like?” and answering with the pattern “both...and...”. The class continued in this manner with students’ utterances, discussions, and laughter.

4.5.3. Gathering and handling students' feedback

In the participants' university, every teacher, at the end of each semester, was required to have their students complete an evaluation form provided by the university concerning the course and the teacher's instruction. My participants all reported that they always fulfilled this task and used it as the main source for the improvement of their teaching. Nevertheless, this end-of-term evaluation did not serve as the sole feedback to the teachers. As Cindy put it:

If it is a small class, especially the class of intensive courses, I often ask students for their opinions. After each exam, I always ask them, whatever class it is, how they feel about the difficulty and the time allocation for the exam. Also in such a class, you can easily identify the weaker and the stronger students. I would find chances to ask for their opinions on my teaching pace. If the situation permits, I would slow down my pace where they find particularly difficult to grasp. For an intensive course, I have to finish a certain number of lessons within the timeframe, so I cannot change my teaching schedule. But I have the flexibility to allocate more or less time to certain learning contents. For example, I allow the slower students to spend more time doing assignments at home. It does no harm to my teaching progress in class. Or for a certain grammar point, I would give more explanations to the students who, to me, appear rather slow in understanding it. I just make some technical adjustment. ...As to the bigger class, which doesn't require such a tight schedule as the intensive course, teaching pace is not a problem. Since I assign group projects to each class, I would solicit students' opinions on these projects. In this way, you can improve your teaching constantly. After all, you yourself alone do not always think as much as your students do.

Henry said that he based his teaching improvement mostly on students' feedback through the end-of-term evaluation. But he also suggested:

A qualified teacher should have more communication with students. The university's student evaluation form is official and formalized, after all, which cannot reflect all the aspects about teaching. So far as I know, some teachers devise student evaluation forms by themselves. They don't solely depend on the university's structured evaluation form. They design the surveys based on what they want to know. Besides, they get students to complete the forms not simply at the end of term. They usually collect the student evaluation at the beginning of term, in the middle of term, and then at the end of term. The beginning-of-term evaluation can give them a sense of students' expectations. The midterm evaluation can help them detect problems and hence solve the problems

in time. And the end-of-term evaluation reflects the general teaching outcomes as it does.

According to Lisa, she usually received feedback from her students through casual chat. She said:

I feel they would take their initiative to tell you what interests them, what they find difficulty to learn, etc. Then you could summarize their opinions and perhaps make improvement in your future teaching....I have never got students to write anything. But during the break, I would chat with them. Or when I find them making some mistakes often, I would ask them why.

Jane told me that, aside from the end-of-term evaluations, students' feedback to her was basically derived from her intuition and purposeful assignments:

As I often have lots of interactions with students in class, I can sense their reactions to my teaching. Sometimes in the past I might get students to write comments anonymously during or past the midterm when it occurred to me that something seemingly didn't work, or that the class atmosphere wasn't right. It normally relies on my intuition. For Cantonese-speaking classes, students are asked to submit a portfolio at the end of term, in which they would voice their feelings about the class, their in-class performances, and their review of the course. This is different from the Course Evaluation provided by the university. Students include more details in their portfolios, which are quite informative and narrative....In case of small issues or the like, I would discuss with students directly. If I feel it is about pedagogical practices or some issues that were unsuitable for public discussion, I would ask students to write them down. But most of the time, when I sense that everything is going well in class, I would not take particular action.

However, some participants stated that they accommodated their students' requests in the feedback selectively and modified their teaching in line with their own teaching philosophy and specific teaching plans. For example, Nina said:

In class students always have such comments as "this is too difficult". ...Some students complain that there are too many quizzes in this course. They complain about it even in class, too. Hehehe...But without the quizzes, they do not even want to study. So what can we do? It is hard to balance. Should we give them more or fewer quizzes? Yet I think we need to give them a bit of pressure. Right, no pressure, no motivation. If there were no quizzes for two times, wouldn't they find it hard to catch up [without studying hard for the quizzes]? If they didn't have a good mastery

of the previous lesson, the farther they would lag behind, the worse they would perform. Hehehe...

Likewise, Lisa showed some dissatisfaction with students' complaints about the difficulty of the last few lessons in the course she was teaching. She articulated her opinion:

When it came to the end of term, they occasionally felt the learning content was somewhat challenging. But they complained that it was too difficult to learn. In fact, I don't think it is that difficult. It is just because they didn't want to calm down to study harder. At that moment I would feel these few students were not diligent. Before I taught the content, they had already developed a sense of fear. Sometimes I feel unhappy about the students like this.

Jane said she took students' suggestions into account, depending on specific situations:

It depends on what their requests are. If the student says, "I wish there would be fewer assignments", I need to consider if I should accept it. But I think some students' suggestions are pretty good. For example, when a Mandarin course was opened for Cantonese-speaking students at the beginning, I designed an activity of presentation. However, to the students, this activity did not appear helpful. So later on, some of them gave suggestions in their feedback, which I felt were quite reasonable. Then, I modified this activity according to their suggestions.

Also, Nina and Jane mentioned in the interviews that some students initially expressed discontent about a relatively heavy load of homework and frequent quizzes occurring in almost each class; but when students came to realize how much they had benefited from the class at the end of term, they eventually extended gratitude to their teachers.

4.6. Discussion and findings

The interviews and observations with my participants unpacked some similarities and differences in their attitudes, feelings, and practices in terms of Mandarin teaching, which could be examined and interpreted with reference to related theories on 'identity'.

4.6.1. Adjusting teacher roles and sense of authority in class

All the participants agreed that teachers in China naturally assume authority in class because of their commonly recognized high prestige in Chinese society and are normally obliged to serve as role models for students. It is noteworthy that Chinese teacher-centeredness is not entirely of teachers' making. In fact, China has a long history of teacher-centered education¹³. The educational system in China is generally centralized¹⁴. Bound by school policies and unified syllabi, teachers find little freedom to select their own course materials or implement the curriculum in ways that they think better suit their students. They gradually form the habit of expecting and pushing students, in hopes that students will follow their instructions closely, to complete all the required learning tasks. In my opinion, being a role model and the sole authority in class is premised on the notion that the teacher is superior to the students. It is probably the hierarchical nature of Chinese society that privileges teachers over students, teaching over learning, and that leads to the hierarchical structure in the classroom, which legitimates the teacher's power and dominance in class and inclines the teacher to see himself/herself as the deliverer of knowledge to students, largely ignoring students' autonomy and learning. However, in the past three decades, China has been undergoing educational reform¹⁵, which was also evidenced by Cindy's reference, as presented earlier, to the practice of the Communicative Approach by some Chinese teachers.

¹³ The teacher-centered tradition can be traced back to the "edification" from the essay *On the Teacher* written by Han Yu, a famous Confucian thinker and poet in the Tang Dynasty of ancient China (618AD-907AD), who claimed that a teacher should be someone "who could propagate the doctrine, impart professional knowledge, and resolve doubts" (Han, 2011, para.1).

¹⁴ There are normally unified teaching syllabi for each subject in order to meet the goal of passing standardized examinations. To raise graduation rates and publicize educational effectiveness, Chinese schools tend to utilize students' examination marks as a standard to assess the quality of a teacher.

¹⁵ Responding to the needs of its unique political culture and new market economy, China has launched a series of reform measures in education since 1985. Chinese central authorities have devolved control of curricula to the local administration, which includes its endeavor to shift the focus of pre-collegiate education from the exam-centered model towards "quality education" that is aimed at fostering students' innovation capabilities and problem-solving competence. Although educational decentralization has had limited effect and is still under debate, invitation to participate in educational initiatives has been extended and autonomy to introduce new courses has been afforded to teachers in some areas of China (Hawkins, 2000).

While they indicated they were comfortable with teachers' social status and teacher roles prevalent in Chinese society, the participants in my study, without exception, expressed preference for learner-centered teaching philosophies and practices under the influence of Western ideology, which they felt characterized education in Canada¹⁶. None of them depicted themselves as the sole authority in their Canadian classes, but rather they saw themselves as assuming the roles typically enacted in Western educational culture such as students' guides, friends, and learning facilitators. Conscious of discrepancies in different teaching contexts, my participants consequently appeared to adjust their professional identities and teaching practices. For instance, the influence of China's moral education could be identified in Henry's comment that he had initially expected the same obedience from Canadian students as Chinese students, and that Canadian professors, who were not so concerned with 'morality' as were Chinese teachers, could still set good examples for students by their conduct. Despite such comments, Henry explicitly said that he had gradually adapted himself to the teaching situation in Canada. Disapproving teacher-centeredness, Cindy criticized some Mandarin teachers' domineering and mechanical teaching practices and brought up her own idea on how to give students options for self study and utilize class time for open discussion.

The teachers' shifting attitudes towards teacher roles therefore affected and facilitated their implementation of a student-centered approach. As far as my observations in their classes revealed, they all demonstrated that they could carry out teaching tasks according to students' needs. As Jane demonstrated, the interactive activities and her constant concern with students' understanding was evident as was her keeping abreast of pop culture among young people. Her in-class activities related closely to her students' daily lives. Corresponding to what she said in the interview, during my observations, she acted as a facilitator of learning to her students. Similarly, Nina started her class with friendly greetings using English and simple Chinese

¹⁶ Celebrating universal equality and cultural diversity, education in Canada is decentralized from the federal to the provincial government to allow for the expression of differences. Most schools are publicly funded and administered by their local district school boards. Set up to meet the diverse needs of individual students, the Canadian school system encourages teachers to facilitate the growth of children rather than exercise their power of control (Moodley, 1995).

expressions to build connections with her students and to help refresh their memory of the knowledge learned previously; she also frequently gave students questions pertinent to their daily lives. Lisa often presented summative notes, vivid examples, and engaging activities to help students grasp new grammar points.

With respect to authority, all the teachers stated and showed that they had shifted their sense of teacher authority in Canada. As Henry put it, he gradually saw challenges from students as normal and necessary for learning to take place. Cindy acknowledged that student-centeredness allowed her to openly discuss mistakes that occurred in her teaching, which she felt actually benefited both the teacher and students. Although all the teachers recognized their diminished authority with Canadian students and were able to cope with the new teaching scenarios, the transition from hierarchical to equal teacher-student relationship, however, seemed not totally smooth to some of them. Henry admitted that it was “relatively more difficult to teach abroad” as students might challenge the teacher anytime and he felt rather embarrassed about such a situation at the beginning of his teaching in Canada. Lisa also bore the worries that students might misbehave if they sensed that the teacher did not assert her authority. But she attributed the students’ argument over their marking to the educational system of North America rather than their intention to challenge her authority. Interestingly, Nina articulated her flexibility in dealing with authority in different teaching scenarios: she tended to relax her authority when teaching in Asia in order to encourage students to speak out but to strengthen her authority when teaching in Canada in order to discipline students for more effective class management.

The case of Henry was thought-provoking as he said that he felt his authority particularly challenged in the linguistics classes he had tutored but not so strongly in his Mandarin classes. This brought up for me a question: where does a Mandarin teacher’s sense of authority come from? As pointed out earlier, teachers’ authority in China is predominantly endowed by Chinese tradition and social values. Challenging the teacher’s authority is equal to dismissing the teacher’s expertise and would make the

teacher lose 'face'¹⁷. While in Canada, Mandarin teachers, being native speakers of Chinese, naturally carry authority in their classes because Mandarin is legitimated as an 'official language' on the teaching site. In other words, they feel empowered by their unique 'cultural capital'¹⁸. As a non-native speaker of English, Henry did not feel privileged when teaching linguistics to a class mostly composed of native English speakers, and as a result he felt embarrassed and anxious when he failed to address a student's question. However, when it came to a Mandarin class, he was more confident and assertive in his manner of dealing with students because he had the advantage over them in his language proficiency and cultural knowledge. In addition, work experience can be another factor contributing to the teacher's self-ascribed authority. For instance, Cindy revealed her sense of authority by stating not only that she was a native speaker of Chinese, but also that she had so many years of teaching experience as to be competent enough to handle various Mandarin courses. Jane also disclosed to me her past experience in which she felt her authority was especially challenged when teaching Western children, who asked her personal questions such as about her relationship and marriage. She admitted that although her mild temperament gave her no desire to become authoritarian in class, she had the expectation that her little students should respect her authority without prying into her privacy.

According to Giddens' (1984) notion of *structuration*, identity is a process that functions at the crossroads of structure and agency: social structure establishes conventions for individual agents but individuals can also impact on the social structure. The way my participants perceived their roles and authority revealed that their professional identities were negotiable and fluid, constituted by the 'figured worlds' (Holland et al., 1998) they were located in. On one hand, the 'figured world' frames

¹⁷ The notion of 'face' is emphasized in Chinese culture as it signals an individual's prestige in the society. To project a particular favorable image in front of others, Chinese people tend to do 'face work' to enhance face, avoid circumstances to lose face, and go all out to save face once it is at stake. The loss of 'face' normally results in injuring one's self-esteem and makes it impossible for one to function properly within the community (Hu, 1944; Hwang, 1987).

¹⁸ According to Bourdieu (1986), 'cultural capital' confers power and social status on a person through one's accumulated knowledge, skills, and education.

teachers' implementation of roles and responsibilities in educational settings (Bascia, 1996a). On the other hand, the teachers adjusted their perception of roles and authority through "participation in, identification with, and development of expertise within the figured world" (Holland et al., p.136). The hierarchical Chinese society prescribes the educational structures and delegates authority to teachers. Hence, my teacher participants automatically assumed hierarchy in the classroom, and claimed authority as ethical role models for students. The apparently nonhierarchical nature of Canadian society penetrates into Canadian university culture, in which equality, autonomy, and critical thinking are said to be valued and enacted and intellectual challenges are said to be welcomed and encouraged. To my participants, changing from "preachers" to students into "companions" of students meant pulling them out of their accustomed roles, perhaps out of their 'comfort zones', and pushing them into meeting challenges from the unfamiliar teaching scenarios. It unavoidably caused ambivalence and uneasiness to them at the outset. Such kind of transition corroborates that 'identification' is processual, underlining individual preferences and choices in relation to the 'outer world' (Rummens, 2000), and that difference and exclusion arising from cross-cultural encounters often call for the formation of hybrid identities, which is sometimes about friction and tension (Ang, 2001) and fashioned on the move (Hall, 1996; Rapport & Dawson, 1998).

Like those teachers presented in Wang's (2002) study, who gradually rationalized Canadian values and teaching practices, my participants perceived themselves as able to adapt to the new university culture. It is my speculation that this result was largely attributed to the teachers' educational backgrounds and life histories, which provided them with some psychological preparation to cope with the new situation before their relocation in Canada: with their access to Western educational theories, the notions of a student-centered approach and of teachers as learning facilitators were probably burgeoning in the minds of these teachers or had even been implemented in their teaching when they were still in China or in other countries. Their authentic teaching experiences in Canada gave them deeper insights and opportunities to reinforce their westernized teaching ideologies. It seemed to me that Nina was familiar with Western educational philosophy as many schools in Hong Kong, where she was born and raised, were modelled on the British educational system. Henry was well

informed of Western culture owing to his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in English Language and Literature in China. I also had the impression that Cindy always conceived of herself as a student-centered teacher since the inception of her teaching career in China and thus saw little change in her teaching approach along with her migration.

Undoubtedly, teachers' sense of authority relates to power issues in the educational institutions in which they work. Power relations are continually negotiated, unstable, and they likely vary in different societies, such as Canada and China. As Foucault observed, human individuals are active subjects instead of merely objects of power; 'power' can be seen as more a strategy than a control, as a potential positive and productive factor that can cause new behaviours to surface (Bălan, 2013). In terms of my participants, they chose to be subject to the power of the society they inhabited, to the established social structure they were located in, and willingly adjusted the power dynamics in the classroom, willingly repositioned themselves in order to connect with the local others and redefine their desired self-images (Lo, 2007; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004). The moment when they saw challenges from students as natural, normal, and even welcomed confirmed the formation of their new 'habitus' (Bourdieu, 1977) in Canadian society, though traces of their old 'habitus' derived from Chinese society were occasionally identified. In light of *structuration*, the teachers' adjusted attitudes towards their roles and issues of authority, together with their current teaching practices, revealed that while social structure impacted on their agency, they enacted agency to initiate changes in themselves rather than challenge the host social structure, and further, they reaffirmed this structure in their classrooms, which they understood as a positive change in their outlook and a great catalyst for their effective teaching.

4.6.2. Interpreting 'respect' in cultural contexts

In China, teaching is purportedly a respectable profession. In my study I also attempted to explore whether my participants' feelings about 'respect' at school underwent any change after they taught in Canada. My interview data showed that the teachers all examined the notion of 'respect' in cultural contexts and looked at their situations through varying lenses. On one hand, they did not deny their habitual

fondness of some signs of 'respect', which were often exhibited and familiar to them in Chinese culture. On the other hand, they all expressed understanding of their Canadian students' behaviours but unanimously attributed the cause to cultural differences and thus modified their own teaching practices. Moreover, they seemed able to distinguish superficial respect and heartfelt respect. According to my understanding and experience, there are some signs of 'respect' that Chinese teachers commonly appreciate in their students, such as verbal courtesy, humble manners, obedience, diligence, and appreciation of teachers' work (e.g. attending class in time, rewarding teachers with gifts, dinner, and help).

Measuring 'respect' through these signs could be discerned in my participants' comments as well. For example, Henry recalled his experiences with students in China when they brought him gifts, helped his family carry their fridge, and invited him to dinner, which made him feel close to his students. And he ascribed such kind of relationship to "Chinese culture". That is why he felt appreciated and respected when his students of Asian origin in Canada invited him to have a meal at a food store. Henry attributed the fact that no Caucasian students had treated him to dinner to Western culture that stresses "human rights and privacy".

Focusing on the essence of 'respect', Cindy related her impression that Asian and Western students had almost the same degree of respect for her but in their own ways: Asian students displayed signs of superficial respect but skipped classes sometimes, whereas Caucasian students never skipped any class without a good reason in spite of their casual manners. It appeared that she attached more importance to students' gratitude for her work by class attendance.

Jane articulately dissected the distinction between *zunjing* (heartfelt respect) and *zunzhong* (superficial respect). By her account, the former denoted students' reverence to teachers' authority and the latter was simply polite manners. She felt that Canadian students generally had *zunzhong* for teachers but not *zunjing* because the students did not always follow what teachers said. She even recollected an anecdote about a previous Chinese colleague to illustrate that Western students had no sense of *zunjing*, which could be offensive to Chinese teachers.

Lisa talked of her pleasure to see students saying goodbye to her at the end of class. Nonetheless, she conveyed disappointment at students' expression of boredom and laziness in learning Chinese grammar. But she communicated her understanding of students' behaviour as such in relation to her own schooling experience when she did not care about respecting her university teachers, either. Justifying her own way of looking at her teachers, she did not hold a high expectation of her students regarding their respect for her, and thus did not see Canadian students' casual manners in class and argument with her over marks as disrespectful but analyzed the situations with reference to different cultural contexts.

I could sense that Lisa expected her students to be more diligent, show more interest in the language, and appreciate her patient explanations. It seemed to me that she understood 'respect' somewhat differently from the other teachers. She placed more stress on the candid communication between her and students than on such signs as offer of gifts, dinner, or help. She liked the way Canadian students approached her directly and freely, which, as she said, removed the barriers between them. This was probably the reason why she felt the teacher-student distance in Canada was less than that in China and the degree of respect was stronger. By saying that Canadian students did not demonstrate "a special sign of respect" for her, she offered the possible reason of a cultural difference — "they don't show their emotion openly". I interpreted what she meant as Canadian students did not exhibit superficial respect as much as Chinese students.

The participants' remarks inclined me to think that in China a teacher's respect is often ascribed by society (which is an officially recognized cultural belief but may be problematic when people's actual behaviours are examined closely, as revealed in Lisa's case), but that in Canada respect has to be achieved through the teacher's own efforts. For instance, Nina noted her culture shock when she started to teach in a Canadian school, expecting the automatic respect she would have had in China, but mentioned that she soon developed understanding towards her students and thus adjusted her teaching plans. Her open-mindedness and flexibility accordingly won respect and gratitude for her from her undergraduate students. As Lisa told me, she felt her Canadian students respected her greatly. During my observations, she demonstrated an

approachable manner in her teaching and often asked her students gently about their impression of the difficulty of the texts and quizzes; her students, in turn, appeared friendly, enthusiastic, and cooperative with her. To me, how Lisa felt about her students and how students treated her appeared consistent; her preference for open communication and thoughtfulness for students earned students' respect for her. In this sense, 'respect' was mutual and reciprocated by both parties.

Thus, the issue of 'respect' could be interrogated in terms of the three-fold identity, as proposed by Côté and Levine (2002): *ego identity*, *personal identity*, and *social identity*. The teachers' personalities affected their choice of the signs of respect they were likely focused on and inclined them to conclude whether they felt respected or not, which was directly related to their ego. As 'respect' was established in interactions with students, the teachers' sense of respect was also personal and relational, depending on how their students treated them. This is an example of Phan's (2008) view that "identities [are] shaped through the perceptions of others" (p.154) and Bakhtin's (1981) opinion that individual consciousness is intersubjective and actualized in dialogue with other subjects through various ideological encounters. Not only about ego and personal interactions, respect is also evident in the social status that the teachers were granted or claimed and it needed to be addressed in specific sociocultural contexts, which often connected with the teachers' life histories, such as their learning and teaching experiences. Moreover, the teachers' self-awareness became more acute in a situation where they had the chance to compare cultural practices (Bascia, 1996a). So talking about the issue of respect, my participants often compared their feelings in China and in Canada: Henry, Jane, and Nina seemed to think they were generally more respected by students in China than in Canada, Lisa deemed the situation the other way around for her, and Cindy conceived of the situations as similar; and they all contended that showing respect could be a superficial thing and students in different cultures might have different ways to express respect.

In addition, the moments the participants conveyed their feelings about being respected to a greater or lesser degree offered a glimpse into the negotiation of their roots and routes. Reading signs of respect from students, the signs that felt usual for them, were considerably associated with their roots. Shifting perceptions of 'respect',

developing understanding towards Canadian students, and gradually adapting to the new teaching scenarios revealed the teachers' fluidity along their routes. I asked the question: why did all the participants invariably express tolerance and understanding of their students in Canada? One of the possible reasons was their roots encouraged them to be lenient and open-minded. Confucianism, the cornerstone of traditional Chinese culture, advocates 'collectivism' and urges people to think of others before themselves. Benevolence and tolerance are thus highly valued in Chinese society. Under such an influence, it was not hard to understand why the teachers could put themselves in their students' shoes and adjust their own practices rather than expect their students to change behaviour. Therefore, how the teachers felt about their relationship with students not only depended on how they defined and interpreted 'respect' personally and contextually, but also on how much of it they expected from students. Further, their deepening insight into the host culture and evolving teaching practices might exert a positive impact on the current teacher-student relationship and thus help update their perspectives on 'respect'.

4.6.3. Purposefully and strategically teaching culture in Mandarin classes

All my participants showed awareness of and described their efforts to incorporate cultural information into their language teaching. The teachers often directed students' attention to the cultural factors related to the language points they were learning. As already described, Henry touched upon Chinese history when introducing Chinese characters; Jane reminded students of Chinese traditional values when teaching Chinese expressions; and Cindy alerted her students to culturally appropriate responses.

The teachers' inclination to integrate cultural information with language teaching brought their cultural identity and ethnic identity to the forefront. As Hall (1996) defined, cultural identities are "points of temporary attachment to the subject positions which discursive practices construct for us" (p. 6). The practices of Mandarin teaching provided a platform for the teachers to demonstrate their expertise in the subject they were teaching, not only their familiarity with the Chinese language, but also their profound

knowledge about Chinese culture. The moment of classroom teaching substantially projected their Chinese identity and awakened their sense of belonging to China. As ethnic identity, a form of collective identity, was “based on shared cultural beliefs and practices” (Puri, as cited in Block, 2006, p. 30), it seemed natural for the Chinese teachers of Mandarin to introduce their students to the cultural practices of Chinese people when teaching them the language. All my participants tended to feel that gaining a good command of a language inevitably involved learning about its culture.

Some of the teachers related to me that they differentiated between heritage students and non-heritage students and utilized different approaches to guide these two groups of students respectively into cultural knowledge. Such a practice perhaps revealed their deference to Confucius’ advice on teaching — “teaching students according to their aptitude”. Jane and Cindy tended to inform non-heritage students of Chinese culture at the surface level and encourage heritage students to inquire about Chinese culture in depth. Jane said that she managed to have non-heritage students catch a glimpse into Chinese culture with resort to visual and audio teaching aids and involve heritage students in more culture-related activities. While equipping non-heritage students with necessary cultural information in order for them to have effective communication, Cindy intentionally selected textbooks containing rich cultural information for heritage students so that they could gain a deeper understanding of Chinese culture. My observation in Cindy’s class happened on a day when she called her students’ attention to the logical links among cultural factors. Elsewhere, Nina remarked that she included more cultural content in the series of course materials she had compiled for advanced learners than for beginners studying in the university.

The teachers’ application of “teaching students according to their aptitude” manifested facets of their professional identities, which, as Brott and Kajs (2001) wrote, is formed at the junction of occupational requirements and the self-conceptualization associated with the role. Situated in the university structure and culture, my participants were apparently conscious of their responsibility as teachers — to ensure that students could get the most out of their learning experiences with them. The contexts surrounding the teachers, such as students’ ethnic and linguistic backgrounds, served to frame their fundamental orientations to teaching and their preference for particular resources and

pedagogies (Bascia, 1996a). These contexts determined what type of cultural knowledge my participants should impart to what kind of students and what was the best method they could use to drive home their messages.

The teachers' cultural sensitivity was also reflected in two teachers' (Nina and Henry) comparisons between Canadian culture and Chinese culture. As pointed out earlier, Nina explicated the reason for different responses to a newborn baby, and Henry expanded the course content by urging his students to bring up more about Canadian and Chinese cultural practices with regard to gift-giving. According to Bascia (1996a), the life experiences of immigrant teachers make them more understanding and empathetic teachers, who are prone to acknowledge their students' cultures and teach them how to negotiate cultural differences. These participants' tendency to compare two cultures for students was probably attributed to their own lived experiences as immigrants and teachers, who had themselves ventured on cross-national journeys and successfully coped with diverse cross-cultural encounters. Their experiences enabled them to visualize students' difficulty in dealing with cultural differences, and thus they tried to introduce their students to a foreign 'Discourse' (Gee, 1990), the socially accepted practices of Chinese people. While the teachers were undergoing the process of constructing hybrid identities themselves in Canadian culture, they were helping their students to develop hybrid identities and a new 'habitus' (Bourdieu, 1977) oriented to Chinese culture so that the students would find it easier to effectively communicate with people from Chinese society.

4.6.4. Applying a student-centered approach in light of own teaching philosophy

In line with the earlier discussion in this chapter, all the participants showed great concern with their students' learning needs and taught students according to their aptitude. The teachers reported that student-centered ideology characterized their teaching objectives, teaching practices, and self evaluations. Aiming to help students learn well, the teachers implemented teaching under the guidance of their own teaching objectives, which presented some commonalities and variations. The teachers all were of the opinion that the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing)

were significant in their Mandarin teaching. In the interviews, both Henry and Lisa underscored these four skills, the former also emphasizing the importance of learning Chinese cultural information and the latter stressing communicative competence. Nina foregrounded the necessity of grasping grammar in order for students to make sentences flexibly. Cindy endeavored to facilitate students' effective communication through the language and culture they learned in the Mandarin courses. Keeping affective factors in mind, Jane attempted to increase and maintain students' interest in learning the language and foster their positive feelings for China, to help students find and adopt effective learning tactics, and to forge a bond among students for the benefit of their life-long learning. Moreover, Cindy and Jane both noted that the teaching process was a chance for mutual learning between the teacher and students.

The teachers' teaching philosophies described above appeared to dictate their teaching practices. Their teaching practices, through my observations, seemingly aligned with the stated teaching objectives and teacher roles they communicated in the interviews (e.g. facilitator, guide, and helper). As far as I was concerned, they all implemented student-centered pedagogies in their own distinct ways. Commonalities among them were their friendly and approachable teaching manners, their practices of carrying out various interactive in-class activities among students as well as between students and them, and their efforts to keep their classes interesting and engaging. All their classes on the whole appeared relaxed, lively, cooperative, and highly motivated for Mandarin learning. Nevertheless, the teachers' implementation of learner-centered pedagogies, through my observations, did not preclude the circumstances under which a few slower students in their classes seemed to get lost in the learning process, or to look terrified by the teachers' invitations to varying class activities, or to be left behind to dwell on the tasks they were struggling with, paying no attention to the teacher.

As illustrated in the interviews and observations, the teachers also exhibited distinct ideas about teaching principles and special teaching methods. For instance, attending to the language background of students and the effect of their mother tongues on their learning of Mandarin phonetics, Cindy related that she was particularly patient with non-heritage students and assisted them in catching up with heritage students when teaching them in the same class, and that she exploited different strategies to teach

these two types of students when teaching them separately. My visits to her heritage class showed that Cindy frequently associated what the class was learning with students' authentic life situations, and sometimes sketched pictures on the board to strengthen students' memory. Allowing sufficient time for her students to participate in class activities, she also facilitated helpful presentations to further heritage students' understanding of Chinese culture. During my two hours' observation in Cindy's class, I was intrigued and impressed by the students' presentations about those four places in China. I felt that I learned something new from the students. At this point, Cindy's previous comment reverberated in my ears, "Teaching benefits teachers and students alike."

Not inclined to tell students answers directly, Henry adopted exploratory methods to scaffold students, engaged everyone in his class in collaborative activities, and offered timely and inspiring feedback on students' answers. I noticed that he often applied the translation method to his teaching but used it flexibly. In addition, he also displayed a sense of humor to relax students. Just as she said about her teaching objectives, Jane was observed to be deeply concerned with students' learning interest. She showed interest in what interested her students, such as youth's fashion, incorporated interesting factors into her teaching, and offered constant care for her students (e.g. suggesting driving slowly in a snowy weather), which helped foster what appeared to be equitable and harmonious relationships with her students. She seemed to grasp every chance to supply students with Mandarin expressions and carefully fine-tune their Mandarin pronunciation. In my opinion, the teacher-student mutually inspiring process resulting from her pedagogy made a community bond among her class possible and successful. Focused on facilitating candid communication with students, Lisa stated that she often exchanged opinions with students individually and appropriated different teaching strategies based on the situations students were in (e.g. China versus Canada). In reality, she initiated many fun activities to help students learn or review the language knowledge with frequent recourse to visual aids. To avoid boredom in class, Nina talked about alternating various teaching methods within one period of class. I witnessed such a practice in her teaching: she frequently switched the learning tasks among listening, speaking, writing, verbal and visual reading, adept at linking the

language points being learned to what students were possibly interested in and familiar with.

In addition, the teacher participants gathered feedback from students in order to hear students' voices about their teaching and enhance their student-centered approach. The evaluation form provided by the university served as a main source for them to get students' feedback but it was not the only way. Most of them took the initiative to seek feedback from students in verbal or written form apart from the end-of-term official evaluation and accordingly modified their teaching practices based on all these sources. Cindy and Jane held that "two heads are better than one" and both articulated their endorsement of the students' contributions to their teaching improvement. Cindy noted that she adjusted her teaching pace based on her observation of students' reactions and their verbal feedback, and sometimes solicited students' suggestions on class projects. Through frequent interactions with students, Jane was sensitive to their reactions in class and modulated her teaching by intuition. She also gained a sense of students' opinions by giving them special assignments, such as asking them to write comments anonymously around the midterm in Chinese or to submit a portfolio reflecting on their learning process at the end of term. She tended to discuss issues with students directly in class or sometimes privately when she identified problems in students' learning. Close with students, Lisa told me that she could collect students' feedback through free chat with them during the break since her students would speak out their minds about the class on their own initiative. Although mostly referring to the university official evaluation for feedback, Henry approved some teachers' practice of gaining students' feedback via privately designed surveys throughout the semester, and he also advocated more communication with students.

However, adopting a student-centered approach did not mean listening to students blindly in the teachers' opinion. In alignment with their own teaching philosophies and specific teaching plans, they selectively accommodated the requests their students raised in the feedback. According to Nina and Jane, some students complained about the difficulty of the learning content and the number of quizzes and assignments. The teachers did not see students' request for reducing the workload as acceptable or reasonable. Nina insisted, "No pressure, no motivation." Jane also stated

that she made no adjustment in the learning tasks she assigned to students unless she deemed their requests reasonable. Nor was Lisa happy about her students' complaints about the difficulty of the last few lessons in a course as she thought it was caused by students' laziness in learning and fear of meeting challenges. In these cases, they adhered to their teaching principles and practices in order to help students attain better accomplishments in the long run. It turned out that, as Nina and Jane mentioned, the students who had initially made complaints eventually extended gratitude to their teachers because they came to realize, at the end of term, that they had benefited tremendously from the class. As a result, the teachers were of the opinion that the teacher-student tension could be alleviated or removed through the teacher's patient explanations to students about the learning tasks and/or students' increasing understanding of the teacher's good intention for certain teaching practices.

Consistently applying a student-centered approach, by and large, showed my participants' preference for their routes to their roots in their teaching practices. The student-centered approach popular in Western education seemed to have been imprinted on their minds, pervading their teaching design, teaching process, and teaching evaluation (except when it didn't, when they felt they knew better than their students). It looked as if the participants had the tendency to permanently internalize the notion of student-centeredness or develop the 'habitus' (Bourdieu, 1977) prevailing in the host culture. They made efforts to regulate their authority in class and enjoyed learning from students. As pointed out earlier, this 'habitus' was not necessarily a new disposition they fostered in the current context, for they might have formed and performed it when they were in China owing to the influence of Western culture. Nevertheless, teaching in a Canadian university definitely necessitated and justified such a habitus and accorded the teachers chances to exercise it because their current student body differed from their previous ones in China in terms of expectations and demands. It appeared that what the teachers told me in the interviews coincided with how they implemented their teaching. None of them seemingly exhibited disguised traits as revealed by one of the participants in Wang's (2002) study, who appropriated "egression", which Wang defined as "adaptation of convenience" for the purpose of "functional expediency" (p. 316) rather than "internalization of the receiving society's values and cultural essence" (Zhang, as cited in Wang, 2002, p. 353).

Yet as Maton (2008) suggested, the structures of the habitus “are durable and transposable but not immutable” (p. 53). While my teacher participants participated in the westernized practices over the domineering teacher-centered ‘habitus’ prominent in Chinese society, their current teaching practices did not entirely camouflage the traces of their previous ‘habitus’ related to their roots. Mostly dictated by their teaching philosophies, they made judgment on the reasonableness of students’ requests and set limits on the space for negotiation. This could explain why they took students’ suggestions selectively. Relaxing teacher authority and granting students autonomy did not deprive the teachers of their inclination to celebrate the virtue of diligence significantly valued in Chinese education, just as Han Yu, the Confucian thinker mentioned earlier, observed, “There is no royal road to learning.” The teachers expected students to study hard and pushed them from time to time. So regardless of students’ complaints, they adhered to what they thought would do students best and appeared assertive and authoritative in assigning learning tasks that they deemed necessary to students, allowing little space for negotiation. The teachers’ solution as such evidenced the dynamics of power relations, which are volatile and shifting, subject to renewal and reaffirmation responding to specific situations (Bălan, 2013). How the teachers balanced their teaching guidelines and their students’ requests also threw light on the negation of their roots and routes where they inhabited a ‘third space’ between the home culture and the host culture (Bhabha, 1994), a ‘third space’ that enabled them to grapple with tensions arising in their teaching matters.

Throughout their interactions with students, the teachers in my study were found to display multiple identities, which underwent dynamic shifts at different moments, depending on the specific context and the teachers’ choices, some being visible and some less visible (Omoniyi, 2006; Omoniyi & White, 2006; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004). According to Omoniyi and White (2006), an individual’s various identity options are co-present at all times but hierarchized based on their salience in a particular moment. By and large, my participants, when dealing with Canadian students and implementing teaching in Canada, foregrounded their professional identities as learning facilitators along the hierarchy of their multiple identities (Omoniyi, 2006), with their roots-related identities, such as ethnic Chinese and class authority, flickering in the background. Nonetheless, it was undeniable that there were moments when the

teachers' identities associated with their roots took over and came to the surface in their teaching process. Examples for this point will be given in the following chapter.

4.7. Conclusion

In sum, this chapter has examined my study participants' attitudes towards Mandarin teaching, their perceptions of teacher roles and teacher authority in class, their feelings about students' attitudes towards them, their specific teaching practices, and their interactions with students in class. The discussions above have unfolded the finding that the teachers' self-perceptions about these matters underwent some changes upon their residence in Canada, though the degree of changes varied among the teachers.

The teacher participants all voiced positive attitudes towards Mandarin teaching, though their motivations differed slightly, giving more emphasis either on their interests in Mandarin proper or on their fondness for language teaching in general. But it was in no doubt that both factors were entangled in their decisions to take up Mandarin teaching.

Under the influence of moral education in China, these teachers did not completely abandon their role as role models for Canadian students, still taking pains to set a good example by their own conduct. Notwithstanding, they expressed understanding and endorsement of the Canadian educational system and willingness to fit into the new educational culture. Instead of role models, they thus tended to see themselves as facilitators of learning, friends and assistants of the students, and organizers of teaching materials and class activities on an equal footing to their students. They acknowledged that in China teachers' authority is usually bestowed from outside, by the society and the school (but not necessarily respected by students, according to Lisa's account of her own story), and that, with less authority accorded by the Canadian society and educational institution, immigrant teachers have to make sense of the new teaching scenarios and choose to abandon, assume, attenuate, or augment their authority in class (Nina was the typical example). When comparing their previous practices in China, my participants re-examined their authority at Canadian educational institutions and created 'adapted versions' according to the specific situations.

Accordingly, their feelings about students' challenges to them in class also shifted from 'uneasy' and 'embarrassed' to 'natural' and even welcoming.

The participants' self-perceptions as teachers were also discerned through their opinions of the teacher-student relationship, in particular, whether they felt respected by their students. Although most of them confessed their impression that students in China displayed more respect to teachers than students in Canada, they articulated their understanding of Canadian students' behaviour and looked at the issue of 'respect' at a deeper level than it appeared, conscious that expressions of 'respect' were culture-specific. Their reactions to 'respect' in different cultures were normally associated with their definitions of 'respect', personal expectations, and lived experiences. For this reason, it was understandable that Lisa had a different opinion from the other teachers, voicing her pleasure of enjoying more respect from students in Canada than in China.

Seeing language and culture as integral to Mandarin learning, these teachers naturally incorporated Chinese cultural information into the entire language teaching process. They drew on their knowledge about Chinese language and culture to build connections with their students. Their personalized teaching philosophies were also mapped onto their instructional strategies — teaching heritage and non-heritage classes differently with recourse to comparative methods, and onto their endeavor to help students of different levels truly master the essence of Mandarin and develop culturally appropriate communication. To some extent, their passion for the teaching profession and their sense of responsibility for students witnessed no change following their migration. What essentially made a difference to them as teachers consisted in their perceptions of teacher roles and teachers' social status in Canada and their feelings about students' attitudes and reactions to them. To cope with the new situation, they consequently took care to make adjustment in their teaching beliefs and practices.

Apparently, teaching in Canada necessitated the need and increased the chance for the teachers to carry out student-centered pedagogies in an equitable relationship with students. During the interviews, the participants told me that they employed different strategies to deal with heritage and non-heritage students — a way to tackle the special learner situation in Greater Vancouver, but that they hardly noticed any sharp changes in

their pedagogies regarding their teaching of non-heritage students only, be it in China or in Canada, though they did not deny their modification of pedagogies along with the change of the macro language environment (for example, Lisa adjusted the teaching content). My conversations and observations with the teachers showed that their typical pedagogical changes appeared to reside in their inclination to serve students' reasonable requests and in their deliberated endeavor to link Mandarin learning to the local surroundings featuring Chinese material objects that Canadian students might be familiar with. Compared with their teaching experiences in China, the teachers seemed to enjoy more freedom and autonomy in Canada to truly implement a student-centered approach.

Driven by their respective teaching objectives, which related to their own learning experiences and insights into the mission of education, these teachers predicated their teaching practices on their concerns with the learning outcomes and the benefits for students. But adopting a student-centered approach did not imply the teachers' indulgence for students in any case. Adhering to their own teaching philosophies, these teachers chose to take students' feedback selectively and modulated their pedagogies selectively as well. While comparing their current teaching in Canada, more or less, with their previous teaching in China, my participants evidently communicated their consciousness of the changes in their teaching beliefs and practices as their profession progressed in the host country. Meanwhile, their perceptions of work environment, of significance of their teaching profession, and of their life trajectories were also evolving, which will be discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 5.

Making sense of teaching profession and life trajectory

This chapter is a continuance of the previous five themes to probe into the immigrant Chinese teachers' lived experiences, through the remaining three themes at a relatively macro level. In this chapter I mostly draw on my interview data to address two of my research questions: How do immigrant Chinese teachers negotiate the relation between their roots and routes? How do they position themselves and feel positioned in interactions with their teaching colleagues at the university and within the university in general? This chapter discusses my participants' remarks on their regular interactions with their work associates and superiors, their opinions on the university mechanism, their thoughts on the significance of their current teaching profession, and their reflections on the impact of their roots and routes upon their life trajectories. Fairly general and abstract, these three themes are clustered together to explore the participants' feelings and practices outside classroom, allowing us to see a bigger picture of their identity negotiation. In particular, deliberated in rich detail is the last theme — roots versus routes, which also throws light on the participants' voices and practices presented in the previous chapter. Following the same structure of Chapter 4, this chapter includes a presentation of the interview data on the three themes in the first section, a discussion of findings with reference to pertinent theoretical and empirical literature in the second section, and a conclusion summarizing the discussed content and answering my research questions.

5.1. Feelings about the work environment

Of the participants, Nina, Cindy, and Jane had a permanent teaching position in the university; Lisa and Henry were sessional instructors or teaching assistants

depending on the positions offered each semester. Possessing different professional titles, they had either similar or different views, to varying degrees, with regard to their impression of the work environment, relationship with their colleagues, and expectations of support.

5.1.1. Pros and cons of the work environment

All the participants communicated their preference for the well-organized system of the university: course outlines were solicited and posted online, course materials ordered, office space assigned, and so on, which were all completed one semester ahead. Three of the five teachers also mentioned that they enjoyed the autonomy as well as financial and technical support they received in the work environment. Cindy said, "There is plenty of room for your teaching. You are given great freedom in deciding how to design your courses, which textbooks to choose, etc. Yes, you have lots of freedom!" Jane expressed her satisfaction with the work environment:

Pretty good [I like the work environment here]. Although I have not done much comparison of this university with other universities, I feel this university is doing quite well [in supporting the faculty]. I asked some faculty from other universities...Our university offers Professional Development Fund to all the faculty members, even to the teachers on annual contract. You can use this fund to buy additional course materials or register for conferences and so on. Some universities don't even offer this.

Henry confessed a natural connection with school since his childhood and spoke of his impression of the workplace this way:

I prefer the work environment here [compared with the work environment in China]. Generally speaking, I think the university facilities in many western countries are better [than those of Chinese universities], which, however, are not only evident in educational hardware. I mainly mean teaching support system, such as audio visual assistance, libraries, etc. I think they do a very good job in a self-contained manner. You rarely find the same system in China...But I am not sure. Perhaps the situation in China has been improving lately...Generally speaking, Western universities are really doing well in this regard [providing teaching assistance], including libraries and so on.

However, as regards the work environment, not all things were satisfactory to these teachers. In the interview, Cindy disclosed some history of the institute and talked about limitations that this history placed on teachers.

I feel that the LI has been kicked back and forth among faculties and departments. Hence, many things I see inappropriate mostly lie on the organizational level. The teachers who have stayed longer at the Institute know more about its history. They used to be assigned to different programs, such as HL Studies, Spanish, or Latin American something, and then they were congregated, and then re-assigned to different departments. Anyway, nobody took charge of them or cared about them. ...Right, the LI has been changing all the time. This is the sixth year I have been here, not really long. But what I see is everything keeps changing. If an organization constantly changes, it is impossible for you to form a vision, right? Not to mention the likelihood for the organization to develop. Everyone here cannot plan something big but merely focus on their own work. After all, in contrast to the scale of this university, our Chinese program is merely petty.

Also, Nina articulated a critical voice on the university administration:

As to the university, it imposes many restrictions within its framework. You feel that it doesn't set teaching as priority, though it claims so. Colleges [such as the one I worked for] always put teaching in the first place. Particularly, college teachers have the say when it comes to class issues. But the university doesn't work this way, probably because it emphasizes research and something else...So it doesn't give adequate support to teaching, only caring about the completion of teaching tasks. As long as you finish teaching students, that is all. It doesn't give more support to teachers. For the teaching affairs, for instance, how to schedule our courses will only be actualized with the permission of the administration. This isn't good. But not only is our university like this, but also other universities are the same....Take language teaching as an example. Our university employs TAs to teach with a low pay. Obviously, it doesn't attach great importance to teaching. ...What I feel uncomfortable about is the university focuses on administrative services and research.... [The administrative staff would say] "Our regulation is like this", and "Correct, we have this very policy, no flexibility". We argued with the administrative staff before. We told them, "We shouldn't use TAs" or "We can hire TAs to teach Mandarin, but you shouldn't see TWO contact hours of our TAs as ONE base unit". Do you know? For all TAs of other departments, one contact hour is calculated as one base unit. Why discriminate against us? Against our language courses? We did argue with them. But they played hardball and responded with administrative tactics, "This is the policy of our university", not allowing us to discuss about the issue further. [They would say] "Right, this is our policy. It is up to them to teach or not. If they feel the pay is low, then they don't need to

do it!” Isn’t this reaction annoying and this practice unreasonable? ...You shouldn’t particularly discriminate against our language TAs. You can’t say, “This way of calculation is just for your program.” So only our language TAs deserve one base unit for two contact hours? Namely, half of other people’s, right?

The status of language courses in the university and the ‘dogmatism’ practiced by the university administration made language teachers feel less important than teachers of other subjects. Jane’s remarks expressly revealed language teachers’ feelings:

Language courses proper are marginalized anywhere, not just in this university. They are not seen as important. If there is any budget cut, it often falls on language courses....So I feel that language teachers usually have a lower status than other teachers. It looks as if language teaching were of no big value. So when giving advice to others, I always suggest, “You should become a professor teaching content subjects rather than a language instructor.” This is absolutely true...I have learned about other universities. The situation is almost the same....If you teach a language, you are given lower credits in the university. Others wouldn’t see you as that academic...hehehe...Indeed, regarding your teaching profession, if you tell others, “I am teaching Finance,” or something else, others will respond admiringly, “Oh, professor!” [Otherwise, they would say,] “Ah, you teach a language. OoooK...” Just like that [just an instructor]. So I feel the status is different. But this isn’t the only problem with our university, but with the macro university culture.

Being a teaching assistant, Lisa had worries different from the full-time teachers. She stated, “[The job here is] not permanent...hahaha...right [I wish it was a permanent position], I have to apply for teaching positions here every semester, which is so troublesome. I always live from hand to mouth. ” Like Lisa, Henry had a similar sense of insecurity, which will be shown in the following section.

5.1.2. Relationship with colleagues

According to all the participants, they were generally on good terms with their colleagues, especially Chinese colleagues; with other language teachers in the institute, they were not so close but quite friendly with one another; they seemed to have complaints about the university administration to varying degrees.

When I asked Jane if she felt any support from colleagues, she replied:

The relationship among teachers is good on the whole, I feel. We often give one another lots of space; nobody would interfere with your work or do anything disturbing. Yes, I have a good feeling about this. At the initial stage of my work here, I could clearly feel some support from colleagues, but gradually it was not so strong. My contact with other language teachers is no more than saying “hello” to them....Generally speaking, our relationship is not bad. With two colleagues I have close ties with, we sometimes eat out together. Or I consult them about some personal matters. So, yes, I have good relationship with some colleagues.

Jane also recalled her communication with the department administrators, saying:

They are quite professional....In fact, the previous administrators of the department the LI was affiliated to were very nice. They particularly cared about contract teachers like us as if they had known that we felt insecure about the job. ...One of the administrators at that time would also offer us advice. Whenever you had a question, you could always go ask him. And he would explain it to you patiently. However, the current administrator is pretty professional. ...But not the one I have just mentioned, who was really like a mentor, telling you many things in detail when you didn't understand and asked him for clarification.

Hearing Jane repeatedly using the term “professional”, I asked her what she meant by it. She clarified:

They just follow the regulations. ...For example, if you ask the administrator a question, he would only answer “yes” or “no”, giving no more information. The administrator I mentioned earlier was different. He would tell you other things related to what you asked him about, or something you should take heed of. He would tell you everything.

Lisa compared her feelings about relationship with colleagues in Canada and that in China in the following remarks:

Collegiality here is somewhat cold, not so close as that in China....I feel as if I had no colleagues here because people are not in much contact with one another....Colleagues have mutual respect but are not really close to one another, not like friends always chitchatting together, which, however, could happen in China. [While I was in China], I used to hang out or dine out with colleagues. This rarely happens with me in Canada.

As to the relationship with other language teachers, Lisa noted, “I do not really talk with them. ...I feel we do not know each other” and “We hardly have any communication”, for the reason that “I do not have a permanent position here and feel like an off-staff member”. Regarding her interaction with the administrative staff, she said, “I have never met any, hehehe...” I asked her if she would like to attend any meeting convened by the institute. She replied, “Depends. It depends on what kind of meeting it will be. If everyone else goes, I will go for sure.” When I told her that the program assistant had sent out an email inviting volunteers to some event hosted by the institute, she commented, “I don’t feel myself qualified to be a volunteer...It seems to me that only course chairs or full-time instructors are qualified to be present on those occasions such as Open House.” Nevertheless, she seized the chance to talk about the positive side of her current collegial relationship:

They [the Chinese colleagues] are all quite helpful, right? If you have any question or request, they are pretty nice and would love to help you out, to support you. My course chairs are all very nice, too. They share with you the resources resulting from their research...All in all, teachers here are pretty helpful, pretty nice. ...Oh, I forgot to mention one strong point of working here, that is, I feel there is no intense competition.

In addition, Lisa voiced her opinion on pros and cons about the affinity with colleagues:

There are both gains and losses, though. In China, you were too close to others, allowing them to know too much about you, which could become your weakness that they might attack [when conflicts arose]. In other words, it [being close to colleagues] has both good and bad sides. Since you were so close and they knew almost everything about you, some people might speak ill of you behind your back. But here [in Canada], others cannot tell much about you because they don’t know you well, hehehe...So it is good to keep a distance. Others know little about me.

Henry expressed his preference for the kind of collegiality in Canada. He said:

Overall, owing to the entire system [of Canadian culture], I think, human relationship is relatively simple. People don’t need to think too much and can focus on their own task completion at work, right? It has little to do with other personal gains. So the collegial relationship here is relatively simple, relatively harmonious [compared with that in China]. ...If you hang out with one or two colleagues here, it is because you are friends. The common practice in China allows you to dine out with your colleagues or

do something together, but probably this seldom happens here. ...When you were in China, you had to consider various interest relationships, right? You had to be very careful when dealing with colleagues. With whom you took sides and with whom you didn't take sides, you must have your own reasons, right? ...Yes, somewhat tiring.

Like Jane and Lisa, Henry noted that he felt support from his Chinese associates when working as TA or SI, who provided him with teaching resources and offered him help, and that he scarcely communicated with other language teachers except saying "hello" to them because he even did not know their names. But he blamed such a distance on himself, in his words — "my own problem", rather than on his colleagues. He analyzed the reasons this way:

I am not sure [why I am not actively involved with other language teachers]. This is perhaps related to my personality. I feel it is also about hierarchy in the workplace. Because they are full-time members in the institute and you are, after all, a 'temporary worker', you always feel there is a distance. Understand what I mean? ...Yes, I find it hard to integrate with them.

Compared with the other participants, Nina had more contact with other language teachers and administrators. She stated:

I think the relationship among colleagues here is not bad. The main problem has to do with those from above. I wonder if you learned that our institute has gone through many difficulties in the past, hahaha...From time to time some administrator would come to tell us, "You should do this or that", and "Yes, this way or that way"...As to the teachers like us, I think we get along. We have no trouble with one another in regard to language teaching. But as I said earlier, our institute went through many hardships in the past ten years, which, however, united us into close 'comrades' because we had to strive for...yes, yes, struggled together to negotiate with the administration. So we are on good terms with other language teachers.

Nina added that sometimes teachers' discomfort arose when fewer sessions were assigned to Mandarin but more sessions to other languages; however, once they learned that the decision was made one-sidedly by the administration without consulting other language teachers, who actually deemed the additional sessions unnecessary, their confusion and complaints were soon dissolved.

Cindy touched little upon her relationship with colleagues but mostly expressed disappointment at the university administration for lack of support, which would be revealed in the subtheme below.

5.1.3. Expectations of support

When I asked what support they expected, the participants came up with suggestions on the aspect(s) that they thought could be improved in the work environment. Jane answered my question in a laughing tone:

Offer more funding and give us more chances to hire teachers....Without money, no plan can be implemented. As you know, for example, we see it necessary to open more Mandarin classes for beginners and advanced students. But right now this is impossible for lack of budget. Opening additional classes are not just based on enrolment but more on the fund allocated by the university administration.

Lisa expressed her wishes for resource sharing, funding support, and facility upgrade, saying:

I think we teachers should often gather together to exchange ideas and learn from one another. Maybe one teacher's weakness in teaching happens to be another teacher's strength. We should plan lessons together. Well, this might not be practical, I know, because each of us is often very busy. But I feel getting together brings about a learning opportunity. As Confucius claimed, "When I walk along with two others, they may serve as my teachers."...I think we should be given more learning opportunities. For instance, we should be sponsored to attend local or international conferences, or even to further our education somewhere....In this way, we can inspire one another and create new ideas. But here teachers only focus on their own work, their own research, and develop materials on their own....too independent. In China, teachers often have something to share....As regards other support, mmm...the university should not charge teachers parking fees. Besides, I think it would be so much better if our offices were fixed [they were changed almost each semester]...The computers provided don't work properly [very slowly] and sometimes they are just dead.

Henry also spoke of his expectation of better office facilities but meanwhile voiced his understanding of the difficulty facing the university administration:

Right, [I want to receive better support in] such as computers, photocopying, and so on [especially providing better computers for TAs and SIs]...But of course, the administrators have their own considerations in that they are concerned with budget, right? ...Many things (e.g. offering more teaching positions) are bound by budget. Sometimes it does not mean they don't want to improve, right?

While teaching Mandarin at the institute, Cindy had affiliation with a computing science department due to the dual diploma program she was working for. She did not see budget as a primary cause of inadequate support but pointed to the university administration's neglect of the importance of language courses. She noted:

By and large, I feel we are not supported at all by the university. To be honest, I have lots of complaints about the faculty our institute is currently affiliated to because I think this faculty has no vision — it doesn't attach importance to languages...They have no idea about what they really want. For example, the budget for my position comes from Computing Science, which asks for not even one penny from this faculty. Even in this case, the faculty shows no care and acts like "Oh, you are here. Just let it be. "...The university doesn't value language courses. That is one of the reasons why our institute has been kicked back and forth...I don't know why the university sees language courses unimportant. ...But what can you do? I think it is a matter of mindset. So honestly speaking, I don't think it will work even if we file complaints to them. Indeed, my example is a typical one. The funding comes from another source, another pocket. What I contribute to this faculty are new courses and increased enrolment, nothing bad. Then why don't you [the faculty] give any support? Why? I don't ask you for money but conversely help increase new courses and enrolment. Having gained all these benefits, you still do not support. Why? Can you give me a reason?

Likewise, Nina anticipated receiving more understanding and autonomy from the faculty and the university administration. She said:

[They are not clear about our specific situations], so they should listen to us. They only know to boss us around but never listen. ...Right, the budget is part of the problem. But they make a decision just by themselves. They may feel it necessary to remove one session of Spanish but open one session of Japanese. However, they never consult with the teachers. ...Yes, why and how they make such a decision? Quite bizarre...They should let us make our own decisions, hahaha...It will be so good if they don't interfere with us, really. Other things, mmm...allow us to open more Chinese courses and classes. Also, they shouldn't see our TA as half a TA or half a teacher...The administration here is somewhat presumptuous.

Expressing dissatisfaction with the relationship between the teachers and the administration, Nina continued:

What is strange about this university is it centers the decision-making power not on the top-ranking administrators but excessively on the middle management, the one called the advisor or office manager. This person has the power to make important decisions. For the teaching staff, however, they know nothing about changes and thus often wonder, "Eh? How come this changes? How come that changes into this way?" ...You never know how budget goes as it never comes to hands of the teachers...Everything is controlled by the manager, who is actually unclear of our teaching issues. The teachers are not informed of the details of the budget. ...Well, if the manager keeps some amount of money to deal with something, I think it could be reasonable and acceptable. Yet the manager has never announced it to us, never told us, but dealt with everything secretly. It seems to me that this is a style of the university: managers warn one another not to disclose the information to teachers as it may cause trouble. Right, right, it seems that this is a culture here, a culture.

5.2. Contribution to China or to Canada?

When I asked how they perceived the significance of Mandarin teaching — whether it was a contribution to China or to Canada, the participants all pondered for a short time before giving their answers. Cindy remarked:

To me, these two aspects are not contradictory to each other. As you are teaching Chinese, certainly you are fulfilling the goal of spreading Chinese language and culture. On the other hand, your students are mostly Canadians. Being Canadian, they master Mandarin and skills to communicate with Chinese people. In this sense, our teaching also makes contributions to Canadian society, right? Thus, it is reasonable to talk about both aspects. I don't have a particular preference, really. I feel our teaching serves both goals, but it also depends on the target learners. Take my non-heritage class as an example. What you teach them is basic Mandarin, say, more about basic language skills, right? What you introduce to them about Chinese culture or something related is the knowledge at a surface level, right? ...Their current Mandarin competence is so basic that it is impossible for them to gain a deep understanding of the broad and profound Chinese culture. But to them, they have mastered the language skills and developed from someone who initially spoke or understood no Chinese into someone able to speak and understand Chinese. They are even capable enough to study in China, right? After obtaining a diploma from a Chinese university, they

might find a job associated with the Chinese market or benefit from more job opportunities. In this sense, we can say that we are helping Canadians, perhaps just as you said, making contributions to Canada. But talking about which aspect to prefer, I think our teaching is more about spreading Chinese language and culture in my heritage classes, to whom Chinese culture is their heritage culture...because you introduce to them plenty of Chinese history, Chinese idioms, Chinese folklore, and so on. Although these students already practice such things in their daily life, they don't know why they practice this way...Their prior knowledge about these things is shallow. If you ask them about a Chinese festival or what to eat on that festival, they all can tell you something but not at a deeper level. So when I teach, I tend to give students in-depth explanations. As to university students, the deeper you elaborate on cultural information, likely the more inspiring to them. They may become more intrigued by the culture and come to realize that "oh...it turns out not so simple as it appears". Hence, [there may be some transformation] in their worldviews, including their identities...After all, they are heritage students. Whether they acknowledge it or not, they cannot deny it, right? This fact remains unchanged. In this sense, we are introducing or promoting more of Chinese culture. So in my opinion, which aspect to highlight relates to the students and their Mandarin levels.

Cindy emphasized the difference between heritage and non-heritage students and described her impression of the latter as "studying more enthusiastically and actively"¹⁹. Yet she continued directing my attention to her concerns with heritage students, saying:

Some heritage students aim to learn something from our course, but some simply intend to get an easy grade as they feel they have known a lot about Chinese culture. At this point, it is crucial to let such students realize that there is actually much more to learn than they think. So you should inform them that there are so many interesting things to unpack underneath a cultural phenomenon. In this way, their interest in it becomes even keener. They won't feel content with general knowledge of it. I feel this is very important to heritage students. ...After all, they were born here and have never been immersed in that big culture. There are many things [about China] beyond their scope of knowledge. I feel I always wish that they would have a deeper understanding of Chinese culture rather than something superficial, hehehe...

¹⁹Cindy was in charge of Chinese courses targeting Canadian students from a dual diploma program, in which students completed the first three years of study in the Canadian university and the last year in its counterpart Chinese university.

No sooner had I finished explaining my question than Jane exclaimed excitedly, “Half to half! This is an interesting question, I think.” She told me that her father had actually asked her a similar question a while ago, recounting:

My dad asked me, “Why are you doing this job?” I replied, “I really like this type of work and enjoy being with students....” Then he said accusingly, “How can you reply like this? Your words don’t show your ambition or any sign of pursuing a lofty ideal! How come you don’t have a noble goal? You are teaching Mandarin to promote Chinese culture!” However, I feel what he argued is not my primary objective of doing the job, though I admit that it may yield this result [spreading Chinese culture]. But my dad suggested, “You should think in that direction.” ...Regardless of my intention, I feel, my job actually contributes to both China and Canada. These two aspects are not necessarily separate or unrelated. On one hand, our teaching definitely disseminates Chinese language and culture as it delivers to students knowledge and information pertinent. Yet on the other hand, students who take Chinese courses are mostly Canadian. We are helping Canadian students gain knowledge of China and Mandarin and enhance their appreciation of Chinese culture, which is certainly conducive to the development of multiculturalism²⁰ in this society. So I think my job helps both sides, indeed. But that I choose to teach Mandarin is not because I consciously think about this effect or about which side I am inclined to but because Mandarin teaching has been my area of expertise and to my own passion. I like this job and really do.

Yet somewhat displeased, Jane challenged the term ‘multiculturalism’ and said that she felt racial discrimination still existed and not all races were treated equally in Canada. However, she joyfully commented that she did not see the problem as that serious in Greater Vancouver, where, she noted, there is a density of Chinese population, and even many native-born Canadians and immigrants of non-Chinese origin are adroit at managing with chopsticks.

²⁰Since first officially introduced in the early 1970s, multiculturalism remains a highly controversial issue in Canada. Its basic values hold that ethnic groups are entitled to preserve and enhance their cultural heritage. Some people criticize multiculturalism for its divisive effects on citizens to form a Canadian national identity. But proponents of multiculturalism argue that this policy helps alleviate racial and ethnic tension and strengthen ethnic groups’ attachment to the Canadian nation-state. Debates also concern the tension between multiculturalism and biculturalism (the English and the French) and the accomplishment of the multicultural policy when faced with different levels of government pursuing different priorities and programs. (Makarenko, 2010).

Similar to Jane, Lisa's answer to the question was also "half to half." She admitted that she had never deliberated on it, saying, "I never considered this matter. I just want to make money to pay off my mortgage, hehehe...." But she added, "My teaching is supposed to benefit Canada more than China...mmm...I really never think that much." Nevertheless, Lisa did not deny her China complex²¹, noting:

I also feel I am promoting Chinese culture. Just like when you talk about your hometown, you feel quite proud, right? So when I tell my students, "I am from China", I also wish they would look at me admiringly. This is a sign of dignity when one feels the strength of one's home country. I also have such sort of patriotic sentiment.

Seeing his profession mainly as a means of making a living as well, Henry tended to consider Mandarin teaching more as a vehicle to spread Chinese language and culture than as a contribution to Canadian society. He stated:

I am more inclined to the former view [promoting Chinese language and culture]. As to making contributions to Canada, I never thought about it that way. Aha...I cannot say my motive to do the job measures up to the 'noble' goal of helping China promote its language and culture, but at least I can say that the thought of contributing to Canada through my job has never flashed to my mind. Never. [Maybe I have stronger attachment to China.] But even this idea is not that forceful to me. To be honest, I teach Mandarin basically to make a living, hehehe...So if you ask me to make a choice regarding your question, I certainly won't choose the view of making contributions to Canada. Right, I never thought that way, never. The most practical and candid answer is to earn a living! Haha.

Like Cindy, Jane, and Lisa, Nina asserted that these two aspects were not at odds and her focus of Mandarin teaching had little to do with these two aspects but to nurture students. She commented:

I think these two goals can be fulfilled at the same time. To students, language is a tool. With this tool, they can gain more knowledge about Chinese culture. You know, not just about Chinese culture, but also it looks as if another side of their world were unfolded in front of them, right? They can gain access to more things. Their logical thinking can be

²¹ China complex refers to an individual's sense of belonging to China and strong attachment to Chinese tradition and culture.

improved and vision broadened. However, we can also say that our teaching is certainly a contribution to Canada, to multiculturalism in this country, hehehe...allowing Canadians to have a better understanding of our China, hehehe...But to me, I tremendously focus on the students. I think Mandarin teaching helps expand our students' vision, develop their logicity and ways of thinking, enhance their flexibility of handling affairs, and diversify their worldviews.

5.3. Roots versus routes

To all the participants, the question on roots and routes appeared most fascinating and thought-provoking.

5.3.1. Cindy

As to her roots, Cindy stated her belief this way:

Of course, you think you are ethnic Chinese because your country of origin is China. This is unchangeable, I suppose? The second generation of Chinese here might have some struggle. Yet what is clear to me is the first generation doesn't need to struggle with this idea. ...Whatever change you may go through in future, wherever you live, you are and will always be an ethnic Chinese.

Relating to her profession, Cindy affirmed her connection with China:

You are inevitably concerned with what is going on in China. To us language teachers particularly, reading Chinese is so fast and hugely enjoyable. We don't feel the same way when reading English, right? [As we teach Chinese], we also need to take heed of changes in China. So to me, such a connection is always there, if it neither strengthens nor weakens.

What about her routes? Having lived abroad for over 15 years, Cindy noted her changes in the following remarks:

The ways you look at and handle matters have changed, I feel. You become more direct and are often reminded that you should plan many things ahead, unlike the time when you were in China, where you could deal with things more flexibly, able to take action as soon as your idea pops up. Take the purchase of textbooks for example. We should place an order now for next semester [one semester ahead], right? But in

China, you don't need to make a plan as early as here. It often worked for you to plan for the purchase about one or two weeks ahead...In addition, here you can bring up your requests directly, such as asking for a vacation leave at a moment you choose. In China, this is determined by department directors, [who would tell you], "Well, you can go on vacation at THIS time", or "you should rotate to take vacation", etc., because China is a more hierarchical society. Canada is relatively flat [in interpersonal relationships]. Thus, this [the social structure] can affect your manner of handling matters.

Further, Cindy expressed her preference for the structure in Canadian educational institutions:

Different from the Chinese teachers living in China, I feel we are probably more in favour of factors like being less hierarchical and more autonomous. You can feel this in your classes and with your colleagues. Not that hierarchical, right?

When talking about the relationship between her roots and routes, Cindy pointed to the reciprocity of these two aspects, stating:

As a Chinese, your birthplace is where your roots stay. No matter what routes you take, your roots are your starting point, your prototype...As a matter of fact, we can still trace many elements of Chinese culture in our thoughts. Sometimes you may be aware of them and sometimes you may not, but there are actually a lot. To be honest, I think you feel like being more Chinese after coming abroad. This is obvious. While abroad, you discover more aspects about yourself, including your interaction with other people, with different cultures. You are more aware of those unique facets about yourself.

I thought Cindy alluded to the increase of her China complex²² by saying so, but she corrected my assumption:

No, this is not about China complex. What zooms in to you is your cultural identity. As your stay overseas gets longer, you begin to introspect and you can see yourself more clearly, and you can assess yourself more objectively. But if you always lived in China, your self-assessment might not be that objective and you might not have a clear picture of yourself. Because you feel you are the same as others, after all, you cannot see your peculiarity. But after you come out, you can examine yourself,

²² China complex refers to an individual's sense of belonging to China and strong attachment to Chinese tradition and culture.

questioning, “How different am I from other people here? Why different?” Then you start to analyze, “Why so?” “Is it good?”...Well, it is not about good or bad. But you can start to wonder if you should keep them [aspects about yourself] or if they are improper.

According to Cindy, an individual’s age and time of coming abroad could determine his/her degree of attachment to China. She said:

I am not sure what the teenagers who come abroad before the age of 18 will be like many years later. But I feel China has a profound influence on those who come abroad after 18. Yet what is controversial may be the identity of ethnic Chinese children who are raised abroad all the time....In addition, I feel the time of coming abroad is another factor. We came abroad quite early, when China was somewhat backward compared with developed countries. Hence, we take a neutral stance towards our Chinese traits. That is to say, we gradually feel there are both strengths and limits about China as well as about countries we immigrate to. To us, this is just a fact. But one or two decades later, when the younger generation come out, they may have a different attitude from ours because China has been constantly developing and now even more developed in some regards than developed countries. For example, mobile devices like cell phones are pretty advanced in China now. This can make the younger ones feel China is better than other countries, which is definitely not a surprise.

5.3.2. Henry

Sounding assertive, Henry also saw his roots as typical Chinese on the whole. He confessed this way:

Undoubtedly, your roots must be Chinese to the marrow of your bones. To a large extent, you are influenced by Chinese culture, which is visible through your demeanor in general, your inclination to make friends within the Chinese circle, right? You mostly eat Chinese food. Perhaps you mostly watch Chinese TV programs. This is really true of my feelings. I have been in Canada for over ten years. My exchange with Canadians still stays on the surface. It is very difficult to be friends with them in the same sense as you are with your Chinese friends. This doesn’t mean Canadians are not nice. It is because there are cultural barriers...Yes, talking of the sense of belonging, [I feel] I don’t belong here.

Furthering the aspect of his relationship with people in Canada, Henry commented:

When we host a party, we also invite some Caucasian friends in addition to Chinese friends. But the comfort in interacting with western friends is not so great [as with Chinese friends], you know. In that case, how could you make yourself feel comfortable as adequately as you have a casual dinner with your Chinese friends? The communication with western friends just can't reach the depth of communication among Chinese people only.

Having pondered for a short time regarding his routes, Henry admitted:

You must experience some changes, too. Although you have your roots, you are inevitably subjected to the influence of the western world, where you are living, such as the influence of Canadian culture, Canadian customs or systems, and so on. Give you a simple example: I was definitely not so organized when teaching in China as I am now here. In China I was quite casual about teaching plans as there were no strict requirements on you. But after you come here, you have to form a habit of being organized, yeah, like preparing a syllabus, making arrangements in advance, right?...I can give you another example. In China, the dean of your department might not send you a notice beforehand until today, saying, "You go teach this course tomorrow." Such a thing never happens here, does it? This is because people here deal with matters differently. Hence, you gradually pick up their modus operandi. This is just an example, which I used to prove the change of myself. Yes, changes do happen.

As Henry was talking about his changes, I asked him if he would see himself as Canadian at present and in future. With a burst of laughter, he denied, "No, absolutely not, even though I have changed my citizenship into Canadian, but I still...haha....Right, right, I still gravitate towards my Chinese identity."

When discussing the relationship between roots and routes, Henry illustrated his perceptions with more examples:

Since you came to Canada, some aspects of yourself derived from China have been modified. Compare yourself before and after your immigration. I am sure those original Chinese elements in yourself are varying. How you look at things now may differ from how you did before. For example, in the past you knew the notion of "everybody is equal", right? But without witnessing the realization of this notion in China, you saw it simply as an empty notion, which remained unchanged while you were there. However, after you came here, you do see the application of this notion in person, right? Seeing the fact that vulnerable groups are cared for and everyone is respected for their dignity here, you may undergo a fundamental change in your opinion of this notion....Yes, this is true. With

regard to income, a professor might not earn as much as a bus driver. But most people here are doing what they enjoy doing...Generally speaking, I think there is a big change in many aspects of my thinking and doing. I am certainly not the same as I used to be. Well, you would also change even if you stayed only in China; now you must be different from who you were ten years ago...[When the environment you are in changes and when you can have comparisons,] I think they must have an impact on your roots.

Like Cindy, Henry reckoned that people who immigrated to Canada at the age of 17 or 18 or as second schoolers might have a totally different sense of roots than people of his age, but he continued:

My kids came to Canada at the age of 12, but I still feel that they are more fond of Chinese stuff, Chinese culture. Although they normally speak English, read English, and watch English TV channels, one day I heard one of them mumbling, "Eh, I still want a Chinese girl to be my wife in future." Hahaha...

5.3.3. Jane

When I asked Jane about her roots and routes, she confessed that she did not know these two concepts and deemed it hard to communicate her views before she was clear about the concepts. After I read out Stuart Hall's definition with some explanations, Jane began to talk about her understanding of them in a tone of uncertainty. She stated:

Roots — "Where are you from?" — they must be Chinese, right? They should include some notions assimilated from traditional Chinese culture...As far as I am concerned, the education you received before has a bearing on you, which can be counted as roots, hehe. This involves the learning practice throughout the entire period of my growth and my Bachelor's education [in China]. As to routes, do they refer to the education I am experiencing here or relate to the environment here?

Seeing Jane's bewilderment, I encouraged her to articulate her own insights into roots and routes regardless of Hall's definition, and reminded her that the question under discussion was more focused on identity issues in general rather than on teaching practices. At this point she sounded firmer in her perception of roots, saying:

In terms of identity, I think my roots are Chinese. But for my routes, I don't think I am changing into a Canadian, definitely not. Though my citizenship has changed to Canadian, it is not directly related to Canadian identity. I

feel one's nationality is not the same as one's ethnicity...Yes, my nationality has changed but my identity remains the same, I feel, say, you may be called "Chinese Canadian" or something. But for people like us who were mostly nurtured in China in terms of personality, values, etc., by the way, I am saying "mostly", not "totally", I think our primary identity is Chinese, at least to me...For the time being, I still consider myself, primarily, as Chinese.

Accepting being addressed as "Chinese Canadian", Jane noted that the change of her citizenship did not make a big difference to her. She explained this way:

I am living here. I applied for Canadian citizenship mainly for practical reasons, for the sake of convenience. I changed it just because I plan to live here for the rest of my life. But it seems that I never feel I have changed into a real Canadian...The core of my roots should be Chinese. This is because when you are in your twenties, your personality, values, and many other things have been settled. If you came to Canada at an earlier age, your situation might be different.

Aware of other people's perspectives as well, Jane continued, "When other people look at you, they still see you as Chinese. I don't think it is likely to happen when they see you for the first time and ask you: 'Hey, you are Canadian, right?'"

Moreover, she challenged the notions of 'Canadian' and 'Chinese':

I always wonder, "What is 'Canadian'?" "How to define 'Canadian'?" Even now when I go back to China, I find myself incompatible with many Chinese girls' thoughts, perspectives, and degree of openness in their words and manners...It seems to me that there is a big gap between the younger generation who were born in the 80s or 90s and our generation. So I sense that even among Chinese people, there are a great variety of personalities.

Constantly showing some uncertainty about her understanding of routes, Jane said:

Certainly, there must be some changes, especially in your way of looking at things. For example, now you might have different opinions on the systems in China than before...While you are living here, many of your cultural practices and perspectives are affected by things here and thus are changing. ...As I have been living here for so many years, it is impossible to say I experience no change at all. I can feel the change in myself. For example, when my parents come to visit and live with us [me and my husband] and sometimes talk about systems and policies in

China, we find ourselves automatically getting into a critique of those practices, which upsets my parents somehow, or to put it more accurately, they normally have different opinions from us....I feel that how we look at things now differs from before. Perhaps susceptible to such concepts as 'democracy' and 'freedom' prevalent here, we start to use them as criteria to assess the previous happenings in China or the old news we heard about China, and we start to feel Chinese government didn't handle the issues properly. But we never had this kind of awareness or feelings when we were in China. Indeed, we are changing in this regard.

Most interestingly, Jane mentioned a few moments of the tension between her roots and routes, in which her roots appeared to hold sway, echoing her frequent reference to her "primary identity". She recalled:

To me, hearing others' compliments, I would still naturally respond in a humble manner. I wouldn't feel at ease without some humble response. In other words, primarily, I am quite [Chinese]. ...Right, I myself can criticize some regards of Chinese society, but I don't feel happy about Canadians criticizing China. That is why I reckon my primary identity is [Chinese], though I am not sure if it may change in ten years or so....Since my perspectives undergo some remarkable changes, this means there probably exists some tension between my roots and routes as in most cases, psychologically, people don't expect to experience changes. ...Another example. Western culture tends to see 'aggressiveness' as positive, such as in the collegial relationships or with other people. But according to the education I received in China and traditional Chinese culture, you are not supposed to challenge the established social order or commonly accepted conventions. You are not supposed to ask for what you want directly. If you keep talking about what YOU want, you will be considered very selfish or something. But in Canada, if you don't say it, nobody knows what you want, right? You should speak out if you need something. People here usually think it is a good thing if they see you fighting for your needs. On the contrary, if you give up on your needs humbly, such as your rights, they may feel you are weak and incompetent. I feel this is a kind of tension.

Further, Jane talked about her feelings and reactions to such tensions:

But I am ready to accept these tensions....To me, my changes I mentioned just now signals progress with myself. I become more critical, unlike what I was like before. In the past, I seemed to be ignorant of politics, showing no concern to anything but my own small world. As to the world news, I normally had no doubt about the reports. But now I am used to reading more sources. If some Chinese media report that China is being well received in something, my first reaction is the question, "Is

this reliable?” Hehehe...I tend to look at the issue more closely. Definitely, this is a kind of progress. However, I also find some cultural conflicts less pleasant sometimes...I know that I am supposed to be a bit more aggressive when dealing with other people. But I feel very uncomfortable if I have to act that way because I feel it goes against my values or personality I have already developed. Although I am improving in this regard, the discomfort still lingers...Right, we have been accustomed to a nice, amiable, and soft character. Of course, there are also some aggressive people in China. I met those, too, and think they may find this environment more suitable for them...Until now, I feel that I haven't adapted well in this regard. As I am not an ambitious person, I often tell myself, “Well, don't worry about it. Just act as I like. No need to force myself in that direction.”

At the end of the interview with me, Jane commented that the topic on roots and routes was much more intriguing than those specific questions regarding teaching practices. Abstract as it was, she said, it made her willing to calm down and spend time mulling over it.

5.3.4. Lisa

Once I put forward the question about roots and routes, Lisa responded with comments like “What a deep question!” “The question you ask today is rather abstract and philosophical, requiring me to sit down and ponder over it.” “Impossible to give a simple answer.” “Oh, very hard! I am most afraid of being asked a question as deep as this kind because I don't want to think about such a question at all. I have never thought that deep. You know, ‘Once a human starts to think, God starts to play a joke.’ Hahaha...”

To gain some ideas, Lisa took the initiative to ask me how I perceived my roots and routes. Having listened to my brief self description, she gave a simple reply: “Mine is probably swaying.” Then I continued leading her on to her deeper thoughts:

Yujia: Well, do you feel there is something relatively stable in yourself, in some ways, which you can see as your roots?

Lisa: No, my roots are never stable, hehehe...I am a traitor of myself, swaying all the time...My roots? I don't know how to answer you. So difficult!

Yujia: To put it another way, do you feel yourself more Orientalized or Westernized? This might be easier for you to answer.

Lisa: Perhaps I am gradually Westernized.

Yujia: In what ways?

Lisa: I feel I am simpler than before.

Yujia: You mean you think more directly?

Lisa: Yes, I think in a more direct way. Besides, when you deal with people, you don't need to be that scheming. You can be straightforward, saying whatever you think. But in China, you can't behave like this because you have to guard against people who guard against you, afraid that the words that slip off your tongue may affect [your interests]...But here, I feel I can deal with people candidly. This is something I like as I don't need to think too much. After all, I only need to focus on finishing my own work; I am not impairing anyone's benefits. However, in China, you should think more before asking...

Yujia: Because in China what stands between people is...

Lisa: Competition!...In Canada, I can ask you questions directly without a need to beat around the bush, though I don't know if you accept this manner. I am just quite direct in my manner...But in China, you would wonder: does what you ask have any negative effect on me? So this is something I want to point out: my way to communicate with others is becoming more straightforward, which is an expression of being Westernized, I think.

Following this comment, Lisa presented her philosophy of 'gains and losses' on living in China and in Canada respectively:

Frankly speaking, China is now developing smoothly. On the material level, food and entertainment in China are much better than those in Vancouver. However, on the spiritual level, people in China are far more complicated than people in Canada. That is to say, while you gain many things in China, you burn out all your brainpower and energy you preserve [to deal with others]. Although you don't gain so much in Canada, you don't have to spend that much energy, either. So I have arrived at the conclusion that what you gain equals what you lose: you lose what you gain in China, and you don't lose what you don't have in Canada.

At this point I asked Lisa how she would answer when others asked her about her identity. Lisa replied without any hesitation, "Chinese! Right, I am not confused about

my being Chinese. I am Chinese, indeed.” It seems that Lisa did not acutely equate her Chinese identity with her roots but considered her being Westernized and simplified to be part of her routes. To show the tendency of her being simplified, Lisa noted her changes after moving to Canada from China:

People in China have stronger ambitions, but people here are not so ambitious. These are two sides of a coin. Lack of ambition means lack of enterprise, right? This is very self-conflicting...While in China, I was somewhat ambitious. But after I came here, I feel such an ambition has evaporated. I am simply satisfied with being a good teacher, having a stable job, and being able to pay for my mortgage...Yes, I am simple now without any strong ambition. When I was in China, I had once lots of endeavors: I want to become a leader, or the dean of my faculty, or many other things. So at that time I paid special attention to social networking. I assumed the position of the President of Student Union and demonstrated strong work competence. But after I moved here, I find my abilities in this regard are gone. Or I don't need them anymore. However, I feel very good about being simple.

While accepting her Chinese identity, Lisa acknowledged the strengthening of her routes for the following reasons:

Oh, my roots [being] are not that strong. I feel as if I were a piece of grass, hehe, easily blown away by others. As long as someone murmured to my ear every day, I would start to follow his words...Yeah, yeah, yeah, I think I am that type of person. I am willing [to adapt to a new environment] because it is impossible for you to keep your own culture forever while you are living in this society, otherwise you will lead a stressful life struggling in the dilemma. So you should go all out to, as you said, adapt to this culture. I also prefer this mindset. In this way, you are not swimming upstream but downstream. So I think my roots are getting weaker and weaker and my sense of becoming or routes stronger and stronger, say, my intention of becoming a Canadian stronger and stronger...Rejecting this culture will only make yourself feel like a stranger here. If you isolate yourself from the outside world, refusing to accept this culture, you will probably have more sufferings by living here.

She continued talking about her feeling about this change:

I am pretty happy when I find myself changing this way. In terms of knowledge, I feel that I am learning a lot about the West while preserving my knowledge about China, which is fixed in my mind. To me, when I learn about a new culture with my old knowledge remaining extant, which means I add something new to myself every day, it brings about a kind of personal growth. Also, with regard to my life and my teaching, I am

becoming more and more integrated with this society, and more competent in handling my work. I won't feel estranged in this world.

Although prioritizing her 'becoming' over her 'being', Lisa touched upon her strategy of handling the latter in her interview:

As you are living in this society, it will be too difficult if you insist on holding onto your old style. This doesn't mean you have to abandon it. I mean you can put it at the bottom of your heart and hide it there...Correct, hide it temporarily and give it a break, hehehe...But when you need it, you can still take it out [for your use].

5.3.5. Nina

Compared with the other teachers, Nina's reply to my roots-and-routes question was the most concise and essentially focused on her teaching experiences. About her roots, she stated:

My roots are still Chinese roots. But it may be somewhat different from a Chinese mainlander's roots because Hong Kong is subjected to the influence of the UK and the education there inherits the British model. So HK teachers may be more open than Mainland Chinese teachers.

Then she talked about her understanding of her routes centering on the change of her teaching strategy. She noted:

Once you realize that how we teach in HK or Japan or in another place of Asia doesn't fit into the situation here, you should change and thus take action to change, right? You have to change in order to adjust yourself to the students here or this society. The main question is what I can do to achieve my teaching objectives. So far as I am concerned, how can you meet your teaching goals best and most effectively in this new environment?

To illustrate her point, Nina recollected her efforts to adjust her mindset and teaching steps when she encountered the first culture shock during her earlier years of teaching at a Canadian secondary school, which she considered as her routes and was detailed in the previous chapter.

By and large, Nina saw her roots as relatively stable but I could sense her flexibility in her perception of it. She remarked:

Perhaps these roots cannot be changed, mmm...the things derived from my roots may be changed, I feel. For example, the fact that I am Chinese cannot be changed. Neither can many of my concepts about being Chinese. But I don't think my roots should have any effect on my teaching or my relationship with students because I can't impose my identity on them.

Nina maintained that giving no flexibility to one's roots might hinder one from becoming successful in what one was doing when the situation changed. She challenged the practice of some teachers from Mainland China, saying:

Right, right, they cannot give up on their authority in class...Then they feel that students disrespect them and thus allow negative feelings to escalate in their minds. Many Chinese teachers feel this way: "Look, our Chinese culture is very good and it is superior to Canadian culture." Hahaha...If they take such a stance, I think it will be very very difficult for them to succeed here, to feel their classes pleasant, as they have to manage to complete teaching tasks and handle this group of 'disobedient' students at the same time, hehehe...

Therefore, Nina attached great importance to her routes and expressed a welcoming attitude to the change for these reasons:

Yes, I am in favour of this ongoing process. It keeps me thinking about how I can teach my students what I intend to teach more effectively, which often requires changes [in my teaching methods]. I feel that our current students differ from those ten years ago. So along your routes, if you refuse to change, wherever you are from, you are doomed to feel miserable, hehe...

5.4. Discussion and findings

5.4.1. Desiring attention and support from the university administration

During the interviews with these participants on their feelings about the work environment, I had the impression that they generally liked the university they were working in. The positive aspects they highlighted were the well-organized teaching

management system in the university, their freedom and autonomy of choosing curricula and planning lessons, and technical support for their teaching. The dissatisfying factor most of them pointed out was lack of budget from the university, which hindered the Chinese program from hiring more teachers and opening more courses, except that Jane expressed her satisfaction with the support of Professional Development Fund allowing the university teachers to purchase extra course materials or attend conferences. What these teachers found most frustrating was language courses were not given due value by the university (they alluded to both their work university and the macro university culture in Canada) and thus they reckoned that language teachers received lower credit in the Canadian society than university teachers of other subjects. This was evidenced by Cindy's complaint about the lack of vision of the university, by Jane's comment like "language courses proper are marginalized anywhere" and hence her advice to others on their career choices like "you should become a professor teaching content subjects rather than a language instructor", and by Nina's disclosure of the fact that language TAs were given lower pay than TAs of other subjects. In addition, Nina criticized the university's practice of giving less weight to teaching than to research and administrative services. Seemingly it was mainly because the university discounted teaching and language courses that the participants felt short of adequate support from the university, and felt dismissed and subordinated in the Canadian university culture.

Collegial relationship is part of the work environment. According to the interviews, all the participants stated that they got along with other teachers but had some complaints against the university administration. Coming from similar backgrounds and teaching the same language, these teachers noted that they had more exchange with their Chinese colleagues than with other language teachers in the institute. They found their Chinese colleagues nice, helpful, and supportive, which was revealed in the remarks by Jane, Lisa, and Henry. Meanwhile, comparing their current collegial relationship with that in China, many of them confessed that they hardly had close friend-like colleagues in Canada with whom they could often hang out. Henry and Lisa even adopted 'self-marginalization' strategy as they felt like "a temporary worker" (Henry), "an off-staff member" and less "qualified" (Lisa) due to their part-time positions in the institute. As Jane, Henry, and Lisa said, they had few contacts with other language teachers other than saying "hello" to them in daily encounters. Only Nina described other

language teachers as “comrades” when recalling their experiences of fighting together and negotiating teaching issues with the faculty managers and directors.

The participants’ discontent with the administration mostly related to the higher-up’s bossy and controlling manner and refusal to take the teachers’ advice. The term “professional” the participants used could be literally understood as the administration’s implementing the university policies and regulations strictly, but to Jane, Cindy, and Nina, it actually implicated their displeasure at the administration’s lack of respect and care for teachers and ignorance of teaching issues. Notwithstanding, it appeared that these teachers preferred the collegial relationship in Canada to that in China for the reasons like “give one another lots of space” (Jane), “colleagues have mutual respect” (Lisa), “relatively simple, relatively harmonious” (Henry). It was noteworthy that both Lisa and Henry expressed their aversion to complicated interpersonal relationships in China, which made them have to be vigilant against their colleagues. Henry found this “somewhat tiring” and Lisa put forward a “gains and losses” theory to show her favour of “keep a distance” and “no intense competition” in Canada.

Nonetheless, none of these participants mentioned racial discrimination and prejudice against them in the university throughout all the interviews; rather, they all voiced their pleasure of working with their colleagues. Looking into the reasons, I tend to think that these teachers were well adapted to the new environment with flexible and accommodating mentality. Though they were working in the mainstream university, they mostly dealt with colleagues in the institute who were originally from different countries, in other words, who had international backgrounds like them and thus possessed no conspicuous advantage over them. As regards their Canadian-born Anglophone colleagues, they all appeared open-minded, welcoming, and helpful to ethnic minority teachers. So far as I knew, some of them had even travelled to these immigrant teachers’ home countries, picked up a bit of their mother tongues, and showed appreciation to their cultures, thus smoothly developing a good connection with these minority colleagues. In addition, some administrators and managers working in the institute still exhibited concern and fairness to the teachers. Probably, what they could improve was to mobilize the ‘self-marginalized’ teachers to take an active part in the faculty activities and make them feel incorporated into their work environment.

As the participants brought up in the interviews, the support they anticipated from the university could be classified into two types: 'hardware' and 'software'. The former included fixed office space, faster office computers, and better photocopying services. For the latter, these teachers expected more funding and autonomy from the university administration. My conversations with the participants revealed that they felt restricted mostly by the lack of budget and the university policies. With more funding, Jane and Nina envisaged possibly increased employment and more courses and class sessions in the Chinese program; Lisa speculated about attending local or international conferences. Drawing on Confucius' wisdom, Lisa also expressed her wish for more opportunities in order to learn from other teachers and share teaching resources. Rather than stress the problem of budget, Cindy and Nina called for the change of the university administration's attitude. In particular, Cindy said that she did not feel supported by the university at all, using her case as a typical example to illustrate that the administration depreciated language courses and neither heard nor wanted to hear her voice. Similarly, Nina pointed out that the administration, who were not acquainted with teaching in her opinion, made decisions on teaching issues one-sidedly without consulting with teachers and implemented hidden policies without informing teachers of the procedures, which she called "a culture" (in a disapproving tone) prevalent in the university, and so she demanded that the university administration should listen to teachers, attend to their concerns, and consign to teachers the power of decision on teaching affairs.

As discussed in Chapter 2, Phan (2008) observed, "Identities [are] shaped through people's perceptions of others. By making others, they [make] selves" (p.154). That is to say, identity formation is relational and contextual. When these teachers voiced their views on the work environment, they resorted to comparison every now and then, to comparison between themselves and other colleagues (full-time teachers and administrators) (Henry, Lisa, and Nina), between language teachers and teachers of other subjects in the university (Cindy, Jane, and Nina), between the university they were working in and other Canadian universities/colleges (Jane and Nina), and between Canadian universities and Chinese universities (Henry and Lisa), according to what they had experienced and/or heard of. The participants' use of comparison in reference to various situations happens to reveal and foreground their self-positioning in the work environment. They communicated how and why they saw themselves as similar to

or/and different from other teachers. In particular, their ways of socializing with others in the work environment manifested their professional identities, which are formed at the intersection of the 'attitudinal' and 'structural' levels (Brott & Kajs, 2001). This was rather evident in Henry's explanation on why he found it hard to integrate with other language teachers: "This is perhaps related to my personality. I feel it is also about hierarchy in the workplace."

The participants' account of their feelings about the work environment also divulged the moments of their conflicting identities. Based on their stories in Chapter 4, these teachers chose to teach Mandarin because they loved language teaching. In other words, the identity of a 'language teacher' was their achieved identity that they were happy with at the moment of choosing it. However, after they started to teach in the Canadian university, they came to realize that their achieved identity was not so profoundly appreciated by the university administration as they had expected, which made them feel disappointed and frustrated at times. At this point their ascribed identity, the identity assigned by the university, militated against their achieved identity, discouraging them from promoting their images as language teachers. The university culture that undervalued language teaching was like a 'discipline', in Foucault's term, which led the university policymakers and administrators to diminish the support for the Mandarin teachers and deprived these teachers of the room where they could bring their autonomy into full play. As this deprivation continued, these teachers began to feel their pride as Mandarin teachers fading away and to see their profession as not that ideal as they had initially visualized. They felt an inner voice warning that language teaching was not so respectable as teaching in other fields. This was reflected in the conversation with Jane, who noted that language teachers received lower credit than teachers of other subjects and thus attempted to persuade the people seeking career advice from her to engage in other subject areas rather than languages.

As I presented earlier, identity is implicated in *representation* (Hall, 1996) and how others represent us sometimes contradicts how we represent ourselves. My interviews and observations with the participants gave me impression that these teachers still cherished deep passion for Mandarin teaching regardless of the university's neglect of their work. Besides, in their interviews, none of the teachers talked

about changing their profession in future. Being seen as “less academic” (Jane) did not decrease their interest in Mandarin teaching. To my understanding, it was through the lens of the university that they advised others to work in the subject areas other than language teaching but not through their own lenses. Nevertheless, I tend to speculate that if such a university culture prevailed long enough, chances are that the teachers would give up on language teaching when they were imprinted with the idea that language teaching is unimportant and inferior to other teaching jobs in the university, when they felt that the image of a language teacher is an imposed identity, which is not negotiable in a particular time and place (Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004).

Another conflicting moment facing the participants, as I identified in the interviews, was their dilemma between individualism influenced by Canadian culture and collectivism derived from Chinese culture. The former aspect was evidenced by their comments that they enjoyed the freedom of planning their teaching agendas as they saw fit at the institute and plenty of individual space allowed by their colleagues, and that they anticipated more autonomy from the university so as to make decisions on the teaching issues by themselves. As to the latter, examples were Henry and Lisa, who expressed nostalgia for the close collegial relationships they had forged in China; Nina saw all her colleagues as united “comrades” when negotiating with the administration together; and Lisa stated that she would join other colleagues in department meetings if everyone else would go despite her tendency towards ‘self-marginalization’.

The teachers’ expectation from the university administration also revealed their collective streak. In Chinese society the hierarchical structure requires institutional leaders to supervise and care for their subordinates. A government official is traditionally called “the parental official of common people” in China. Leaders are normally compared to ‘parents’ that their subordinates can depend on. So it is not surprising that my participants naturally desired caring administrators, who could offer support and help without being approached and requested. This is probably the very reason why Jane still remembered and described a previous mentor-like department director with appreciation and acclaim. Fortunately, given the same Chinese culture and frequent contact by teaching the same language, these teachers gained some of their desired support from their Chinese colleagues, who understood and offered to meet their needs. However, it

did not mean non-Chinese language teachers at the institute were not supportive. All the participants communicated, more or less, their comfort with teachers of other languages, giving no negative comment; rather, they expressed appreciation of other language teachers' friendliness to them. I still remember the incident on the day I went to conduct the first interview with Henry. It happened that he was not in his office at our scheduled time. Wondering if he might have forgotten our appointment, I started to look for him in other teachers' offices nearby. At the sight of me, a female German teacher working in the office across Henry's said that she had seen him earlier and thus offered to walk me to several others' offices. Having not found him, she copied down Henry's home phone number from the teacher contact list and wished me good luck in finding him.

What I have found in the discussion above corresponds to Wang's (2002) study of the Chinese teachers in Toronto schools, who displayed a mix of dual cultural identities — a shared collective cultural identity that they brought along from China and a more current cultural identity resulting from their teacher status in Canada. My participants also demonstrated the same trait: in some cases they demanded individualism and in some cases they celebrated collectivism. While these teachers voiced an interest in seeking connections with other colleagues, they seemed to have the tendency to privilege individualist culture in Canada over the complicated 'guanxi' (social networks) in Chinese culture in order to preclude potential adversity against them, such as Lisa's and Henry's choice of "keep a distance". Moreover, the 'strategic self-marginalization' was particularly salient with the part-time teachers. Seeing themselves as "off-staff workers", they chose to refrain from the chances of socializing with other colleagues so as to preserve their 'humble status' or to protect themselves from being embarrassed due to their self-perceived 'humble status', which is considered a typical Chinese virtue. They also used unfamiliarity with other colleagues as an excuse to realize this 'self-marginalization'.

The dual cultural identities my participants displayed can also be seen as an expression of their hybrid identities that enabled them to cope with their cultural transition on their routes. Hybridity arises when the past and the present "encounter and transform each other" (Papastergiadis, as cited in Block, 2007, p. 21). As Ang (2001) pointed out, it is not only about fusion and synthesis, but also about friction and tension,

about ambivalence and uneasiness. In my study, tension and uneasiness became particularly visible when Cindy, Jane, and Nina criticized the university administration's "professional" manner and Lisa's proposal of her 'gains and losses' theory.

My participants saw a need to negotiate their identities when faced with tension arising from imbalanced power relations (Rummens, 1993). They conveyed a sense of humiliation when seeing the university belittling language teaching, which contradicted their self images as respectable language teachers as how they had been received in China. Like some teacher subjects I mentioned in the empirical literature (e.g. M. Lam, 1996; Thiessen, 1996), some of my participants, such as Cindy and Nina, also enacted their agency as active subjects to make their voices heard by the higher-ups in the university. By their account, they asked to be given more attention and support from the university administration. They wanted to be respected and valued in the Canadian university as they had been in their home country and yet requested more autonomy from the current university, which they did not truly possess in their home universities. The findings of the empirical studies I reviewed in Chapter 2 showed that many teachers reported feeling 'marginalized' in the mainstream schools because of their racial difference (e.g. C. Lam, 1996; Feuerverger, 1997). Somewhat different from such findings, my study revealed that all my teacher participants felt marginalized and subordinated not because of their race but because of their profession, and that the part-time teachers practiced 'self-marginalization', which they attributed not only to the hierarchical institutional structure that defined the status of their position, but also to their own personality and preferences.

5.4.2. Seeing teaching not as a noble cause but as a cause of benefiting China and Canada

Initially, I designed and posed the 'contribution' question to my participants for the sake of understanding their sense of belonging. I had the speculation that they would perceive their Mandarin teaching as some sort of a noble cause. To my surprise, all of them confessed that they had never given a thought to such a question until the moment I brought it up. Jane found this question rather interesting because her father had sought from her an answer to a similar question before. By their own account, none of the

participants took their profession as a way to accomplish a lofty mission; nor did they spend time in examining it in a political and ideological sense. Except Henry, these teachers all acknowledged the ‘by-product’ of their enterprise: Mandarin teaching was instrumental in benefiting both China and Canada. They observed that these two aspects did not stand against each other but were mutually entangled. Generally speaking, they did not have a preference for either of the two aspects. In particular, Jane and Lisa claimed that the proportion of the benefits to both countries was “half to half”. They held such a stance mainly for two reasons. First, the nature of their teaching job was inevitably conducive to spreading Chinese language and culture. Second, their target learners were mostly Canadian students, who would use their Mandarin skills to serve the needs of the job market in Canada. Also, Jane and Nina both mentioned that Mandarin teaching was a means to support multiculturalism in Canadian society.

While largely seeing their undertaking as a contribution to China and Canada, the participants underscored different facets when addressing the question. Cindy distinguished non-heritage students from heritage students. For the former, she thought she helped Canadian students master basic Mandarin and hence gain access to more job opportunities, which could be considered as a way to benefit Canada. Yet to heritage students, she endeavored to deepen their understanding of Chinese culture, their heritage culture, which she tended to conceive of as helping China promote its culture. Therefore, she concluded, “Which aspect to highlight relates to the students and their Mandarin levels”. Disapproving her father’s assertion about the ‘right’ orientation to her career choice, Jane called attention to her personal interest, which played a significant role in her decision to teach Mandarin, despite her opinion that her teaching contributed to China and Canada as a result. As to Nina, she affirmed, “These two goals can be fulfilled at the same time.” But her response rested on learner-centeredness, by which she meant to broaden students’ vision and develop their thinking skills with the help of an additional language. Elsewhere, Lisa and Henry both emphasized the practical reason for their Mandarin teaching — earning a living. Lisa was inclined to believe that her teaching generated more benefits to Canada than to China. However, without giving further reasons, she directed my attention to her patriotism and sense of national pride resulting from China’s growing prosperity. Henry was the only teacher who did not think of Mandarin teaching as a channel to serve Canada. Meanwhile, he admitted that

promoting Chinese language and culture was not his ultimate pursuit, either, for his motive for the job was not sublimed to such a “noble goal”.

How these teachers perceived the significance of their profession offered us a glimpse into their personal preferences and choices among their multiple identities. Possessing a Chinese ethnic origin and teaching in Canadian educational institutions for years both constituted ‘where they are’ at the moment. In response to such a particular context, their concern with professional identity appeared to oscillate between *being* and *becoming*. These ‘figured worlds’ (Holland et al., 1998) led most of the teachers to reckon that they were making contributions to both China and Canada. While teaching Mandarin strengthened their bond with China, they were on the way to gradually feel connected to Canada as well. As Cindy, Jane, and Nina mentioned, they were delighted to help Canadian students and advance the development of multiculturalism in Canada. In the case of these teachers, their identification was processual and shifting, echoing what most Western postmodernists foreground in their theorization of identity.

According to Bascia (1996a), the contexts that immigrant teachers are located in jointly help shape their fundamental orientations to teaching, their preference for particular resources and pedagogies, and their implementation of roles and responsibilities in schools; in addition, their life experiences usually make them more understanding and empathetic teachers, who are prone to acknowledge their students’ cultures and teach them how to successfully negotiate the Canadian system without compromising their own heritage. This was particularly true with Cindy and Nina in my study. Seeing Mandarin skills as an asset for the future of Canadian students, Cindy inserted some Chinese cultural content into her non-heritage classes in order for her students to have smooth communication with Chinese people. To help heritage students acknowledge and appreciate their heritage culture, she spared no efforts to expound Chinese cultural information to them in depth. As for Nina, equipping Canadian students with the knowledge about Chinese culture was a vehicle to expand their vision and enhance their intellectual level. So she often gave students exploratory questions and compared linguistic and cultural differences in her teaching, which was illustrated in the previous chapter.

Both Hall (1997) and Holland et al. (1998) reminded us that identity connects the personal world to the collective world. When answering my 'contribution' question, Jane, Lisa, and Henry accentuated their personal interests whereas Cindy and Nina concentrated on 'others', their student body. Although none of them overtly depicted their profession as a noble cause to project a national identity, their replies to this specific question seemed to gravitate towards their *being*, collective 'Chineseness', over their *becoming* as Canadian immigrants/citizens. Even though some of them claimed that their teaching served the needs of both countries, I could discern their strong attachment to China when reading their remarks between the lines. Their delight in spreading Chinese language and culture, implicitly or explicitly, could be identified in many ways. Henry's stance in favour of 'Chineseness' was the most obvious as he replied that he would rather think of his work as a contribution to China than to Canada if 'forced' to make a choice between the two aspects. Cindy exhibited her pride in helping non-heritage students develop their Mandarin competence from scratch to proficiency and in helping heritage students keep track of their Chinese roots. While recognizing that her teaching made for the development of multiculturalism in Canada to some extent, Jane mentioned that she was helping Canadian students "enhance their appreciation of Chinese culture" and that she was pleased to see many non-Chinese Canadians and immigrants in Greater Vancouver managing with chopsticks as skillfully as Chinese people. Likewise, Nina's reference to promoting multiculturalism meant "allowing Canadians to have a better understanding of our China". Noticeably, "our China" in her remarks happened to indicate her sense of belonging to China and pride in her Chinese origin. Lisa directly 'trumpeted' her 'nationalist image', saying that she expected her students to look at her admiringly when telling them she was from China and adding that "I also have such sort of patriotic sentiment".

As suggested in Omoniyi's (2006) "Hierarchy of Identities", an individual's various identity options co-exist at all times but may compete with one another to gain their salience in a particular moment. For my participants, their ethnic identity stood out among many of their other identities at the moment of addressing the significance of their profession. In my opinion, the fact that the subject they were teaching was Mandarin, that they were keen on their native language and culture and proud of their 'authority' granted by their cultural capital, and that they were passionate about their

work, possibly all resulted in their tendency to magnify their collective identity, their 'Chineseness', when thinking of the question of 'contribution'. Their responses closely corroborate the importance of a unified, collective identity to Asian descendants, as reminded by some Asian scholars (e.g. Ang, 2001; Lo, 2007; Phan, 2008; Wang, 2002), in the postmodern era when the shifting, hybrid, and conflicting structure of identity is gaining increasing attention.

5.4.3. Not Canadian yet, still Chinese but...

The degree of attachment to Chinese or Canadian nationality can unveil where an immigrant is — whether he/she leans towards the roots or the routes. Based on their own understanding of roots and routes, my participants offered various interpretations of these two notions and the relation between these two aspects with reference to their lived experiences. In their responses, they communicated more similar perceptions of their roots than of their routes.

By and large, they attributed their roots to their ethnic origin — Chinese identity. Holding the same view as the teachers mentioned in C. Lam's (1996) study that racial and ethnic differences are not negotiable through learning and conformity, my participants also saw their Chinese identity as *assumed identity* (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004) that they accepted and did not try to negotiate regardless of their long stay abroad and as *ascribed identity* that they thought others would always assign to them (Block, 2007). As Bakhtin (1981, 1984) observed, individual consciousness is intersubjective and the individual internalizes the surrounding voices and gradually formulates own voice derived but separated from others' voices. Defining themselves from others' perspective, these teachers were aware that their conversion to Canadian citizenship/residency neither did nor would change other people's perception of their Chinese identity. Like what Jane remarked, "Yes, my nationality has changed but my identity remains the same...I never feel I have changed into a real Canadian...When other people look at you, they still see you as Chinese." Besides, the length of their residence in Canada seemed not to affect their opinion as such. Evident from the interview, Cindy appeared rather firm about her Chinese roots, concluding, "Whatever change you may go through in future, wherever you live, you are and will always be an

ethnic Chinese”. Nonetheless, Henry, Cindy, and Jane all recognized that the age of coming to Canada could dictate one’s self identification — Chinese teenager immigrants might have a different sense of roots than Chinese adult immigrants.

However, connotations of Chinese roots may vary at a deeper level since “being Chinese” is a broad concept embracing details and nuances in relation to multifarious personal experiences. And these roots gain even more variations along with the immigrants’ relocation in another country. Just as Ang (2001, p. 38) suggested, “Chineseness is not a category with a fixed content — be it racial, cultural or geographical — but operates as an open and indeterminate signifier whose meanings are constantly renegotiated and rearticulated in different sections of the Chinese diaspora.” ‘Chineseness’ also found its rich expressions in my participants’ utterances. To Cindy, Chinese roots related to her concern with current happenings in China and enjoyment of reading Chinese texts. And she speculated that her connection to China would neither strengthen nor weaken as times went on. To Henry, he was frequently involved with Chinese things in his daily life and confessed his closer affinity with Chinese friends than with non-Chinese friends. To Jane, somewhat uncertain of the meaning of roots, she still tended to think that her identity was primarily Chinese and ascribed her Chinese roots to the values she assimilated from traditional Chinese culture and the influence of the education she had received in China. Yet she called attention to individual differences in their personalities and identities regardless of nationality. Born and raised in Hong Kong, Nina held that her Chinese roots might differ in some way and be more open than Chinese mainlanders’. It seemed that Lisa did not cling to Chinese roots as strongly as the other teachers. Although not denying her Chinese identity, she did not draw a parallel between her Chineseness and her roots as she compared her roots to “a piece of grass” that was “easily blown away by others” and “swaying all the time”. She would rather hide her Chinese things till the moment she deemed it necessary to bring them out for her practical use.

According to what my participants told me in the interviews, none of them went through dramatic personality changes like Mei in M. Lam’s (1996) study, who, after coming abroad, repositioned herself as an essentially outgoing person rather than a stereotyped reticent Chinese. In my study, while Cindy, Henry, and Nina saw

Chineseness as their roots, Jane and Lisa displayed a sort of uncertainty about their roots. In particular, Lisa saw her roots as something flexible and easily changed responding to her surroundings. Although Hall (1996) defined 'roots' as 'where we came from', implying certain stability in our *being* attached to our place of origin, I want to ask, based on my research data, such questions: What is 'being'? Does an 'inner core' really exist? My participants' responses, especially Lisa's, inclined me to conclude that roots can be understood differently depending on individuals, not necessarily stable or strong owing to 'where we came from', and that one's 'inner core' is sometimes in question and may be evolving along with one's routes.

Routes seemed to gain a greater variety of interpretations than roots depending on the participants' focus at the time of interview. Commonalities were found in their frequent recourse to comparison of their work experiences in China and in Canada (or their past and their present) and articulation of their recognition of the changes alongside their immigration, which many of them explained with examples. Cindy and Lisa noted that their ways of thinking and behaving became more direct and simple than before. Showing a preference for the institutional system in the Canadian university, Henry and Cindy both voiced their being more well-planned and well-organized. While not seeing themselves changing into 'real' Canadians, Jane and Nina also distinguished themselves from Chinese mainlanders living in China all the time.

Yet examined more closely, these teachers foregrounded different aspects of their routes. Cindy attributed her changes to the influence of a social structure on individuals' manner of handling things and pointed out that it was the macro non-hierarchical structure of Canadian society that ensured more autonomy in a micro structure like a university, which, by her account, made possible equal collegial relationship as well as teachers' flexibility in class and practice of learner-centeredness. Under "the influence of Canadian culture, Canadian customs or systems, and so on", Henry admitted that he started to pick up Canadian teachers' "modus operandi" and some of his Chinese values were being "modified". For instance, he realized that the notion of "everyone is equal" could be truly fulfilled in a country like Canada and people could pursue their career out of their interest rather than of the amount of earning. It seemed true that "living away from home gives a new perspective on home" (Laurence,

as cited in M. Lam, 1996, p. 58). Affected by notions like 'democracy' and 'freedom', Jane confessed her tendency to examine things, such as the news about China and Chinese government, more critically and broadly than when she was in China. To Lisa, she felt her routes were getting stronger as she found herself gradually Westernized, by which she meant she became more candid and less ambitious than had she been while in China. With recourse to her theory of "gains and losses", she appeared firm in her determination to 'swim downstream' instead of 'upstream' and made efforts to change into a Canadian in terms of her thinking and doing, which she considered crucial to be integrated with the host society. Nina's response specifically centered on the change of her teaching strategy after immigrating to Canada. She criticized some Chinese teachers' blind nationalism and deemed the adjustment of teachers' mentality and pedagogical practices necessary to meet the needs of the host country and achieve her teaching objectives in favour of Canadian students.

Another commonality identified among my participants was they demonstrated reflexive and reflective traits when talking about their changes along the routes and most of them explicitly communicated self-evaluations. Undoubtedly, migration accorded them chances to make comparisons of their lived experiences, and comparisons evoked their awareness of changes in themselves, and changes made them more self-conscious of their differences and uniqueness compared with their prior selves and other people in the societies they previously and currently inhabited. As mentioned in M. Lam's (1996) study, many immigrant teachers felt that teaching in Canada created an opportunity to reflect on their personal values and re-learn numerous things that they used to take for granted. Bascia (1996a) also reminded us that our self-awareness usually becomes more acute when we step outside our own cultural frames of reference and have a chance to compare them within and across cultural boundaries.

In my research, immigration experiences also enabled my participants to have a clearer picture of 'who they are' and 'where they are'. As presented earlier, Cindy commented that "you feel like being more Chinese after coming abroad", "you are more aware of those unique about yourself", and that as one stayed overseas longer, "you can see yourself more clearly" and "you can assess yourself more objectively". She thought that stepping out of China propelled her to become introspective and contemplative of

how to deal with her differences in the host culture. Although Henry did not explicitly describe his self image, it appeared to me that he revealed a keen sense of his Chinese aspects when talking about his frequent contact and comfort with Chinese friends and Chinese things; however, he portrayed the changes in his values and practices occurring along his routes as positive and progressive. Jane admitted that she had never showed concerns to politics or questioned about the news issued from Chinese government when she was in China. Yet after studying and residing in Canada for years, she rendered herself becoming a more critical person sensitive to political issues, for which, she said joyfully, "Definitely, this is a kind of progress", though she felt that "I haven't adapted well" in some regards. Excited about her changes in Canada, Lisa stated that "I feel very good about being simple" and "I am pretty happy when I find myself changing this way". She preferred the mindset of adjusting oneself to the surroundings to that of holding onto one's old traditions and values as she found that learning about a new culture denoted "a kind of personal growth" and made her more competent and confident in herself. Like Lisa, Nina observed that clinging to one's old habits in a new culture would unavoidably incur sufferings and thus saw changes as necessary and constructive. She was "in favour of this ongoing progress" as it kept her pondering on how to teach more effectively in a different teaching scenario. By and large, these teachers all appeared optimistic about the changes they underwent and gave positive self assessment of their shifting attitudes.

What I found illuminating through my interviews with the teacher participants was the manifestation of their identity negotiation between their roots and routes. As Weedon (1997) observed, subjectivity is complex and changing across time and space responding to changing discourses. According to Foucault (1972), discourses as power/knowledge systems both produce and constrain human subjects' possibilities for thinking and acting. And social interaction and social structure constitute individual identity (Block, 2007). On account of inevitable attachment to a specific social existence (Ilieva, 2005), subjects may internalize the prevailing 'discipline' (Bălan, 2013), as Foucault termed, and identify with the socially accepted cultural practices or 'Discourse', as defined by Gee (1990). The complex and evolving nature of subjectivity in response to shifting discourses could also be discerned in my participants' insights into the negotiation between their roots and routes. On the whole, they all acknowledged that

their beliefs and behaviours were influenced by both Chinese culture and Canadian culture.

More specifically, Cindy noted that roots were the starting point and routes went off those roots in many directions. Consciously or not, she felt, numerous Chinese elements could always be traced in her thoughts, and her routes actually made these elements become more salient after she moved abroad, which reassured her of her Chinese roots. She also observed that an individual's time of coming abroad could affect his/her degree of attachment to China. As she came overseas in her late twenties when China was somewhat backward compared with the developed countries she moved to, she tended to take a neutral stance towards her Chinese traits, positing that both China and Canada had strengths and limits. But in her opinion, younger Chinese generations who came abroad in recent one or two decades might prefer China to Canada due to China's growing economy.

While assertive about his Chinese roots, Henry gave some examples to prove his changes in his thinking and doing and how he modified his Chinese aspects after coming to Canada. He also noted that time brought changes to people in addition to migration. Like Cindy, he reckoned that younger Chinese immigrants might have a different sense of roots from people of his age, but he mentioned that his twin sons who came to Canada at the age of 12, however, showed stronger attachment to Chinese culture than to Canadian culture. Henry concluded that the changing environment inevitably had an impact on his roots. Both Cindy's and Henry's awareness of their possibly different perceptions of roots and routes from those of younger Chinese immigrants reminded us that hybrid identities need to be addressed historically and contextually (Ballinger, 2004; Hutnyk, 2005; Yousfi, 2014), and, I want to add here, that personal differences should also be considered in the analysis of hybridity.

Seeing her roots as unstable and fluid, Lisa held the view that her routes considerably outshone her roots. She took much pleasure in learning more about the West and merging into the Canadian society while retaining her profound knowledge about Chinese language and culture. According to her, she was 'doing addition' in this way to facilitate her self-development. It is interesting to note that she was focused on

building up her cultural capital along her routes, and that she neither considered her Chinese identity equivalent to her roots nor meant to abandon her Chinese elements but endeavored to keep these elements resting at peace and exploit them only when they were in need.

While acknowledging her Chinese roots, Nina examined these roots with flexibility in reference to her routes. She maintained that adjusting certain things derived from the Chinese roots would make immigrant teachers more adaptive and successful in Canadian universities. Hence, she noted, "I don't think my roots should have any effect on my teaching or my relationship with students because I can't impose my identity on them." Superficially, Nina's comment as such sounded similar to Rose's in C. Lam's (1996) study, who tried to separate her Chinese identity from her teaching as she thought that highlighting differences got in her way of securing a place for herself in the mainstream society. But examined closely, Nina differed from Rose in that she was largely concerned with the question of how to be a good teacher in a new situation. By her account, clinging to the mentality that the teacher was the sole authority in class and Chinese culture was the best culture in the world, for example, would unavoidably cause cultural dissonance in dealing with Canadian students.

Both Rose's and Nina's responses disrupted my assumption that people are inclined to link their identities to their practices. Now it seems to me that some people do not want their identities to interfere with their work and social interactions or people may choose to bring about some of their multiple identities to link with their practices. In the case of Rose and Nina, they concentrated on their becoming and attempted to detach themselves from the 'negative' part of their being, at least 'negative' in their eyes, from their teaching practices. What Rose wanted to separate from her teaching was the racial difference that she could not change. Yet Nina managed to avoid the negative influence of some Chinese stereotypes on her teaching. Although they claimed to orchestrate their classes with their becoming, their being turned out to endure and become relevant at times since social practices are hardly separable from individual identities. Rose still taught her students how to combat racism drawing on her own experiences and Nina was excited about helping Canadians gain a better understanding of "our China". At this point, I want to suggest that it is unlikely to be able to segregate one's identity from one's

practices regardless of one's intention to do so. In my opinion, one's roots may have both positive and negative effects on one's routes, depending on individuals' attitudes and choices. People who mean to separate their identities from their work probably equate the 'negative' aspect of their identities with their identities in general and ignore the part of their identities that they actually involve in their daily practices. I observe that ethnic minority immigrant teachers, consciously or unconsciously, infuse into their teaching practices some elements imbedded in their being together with some elements developing in their becoming, which may lead them to reconstruct their professional identities in a new educational context.

My study with the teacher participants confirms that diasporic individuals usually take up a 'third space', a state of in-betweenness where they negotiate between the home culture and the host culture, and this space presents both a privilege and a challenge (Bhabha, 1994). All my participants seemingly tended to take their 'third space' as a privilege: they voiced their appreciation of the work environment in Canada as they enjoyed more autonomy and freedom than in China and they saw their changes (e.g. becoming more critical, more straightforward, more well-planned, and so on) as landmarks of personal progress. As Iyall Smith (2008) noted, the third space also allows the immigrant teachers to distance themselves somehow from both cultures and realize how they differ from the Chinese living in China permanently and from the Canadian-born Chinese in Canada. The privileges these teachers felt fortunate to have inclined them to seeking fusion and harmony with the host society. This is why they all welcomed their emerging changes and celebrated their hybrid identities. In particular, Lisa expressed her desire to become a 'real' Canadian in the near future, who would think and behave like native-born Canadians.

Nevertheless, hybrid identities, after all, are crafted out of difference and exclusion, and the 'third space' also creates a challenge and causes friction and ambivalence to immigrants (Ang, 2001; Bhabha, 1994). Neither did my teacher subjects deny some discomfort arising from their differences. However, none of them articulated such a strong sense of difference as those immigrant teachers reported by Bascia (1996a), who complained about being treated as foreigners, tokens, marginalized and discriminated groups. Only some degree of uneasiness was detected in Cindy's comfort

level of reading English texts and Henry's of socializing with non-Chinese friends. Jane disclosed several moments of tension between her roots and routes, which vividly presented a contradictory, fragmented postmodern subject (Hall, 1992). Positioning herself as "primarily Chinese", Jane voiced her struggles between preserving traditional Chinese virtues and observing Canadian cultural practices: she was still accustomed to giving humble responses to compliments; she disliked Canadians' criticism of China in spite of her own practice of critique; she often questioned herself whether she should become more aggressive to fight for what she wanted as most Canadians did.

Most people are concerned with their images in others' eyes and thus take care to appropriately represent themselves. In M. Lam's (1996) study, Mei managed to have her differences recognized but meanwhile seek commonalities with people around; she also communicated her experiences with her colleagues of ethnic minority backgrounds, and sometimes spoke out on their behalf. Wang's (2002) research found that one of her participants exploited the strategy of "egression" — "adaptation of convenience" for the purpose of "functional expediency" (p. 316), through which he was seemingly using some teaching methods commonly practiced by Canadian teachers but actually had been strongly adhering to his Chinese teaching philosophy. In my research, Jane expressed ambivalence about how to behave properly in the host culture. She neither wanted to be seen as "weak and incompetent" by Canadians if she kept acting humbly nor was she willing to challenge her mild personality and Chinese values on tolerance and harmony. So she chose to conduct herself as she felt at ease and regulate her habitual manner little by little. Jane's reaction corroborates Papastergiadis' opinion that *hybridity* is the "negotiation of difference" in "the presence of fissures, gaps and contradictions" during which the past and the present "encounter and transform each other" (as cited in Block, 2007, p. 21). And it also supports Rapport and Dawson's (1998) idea that hybridity is fluid and shifting, fashioned on the move. Just as Jane remarked, "I am not sure if it [my primary Chinese identity] may change in ten years or so."

The in-depth analysis I have conducted in this chapter demonstrates that the subjects constantly and dynamically negotiated between their roots and routes by comparison of their past and present experiences. Sometimes they put more emphasis on roots and sometimes they gave more stress to routes. On the one hand, none of

them rejected their roots pertinent to Chinese origin; on the other hand, they all displayed their acceptance and readiness for their routes in the host culture. Their reflections on their lived experiences revealed both joyous moments when roots and routes lived in harmony and complemented each other and anxious moments when these two aspects were in conflict and tension. In my viewpoint, roots and routes may alternate to stand out in an immigrant's life trajectory responding to the change of one's objective surroundings and subjective choices. There are chances, in extreme cases, that immigrants may be pulled back to their roots and have to abandon their routes, or they accelerate their pace to the destination of routes and choose to ignore their roots. Evidently, the negotiation between roots and routes is constituted not only by the discourses that immigrants historically and currently inhabit but also by immigrants' perceptions of their relationship and corresponding reactions to these discourses, which can translate into their personal choices or identity practices. Their hybrid identities crafted out of the negotiation between roots and routes were inescapably interwoven with their emerging identity practices (Frie, 2008; Toohey, 2000), as it were, their identities defined their practices while their practices reflected and presumably reshaped their identities.

Moreover, roots and routes are reciprocal and responsive to each other. As noted earlier, my study participants admitted that their move of 'stepping out' made them more reflective about themselves and their home country, and that their routes consequently thrust their Chinese roots into spotlight and reaffirmed 'who they are'. In my opinion, these teachers' open-mindedness towards their routes might have gained inspirations not only from the influence of Western culture but also from their roots — traditional Chinese values and Chinese educational ideology.

Chinese civilization has been profoundly informed by Confucianism, which is open-minded by nature. Confucius was said to be one of the most open-minded philosophers, whose goal was to use all the knowledge that the world could offer to create order and harmony amongst all things. Being "harmonious" denotes being able to be open to all directions and thus to be successful in all endeavors, which is the factor indispensable to the prosperity of a civilization (Yuan, 2006). According to Confucian spirituality, it is advised that people should go and see widely in person and look into

various sources to gain first-hand knowledge, discern the good and the bad, and then study and acquire greater depth of knowledge (Liat, 2011). Just as Confucius put it, “There may be those who can act creatively without knowledge. I am not at this level. I listen widely, select the good and follow their ways. I observe broadly and contemplate. This is the second level of knowledge” (Muller, 2010, 7:28). Besides, Confucius was always willing to learn from others, remarking, “When three men are walking together, there is one who can be my teacher. I pick out people’s good and follow it. When I see their bad points, I correct them in myself” (Muller, 2010, 7:22), which happened to be quoted by Lisa in my study, who expressed her wish to absorb various resources. With reference to such Confucian inculcations, it is not difficult to understand why my teacher participants made decisions to live in another country, learn from a new culture, and examine their situations consciously.

Furthermore, the time these teachers were receiving education in China was 1970s-1990s when China was led by the paramount leader Deng Xiaoping, a reformer who led China towards a market economy. In 1983, Deng wrote an inscription for a school in Beijing, “Education should be geared to the needs of modernization, of the world, and of the future” (Zhen, 2009, para. 5). This proposition was soon disseminated across China to become the slogan of many educational institutions. Also, to encourage children to strive for higher life goals, Chinese parents often gave them exhortations like, “A promising achiever is the one who bears a mind aimed at all directions.” It was likely that these teachers were inspired by such words during their schooling, which helped prompt their idea of studying abroad in the future and their intention to pass the Chinese roots on to their offspring.

Therefore, I tend to conclude that the participants’ roots, to some degree, exerted an impact on the choice of their routes, and that their routes conversely reaffirmed and invigorated their roots. Although roots are normally associated with *being*, which is often seen as an unbreakable core, stable and enduring, yet my study shows that roots can also be evolving and *becoming*, which was especially notable in the case of Lisa. To my study participants, the negotiation between their roots and routes came into prominence across their immigration and concurrently enriched their lived experiences. Hence, they

generally celebrated their self-recognized changes taking place along their routes and rendered their immigration experiences meaningful and rewarding.

5.5. Conclusion

To encapsulate, this chapter has investigated the five teachers' feelings about their work environment, understandings of the significance of their profession, and reflections on their roots and routes. It seems that the three themes discussed in this chapter can be integrated with the five themes described in the previous chapter to jointly address my key research question — how immigrant Chinese teachers negotiate the relation between their roots and routes. Or in other words, the relation between their roots and routes seemingly functions as an epitome of all the eight themes. With recourse to the comparison of Chinese university culture and Canadian university culture, and of their pasts and their presents, the participants frequently exhibited preferences for one to the other and persistently sought expedient solutions to reconcile their roots and routes.

In terms of the institutional mechanism, the five teachers all endorsed the systematic arrangement in the Canadian university that offered them more autonomy and freedom than the Chinese universities they had worked for, which were fundamentally centralized and hierarchical. Yet they anticipated a deeper level of concern and support from the Canadian university administration, similar to what they had experienced in Chinese universities. When these teachers expounded the significance of their profession, their roots appeared to be predominant in the foreground with their routes playing out in the background. Although most of them perceived their undertaking as a contribution to both China and Canada, they still divulged a sense of belonging to China by demonstrating a pride in helping Canadian students master, appreciate, and admire the teachers' home language and culture.

The interviews with my study participants also revealed that they were all friendly with the Chinese colleagues and other language teachers in the institute but had closer ties with the former than with the latter, though they pined for a greater affinity with colleagues that they used to have in China. In addition, some of them, especially the

part-time teachers, appropriated 'strategic self-marginalization' to handle the tension between collectivism and individualism in the workplace: they tried to build connections with their colleagues in order to feel included and supported, but meanwhile managed to maintain some distance from others in order to ward off their vulnerability to potential gossip and conflicts, which they thought might happen. They chose to distance themselves from the rest possibly for two reasons. On one hand, they were apprehensive about possible mishaps resulting from sophisticated social networks, against which their roots warned them. On the other hand, they demonstrated a preference for independence and self-reliance, of which their routes informed them. In terms of collegial relationship, the participants' routes seemed to outperform their roots, which I reckoned was mainly ascribed to their colleagues' friendliness and their own open-mindedness, allowing them to feel on an equal footing with other teachers and thus settle into the new work environment rather smoothly.

Moreover, my study showed that although the collegial relationship generally did not make them feel discriminated or marginalized within the institute, my subjects, however, felt subordinated in the mainstream university culture due to the university administration's depreciation of language courses, lack of adequate support, and authoritarian work style giving little respect for the teachers' requests. As far as my participants were concerned, language teachers received lower credit than teachers of other subjects in many universities and colleges in Greater Vancouver. They expressed anticipation for more support from the university administration, such as allowing Chinese teacher more autonomy in managing Chinese program, providing more funding, treating teaching assistants of language courses fairly, and upgrading their office facilities. Although some of these teachers took action to get their voices heard by the university administrators, it seemed that they did not follow up, after meeting with a rebuff, with further steps to fight for their rights.

Admittedly and cheerfully, the immigrant Chinese teachers in my study perceived the dynamics of roots and routes as a natural process of identity negotiation along with their immigration, which helped shape them into who they were at the current moment and towards who they might become at the next moment. In fact, roots and routes are the two factors that immigrants often grapple with in the process of their identity

reconstruction. In one's life journey these two factors might stand out alternately or keep abreast of each other at some point, either in tension or in harmony. To conclude this chapter, I want to note that my case study confirms the sociocultural and postmodern perception of identity as unstable and shifting responding to individuals' situated discourses, and meanwhile showcases the moments when individuals dwell on, or skip over, or fine tune their stable and enduring identity, and that routes — “what we might become” — do not always entail changes but surely permeate one's life throughout, whereas roots — “where we are from” — are not necessarily static or retrospective but may propel one to step out.

Chapter 6.

Conclusion

In this final chapter, I summarize the content of previous chapters and the research findings, and consider the implications of my study findings for research, for ethnic minority immigrant teachers, and for relevant stakeholders respectively. In particular, I address the research question: What are the implications of the reports of immigrant Chinese teachers' lived experiences for providing appropriate support for them and other immigrant teachers of second languages in the multicultural context of Canada? This chapter also describes the limitations of my study and makes recommendations for further research.

6.1. Summary of the content and the findings

In this thesis, I explored how immigrant Chinese teachers of Mandarin in a Canadian university negotiated their ethnic, sociocultural, and professional identities. I set out to introduce the rationale, the purpose, and the methodology of the study, clarified some terms used in the report, and provided a brief overview of the chapters (Chapter 1).

In Chapter 2, I outlined the theoretical framework for the thesis, reviewing relevant theories on immigrant identity and empirical studies on identity issues of immigrant Chinese teachers in Canada. Among multiple identities, social identity and cultural identity are often examined by scholars in their research (e.g. Hall, 1992, 1996, 1997; Norton, 1997). Whereas many Western scholars underscore the shifting, hybrid, and conflicting structure of identity (e.g. Bhabha, 1994; Block, 2006, 2007; Holland et al., 1998; Omoniyi, 2006; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004), some Asian scholars call attention to the importance of a unified, collective identity to Asian descendants (e.g. Ang, 2001;

Lo, 2007; Phan, 2008; Wang, 2002). As identity is formed contextually (e.g. Hall, 1997; Phan, 2008; Rummens, 1993) and constructed at the junction of one's 'inner world' and 'outer world' (e.g. Bakhtin, 1981; Holland et al., 1998), I also found useful the notions of 'discourse' (Foucault, 1972; Gee, 1990; Poynton, 2000), 'figured worlds' (Holland et al., 1998), 'discipline' (Bălan, 2013; Eriksen & Nielsen, 2001), and 'habitus' (Bourdieu, 1977; Maton, 2008) in discussing immigrant identity.

In Chapter 2, I also made reference to several recent studies specifically on immigrant Chinese teachers conducted by a few researchers. These studies revealed that Chinese teachers in Canadian educational institutions normally assumed dual cultural identities (Wang, 2002) and adopted various strategies to manage the differences they encountered in the host society (Bascia, 1996a; Thiessen, 1996). The historical and current contexts they inhabited framed their fundamental orientations to teaching, their preference for pedagogies, and their implementation of roles in schools (Bascia, 1996a; Goodson, 1992; C. Lam, 1996). The immigrant Chinese teachers often had to reposition themselves when confronted by cultural dissonance and power inequality (M. Lam, 1996; Lo, 2007; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004). Some of them voiced their desire and even took action to initiate changes in their school structures (e.g. Bascia, 1996a; Feuerverger, 1997; M. Lam, 1996; Thiessen, 1996). The studies also found that how the immigrant Chinese teachers implemented their teaching might be in conflict with what they believed in (C. Lam, 1996; Wang, 2002), and sometimes others' representation of them might contradict their self-representation (M. Lam, 1996).

Inspired by the literature, I conducted a qualitative case study with five immigrant Chinese teachers of Mandarin working in a Canadian university. In Chapter 3, I described the methodology I used to investigate the teachers' lived experiences. The case study consisted of semi-structured interviews and classroom observations as well as some informal exchange with the participants for approximately one year, with resort to audio recording and field note taking. After introducing the research methods, I detailed the procedures of my data collection and data analyses. I also provided background information about my research site and the profiles of the study participants. At the end of this chapter, I recounted how I had situated myself in the research and brought forth some methodological perspectives.

In Chapter 4, I discussed the teachers' thoughts and practices regarding their classroom teaching, centering my investigation around the following questions: What are immigrant Chinese teachers' feelings about teaching Mandarin in Canada, about their roles and authority with students, about their students in general, as compared to their feelings about these matters when teaching in China? What pedagogies do they use in Canada and what kinds of interactions do they have with students in their classes? My purpose was to explore whether and how my participants' self-perceptions as teachers had changed since they moved to Canada, and how these changes impacted on their teaching practices and teacher-student relationships.

In this chapter, the analysis of the primary data from interviews and the secondary data from classroom observations illustrated that the participants' perceptions of themselves as teachers, of their students, and of their teaching underwent varying degrees of changes. With slightly different motives, they all demonstrated positive attitudes towards Mandarin teaching, which remained the same along with their migration. In respect to the educational landscape, all the teachers voiced their awareness of the differences between Canada and China and their willingness to fit into the new university culture. Some of them acknowledged that they took pleasure in being role models for students when in China as such a teacher role and status was supposedly granted by Chinese society and traditional Chinese culture. Yet some of them criticized teacher-centered practices and had already implemented a student-centered approach while in China. In terms of teaching in Canada, none of the teachers stated that they acted as the sole authority in class, but they claimed to perceive themselves as and serve as learning facilitators in an equal relationship with students, and reported that they strategically exercised their authority depending on specific teaching scenarios. To most of the teachers, although they had experienced more or less dissonance at the beginning of their teaching in Canada, they admitted that they gradually adapted to the new situation and came to accept and welcome students' challenges.

With respect to the teacher-student relationship, all the teachers articulated their understanding of Canadian students' behaviour and interpreted the issue of 'respect' in cultural contexts. Three of the five teachers related that they felt their relationship with

students was closer and they received more respect from students in China than in Canada. One teacher represented the distance between her and students as similar in both countries, and one teacher reported a closer relationship with students and feeling of being more respected while in Canada. The data analysis revealed that their different reactions to 'respect' were likely linked to their own definitions of 'respect', personal expectations, and lived experiences.

Regarding their language teaching, all the participants stated that they saw language and culture inextricably connected and thus spontaneously inserted Chinese cultural information in the language instruction but that the depth of the cultural knowledge and their teaching methods varied depending on the level of the Mandarin course and the type of target learners — heritage or non-heritage students. In addition, they reported (and were also observed) often employing methods of comparing Canadian culture and Chinese culture to deepen students' understanding of the latter.

As compared to their previous teaching in China, the participants all communicated their consciousness of some changes in their teaching philosophies and practices taking place in Canada. By their account, they delineated teaching objectives that they thought could suit their students best. It seemed that the participants were all acquainted with and endorsed the student-centered approach during their previous teaching in China but gained more autonomy and freedom to implement this approach after they came to Canada. They reported that they dealt with heritage and non-heritage students in different ways but that they made few changes in their teaching of non-heritage students only, be it in China or in Canada. The noticeable pedagogical changes they made after teaching in Canada mostly resided in their endeavor to accommodate students' reasonable requests and in their deliberation to remind Canadian students in their Mandarin classes of the Chinese elements accessible locally in Greater Vancouver. By and large, these teachers managed to adjust their teaching beliefs and practices to cope with the mainstream university culture rather than demand enormous changes from their students. On the other hand, they related their considerations of students' needs to their own teaching philosophies, and thus took students' feedback selectively and regulated their pedagogies selectively as well.

Chapter 5 examined the teacher participants' lived experiences at a relatively macro level, addressing these two research questions: How do immigrant Chinese teachers position themselves and feel positioned in interactions with their teaching colleagues at the university and within the university in general? How do they negotiate the relation between their roots and routes? The inquiries into the first question herein and into those questions investigated in Chapter 4 were all connected to address the key question on the relation between roots and routes.

With a view to the institutional mechanism, all the participants expressed a preference for the freedom and autonomy they largely received in the Canadian university to the centralized system of Chinese universities they had previously worked for. But they concurrently expected a deeper level of support and more concern from the Canadian university administration. As for the significance of their current teaching profession, one participant considered it to be contributive to China only and the other four observed that it inevitably benefited both China and Canada, though they signaled a sense of belonging to China when conveying a pride in helping Canadian students grasp and appreciate the teachers' home language and culture.

In terms of collegial relationship, the participants all stated that they were generally on good terms with all their teaching colleagues but had closer rapport with Mandarin teachers than with other language teachers at the workplace, and yet the degree of affinity with colleagues in Canada was not so great as that when they were in China. Three of the teachers had more or less interactions with the university superiors but expressed dissatisfaction with the administrators' failure to accommodate teachers' reasonable needs and requests. Two of the teachers were part timers and appropriated 'strategic self-marginalization' to retain their humble status and independence at the workplace.

In contrast with findings of Bascia's (1996a) and C. Lam's studies (1996), in which some teachers reported that they felt discriminated against in the workplace because of their racial differences, the teacher participants in my study did not feel discriminated or marginalized for racial reasons, but they felt subordinated in the mainstream university culture mostly due to the university administration's depreciation

of language courses and neglect of language teachers' requests. As the participants related, language teachers received lower credit than teachers of other subjects in most universities and colleges in Greater Vancouver, which made them feel less important and less 'academic' than teachers in other fields. All the participants communicated desire for due attention from the university administration, and some of them mentioned their efforts to negotiate with the administrators, but it seemed that they refrained from fighting further after their requests were refused by the superiors.

The issues discussed in this chapter could cast a glance at how the immigrant Chinese teachers negotiated their roots and routes. Regarding the kinds of interactions they had with their colleagues, the teachers appeared to straddle across collectivism related to their roots and individualism associated with their routes, and that their routes seemingly outshone their roots. When it came to the significance of their profession, their roots seemed to fall into prominence and their routes played out in the background. Moreover, my participants also directly addressed the question on the negotiation of these two aspects in their life trajectories. All the teachers perceived their ethnic identity as fairly unchangeable, whenever and wherever they were. Therefore, they unanimously associated their roots with Chineseness, the connotations of which, however, they thought were evolving along with their immigration, except that one participant depicted her roots as uncertain and swaying. At the time of my study, all the teachers seemed to be more focused on their routes than their roots on the whole. They offered distinct versions of their routes and disclosed the moments when their roots and routes interacted in harmony or in tension. They expressed comfort with the things they were familiar with in relation to their roots, but meanwhile they endorsed the positive changes (from their own perspectives) arising along their routes. They expressed understanding towards cultural differences and demonstrated adaptive manners to integrate with the host society. Despite their endeavor to have their voices heard by the university administration, they managed to adjust their own values and practices rather than demand essential changes from their Canadian students or sharply challenge the mainstream university culture or the sociocultural structure of the host country.

In Chapter 6, I reviewed the content of all the chapters in this thesis and summarized the findings from my study. I also point below to the implications of the

findings for research, for immigrant teachers, and for educational stakeholders respectively, which also address my last research question: What are the implications of the reports of immigrant Chinese teachers' lived experiences for providing appropriate support for them and other immigrant teachers of second languages in the multicultural context of Canada? In addition, I note the limitations of my current study and suggest further areas of research.

6.2. Implications of the study

6.2.1. Implications for research

While identity has been examined in various disciplines such as psychology, sociology, business, and so on, and has been recently applied to research in education and applied linguistics, there have been insufficient studies that survey lived experiences of ethnic minority teachers in countries of immigration. My extensive literature search shows that little research has been conducted on identity issues of ethnic minority immigrant teachers in Canada, particularly on those of immigrant Chinese teachers in Canadian universities. Although I have found some studies of teachers of Chinese ancestry teaching in mainstream classrooms (e.g. Beynon et al., 2001, 2003; C. Lam, 1996; M. Lam, 1996; Lo, 2007; Wang, 2002), there seems a relative lack of research that investigates self identification and related practices of immigrant Chinese teachers teaching Mandarin at the university level. Many studies focused on Chinese language teaching in North America are primarily concerned with learners, teaching methods, and curriculum development (e.g. Duff & Lester, 2008; Duff & Li, 2004), leaving sociocultural aspects of Chinese teachers of Mandarin inadequately investigated.

In the study, I examined the lived experiences of five immigrant Chinese teachers teaching Mandarin in a Canadian university and explored the dynamics of their self identifications with reference to their practices in the classroom and at the workplace. One thread running through Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 has been how these teachers negotiated their roots and routes in their ongoing life trajectories. The data from my research indicate that subjects constantly negotiate between their roots and routes by frequently comparing their past and present experiences and that such a negotiation is a

process replete with variations: at some times they place more emphasis on their roots and at other times they attach more importance to their routes; at some point their roots resonate with their routes but at another point their roots militate against their routes. Based on the data, it is possible to conclude that roots and routes are reciprocal and reactive to each other; these two aspects may alternate to stand out or keep abreast in harmony or in tension in an immigrant's life trajectory, responding to one's situated contexts and subjective choices; the negotiation of these two aspects is prescribed both by the discourses that immigrants historically and currently inhabit, and by immigrants' corresponding reactions to these discourses and agency in engaging with them; and this negotiation normally translates into immigrants' daily practices, which, in turn, reflect and impact this negotiation and possibly reconstruct discourses for immigrants. Although I had intended to examine if gender could be a factor that makes a difference in one's opinion of the negotiation of roots and routes, I did not identify any salient data from the male teacher participant for comparative analysis. Nor could I make any grounded and convincing claim here because of the small sample. Yet I attempt to explore this factor in my future research.

With regard to my participants' remarks on their routes, the data support Western scholars' poststructural and sociocultural perspectives of identity: identity is fluid, shifting, conflicting, hybrid (e.g. Block, 2006, 2007; Hall, 1996, 1997; Iyall Smith, 2008; Rapport & Dawson, 1998), multifaceted (e.g. Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004), contextualized (e.g. Rummens, 1993), and hierarchized (Omoniyi, 2006; Omoniyi & White, 2006). Meanwhile, regarding the participants' comments on their roots, the data also consent to Asian scholars' emphasis on a unified, collective identity to Asian descendants (e.g. Lo, 2007; Phan, 2008; Wang, 2002); particularly, the data agree with Ang's (2001) vision that 'Chineseness' is evolving and redefined along immigrants' routes. Nevertheless, my study points further to the complexity and dynamics of identity negotiation, especially highlighting the moments how and when (and why) roots and routes interact with each other and jointly affect subjects' practices. Drawing on the literature reviewed in this thesis as well as my research findings, I have summarized my discussions on roots and routes as follows:

1. Immigrant Chinese teachers' lived experiences are not solely about either their roots or their routes, but often about the negotiation of

these two aspects. In that respect I examine closely Hall's (1996) stance that identities are "not the so-called return to roots but a coming-to-terms-with our 'routes'" (p. 4).

2. There are numerous moments when roots and routes alternate to stand out or keep abreast in harmony or in tension throughout immigrant Chinese teachers' lived experiences.
3. Negotiation of roots and routes is often reflected in and impacts on immigrant Chinese teachers' regular practices, such as their teaching practices and interactions with their students and colleagues.
4. Negotiation of roots and routes is at the crossroads of immigrant Chinese teachers' inner world and outer world, intertwined with the negotiation of their personal choices and the discourses they historically and currently inhabit.
5. The connotations of roots and routes may need to be revisited and enriched. They should not be understood in dichotomy but as two aspects prominent in immigrants' life trajectories, especially in those cross-cultural encounters. From my participants' perspectives, roots do not necessarily mean 'being' and may indicate 'becoming', or 'swaying', as one participant suggested. In my opinion, subjects have their agency to tell 'where they are from', regardless of their country of origin. Accordingly, routes are not always associated with 'becoming' but possibly manifested as 'being' because immigrants may hold onto their original values and practices for a length of time as they see fit, even after settling down in the host country.

6.2.2. Implications for educational stakeholders

The reports of immigrant Chinese teachers' lived experiences in this study have significant implications for educational stakeholders, such as university administrators, university policymakers, and teacher educators, who are the backbone of an educational institution that can make informed decisions and initiate changes to support ethnic minority immigrant teachers like my participants. This section directly addresses my last research question on how to provide support for immigrant teachers of second languages in Canada.

As Lee and Bang (2011) warned, the full potential of minority language programs has not been recognized in North America and there are still false assumptions and expectations leading to ineffective programs for teachers and students. This seemingly holds true for my research findings. My teacher participants also expressed their dissatisfaction in this regard and demanded that the university should give more weight

to language courses, offer language teachers autonomy to make decisions on teaching issues, provide more budget and teaching positions to allow for expansion of Mandarin courses, raise the pay for language teaching assistants, and supply faster computers and fixed office space. It was clear that the teachers could identify their own resources of knowledge, reflect on them, and analyze them as means to communicate their desire for teaching support. This points to the importance of positioning ethnic minority teachers in ways that appreciate and empower their knowledge and experience, especially for the sake of professional development.

My participants also reported that they had made efforts to negotiate with the university administration about some of these issues mentioned above, but that unfortunately their requests were neither considered nor accommodated by the pertinent personnel. Their comments revealed the tension between the teaching faculty and the administrative staff, illustrated issues of power and how it played out in language education at the university, and suggested the need and directions for improving university policies and the administration's work ethics. I take the position that the university administration should treat teachers of every discipline equally and fairly; that they should not follow the university policies blindly and one-sidedly or claim to do so, but they should allow certain flexibility for the implementation of university policies, respect and accept teachers' reasonable requests and suggestions, and take proper measures to accommodate teachers' professional needs. Only in this way could they help maintain a racially, culturally, and ethnically diverse teaching force, and create an inclusive, equitable, and harmonious university culture, within which teachers would feel strongly motivated to ameliorate their work and to contribute their intellectual resources to the development of academic programs in the university. Only in this way would the promulgation of 'multiculturalism' in Canada not become empty talk but make a further move to actualization.

6.2.3. Implications for immigrant teachers

My study also has implications for my participants and other immigrant teachers of second languages in Canadian educational institutions and perhaps for immigrant teachers in the broader international context. As the study illustrates, the interviews

provided opportunities for the participants to reflect on their teaching careers and practices. With a small sample size, how my participants position themselves and feel positioned in their university might or might not be transferrable to second language immigrant teachers working in mainstream universities. But my research findings at least offer a glimpse into the status quo of some ethnic minority teachers in Canada, direct immigrant teachers to be aware of underlying dimensions and dynamics of teaching and learning in the Canadian context, and accord them a chance to reflect on their own lived experiences by comparison. If the problems reported by my study participants applied to immigrant language teachers in other universities, I would suggest immigrant teachers stand up for justice and negotiate their concerns with the university authorities; and if rejected, they could align with other supportive personnel, such as other teachers and staff, and even with societies like the Union and teacher associations, to make their sensible requests heard and fulfilled, through collective action. I believe that development of multiculturalism in Canada will benefit not only from immigrant teachers' efforts to foster the growth of Canadian students, but also from university authorities' efforts to hear immigrant teachers' voices and resolve their issues.

In addition, how my participants negotiated their roots and routes in their routines may be instructive for other second language immigrant teachers. My research with the teacher participants inclines me to putting forward such a proposition: immigrant teachers need to maintain a good balance between their roots and routes in their teaching as well as in their personal interactions at the workplace. Holding onto one's roots obstinately, regardless of a changed situation, could exert a negative impact on one's teaching effectiveness. Imaginably, the teacher-student relationship would hardly remain harmonious if a Mandarin teacher insisted on asserting his/her authority over the class, requesting students to obey Chinese cultural ways due to the language they are learning, or even finding faults with the students who behave in the way they normally behave in the Canadian culture. Thus, I subscribe to one participant's opinion that immigrant teachers should monitor the effect of their roots on their teaching to avoid possible impairment to relationship with students and should focus more attention on their routes — adjusting their teaching philosophies and pedagogies to help students achieve optimum learning outcomes.

6.3. Limitations of the study

In this thesis, I have primarily investigated the five teachers' thoughts, comments, and practices within a limited period of time. Yet the complexity of my collected data was already so daunting that I feel I have analyzed them only in a surface sense. While I hope that this focused examination has allowed me to unpack some of the richness and intricacy of teacher identity I endeavored to explore, the emphasis on several interviews and observations alone may be seen as a limitation of the study, since what people say in an interview about themselves is constructed in a particular way for a particular social setting, and what they do in an observed session is also a construction that may or may not be representative of their usual practices. In Omoniyi's (2006) words, "The distinct identity categories which we often talk about only exist as discreet units that we imagine for convenience of reckoning. In reality, people, places, and things may be constructed and projected in multiple and dynamic ways" (p. 30). In my future research, I would make efforts to examine cases from more perspectives and follow up on them for a longer time if the situation allows.

Besides, some of the interview questions, such as the issue on collegial relationship, were rather sensitive topics to the participants, two of whom actually showed apprehension about disclosure of their private thoughts in their interviews. To my understanding, it was because they tended to see me as an insider who they thought could easily spread the word around. Hence, the participants might have concealed some of their true feelings, understated their dissatisfaction with the workplace, or eluded discussing some sensitive issues. In this regard, the validity of the relevant data could be problematic.

I am also mindful that observation and interpretation of other people's accounts and behaviours always remains perspectival in any piece of research (Bordo, as cited in Day, 1999). The discussions and claims I make in the thesis could be only valid for the context that my research was situated in and privilege my voice as researcher as well. They might not represent fully what my participants were trying to drive at. In addition, I may have had ungrounded presumptions due to a similar background as my participants' and thus failed to ask the teachers for clarification of some of their remarks

at the time of conducting the interviews, which could result in my misinterpretations of their thoughts.

Also, how the participants were depicted in this report is inevitably associated with my stance and writing style. I am aware that my optimistic streak may make this piece of work sound too positive sometimes, touching inadequately upon the problems and inconsistencies that might consist in my study participants' remarks and practices. In future research, I hope to take account of participants' interpretations more fully when I create my representations. I should pay special attention to the contradictions and inconsistencies that occur in participants' words and practices and pursue the reasons behind such happenings, which may bring about a new vision to the theories I draw on or unfold a new research dimension for me to explore. I also need to take care not to confuse participants' voices with my own voice in my study report.

The quality of translation may also have some bearing on the accuracy of my representations. Having conducted the interviews mostly in Chinese, I translated the participants' words into English on my own when I wrote up the thesis. But the differences between Chinese language and English language made the work rather challenging. There are not always equivalents between Mandarin and English. Besides, Mandarin utterances are primarily context based. The subject of a sentence is often omitted in real conversations and context-based information is often substituted by anaphor because participants in a conversation normally assume their interlocutors know what they mean. If I had translated the participants' words only as they were originally, the texts would have been incomprehensible to English readers. Therefore, for the quotes of the interview data, I included my interpretation of the participants' implications in brackets. Despite this effort, I still have uncertainty about how close my translations are to the participants' intended meanings and how intelligible they are to readers of this thesis.

6.4. Recommendations for further research

Following an increasing trend towards globalization and transnationalism, questions about transnational and diasporic identities undoubtedly deserve greater

attention. Recent years have seen growing research into this field but the richness of cultural diversity in pluralistic countries, like Canada, remains to be further explored. I hope my work is fairly suggestive and points to a promising direction for identity research.

According to Tastsoglou (2013), the findings of contemporary empirical research on ethnic identity in Canada fall into two categories: those that identify some of the most important factors that affect immigrant identities making among specific minority groups in Canada, and the content and parameters of such identities at specific moments in the lives of specific ethnic groups. My study appeared to touch upon some facets of both categories. The two notions examined in this study — ‘roots’ and ‘routes’ — were two factors of my focus that could contribute to immigrant teachers’ identity making. Roots relates to retention of ethnocultural identities whereas routes lean towards identity reconstruction occurring in the immigration process. This study captured moments the two factors interacted with each other and indicated when, how, and possibly why the teachers preserved or altered their identities.

Certainly, there are many other factors that play an important role in affecting immigrants’ identities, which I could explore in my future research. This study revealed that the youngest teacher participant seemed to favour changes more than the other participants. Hence, age of arrival in Canada could be a factor to look into. My participants actually mentioned not only this factor but also factors like length of time since migration, the proportion of friends from the same ethnic background, the economic and political development in the home country, citizenship status, and visible minority status. These factors all likely contribute to immigrants’ self identifications and merit further investigation. Moreover, it would be also meaningful to probe into the links between ethnic identity and such factors as political participation, economic status, language use, religion, gender, and class within specific ethnic groups, which are valuable to those interested in developing strategies to facilitate the incorporation of immigrants into their host society (Tastsoglou, 2013; Walters, Phythian, & Anisef, 2006).

The study herein described four teachers from Mainland China and one from Hong Kong. Rummens (2000) suggested that intra-group and inter-group dynamics (in

an ethnic sense) require more consideration and further analyses. To answer this call and also develop fuller understandings of Chinese teacher identity, I would like to conduct comparative studies among different groups of teachers in future, on the basis of my current study. Possible intra-group studies include comparisons among mainland Chinese teachers, Taiwanese teachers, and Hong Kong teachers who are teaching in Canada, those between immigrant teachers from China and teachers of Chinese ancestry raised in countries outside China (e.g. Canadian-born Chinese), those between immigrant Chinese teachers and Chinese teachers sponsored by Chinese government, those between Chinese teachers teaching Mandarin in Canada and Chinese teachers teaching foreigners Mandarin in China, and those between immigrant Chinese teachers of Mandarin and immigrant Chinese teachers of other subjects. Possible inter-group studies may involve comparisons between Mandarin teachers of Chinese ancestry versus Mandarin teachers of non-Chinese ancestry (e.g. Caucasian Mandarin teachers), those between immigrant Chinese teachers of Mandarin and ethnic minority teachers of other languages, and those between immigrant Chinese language teachers and Canadian-born Anglophone language teachers. Through these studies, I would probably identify commonalities and distinctions between various groups of teachers and thus form a deeper understanding of teacher identity, especially that of teachers of Chinese origin. Furthermore, a longitudinal study on intra-group immigrant generations would also allow greater opportunities to track ethnic identity changes over time (Tastsoglou, 2013).

Last but not least, a review of theoretical developments regarding identity formation, identity construction and negotiation, and syntheses of research findings in these regards would be tremendously helpful to researchers and policy makers alike (Rummens, 2000), especially those concerning specific ethnocultural groups. I feel there is a great urgency for such literature because despite an extensive literature search, I could not find even the total number of ethnic Chinese teachers teaching in Canadian universities or a rich collection of works that address identity issues of these teachers. Moreover, upgrading the effectiveness of methodology in identity research could be another avenue for future research (Omoniyi & White, 2006).

6.5. Concluding remarks

Educational institutions in Canada have become, more than ever, venues where we encounter diverse cultures and experiences. The voices of all teachers, especially those of ethnic minority background, whose voices are often silenced, need to be heard. The purpose of this study was to portray lived experiences of immigrant Chinese teachers who teach at the crossroads of cultures, who strive to establish a sense of professional identity, and who claim a physical space within the Canadian educational landscape.

What emerged from this study was a tapestry of conversations that allowed me into several minority teachers' personal thoughts about themselves and about their relevant 'others' and that acknowledged the realities of minority language teaching in an urban area such as Greater Vancouver. The stories of the five immigrant Chinese teachers reported in this study speak to the need for reconceptualizing "teaching and learning as a social phenomenon that is fundamentally linked to a sense of identity and self-worth within culturally diverse school populations" (Feuerverger, 1997, p.51). Thanks to the insights I gained from many theorists and scholars, I was able to delve into nuanced perspectives on these teachers' identities and to capture the richness of detail that their narratives unfolded. As the study shows, it becomes imperative to frame their attitudes and practices within the context they are located in and to appreciate the linguistic, the cultural, and the structural knowledge that they bring with them, in order to understand their identifications and needs. I side with Lee and Bang's (2011) opinion that minority teachers' stories would direct our attention to listen, to notice and appreciate, and to act upon their voices, which may "help increase the visibility of minority teachers and minority programs, and help us understand diversity in teacher education as well as pose questions that would help redefine and stretch the definitions of professional development and teacher education" (p. 394).

In the research process, my participants and I became engaged in the development of personal and professional identity through relational storytelling. Our interactions across this inquiry accorded an opportunity for my participants to learn about their cultural selves and, at the meantime, for me to learn about my own. When I asked

the teachers how they negotiated between their roots and routes, I was also considering the impact of these two aspects on my life trajectory. Applying the notions of roots and routes to my own lived experience, I am inclined to think that my roots teach me to persevere in accomplishing life goals and compromise in interactions with others, while my routes teach me to examine everyday happenings not only in perspective, but also critically and analytically. To me, the negotiation of my roots and routes experiences more harmonious moments than conflicting moments. I feel proud of my roots but meanwhile celebrate my routes. On one hand, leaving my roots behind for the time being does not diminish my admiration for my home culture that a long and uninterrupted Chinese history brings about; on the other hand, pursuing my routes offers me opportunities to become more cosmopolitan-minded and more fascinated by diverse cultures that our world presents to us. I am very grateful for the learning and teaching experience I am now undergoing in Canada because it shapes me into a more well-rounded person and fledgling scholar. Looking back to my PhD journey, especially to the thesis writing process, I suddenly discover the new meaning of “PHD”, which I interpret as “Probing” (the research), “Honing” (the wording), and “Digging” (the finding).

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Appendix A.

Ethics Approval

 SFU	SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY THINKING OF THE WORLD	 ORE Office of Research Ethics Balancing Research with Ethical Considerations
H. Weinberg, Ph.D. Director, Office of Research Ethics Simon Fraser University		8888 University Drive Multi-Tenant Facility Burnaby, B.C. Canada , V4A 1S6 778 782 6593

Expedited Approval

Date	File	Approval	Principal Investigator
8 May 2010	[2010s0312]	Approved	Jiang, Yujia
Risk	Title		Start
Minimal	Exploring the Labyrinth of Identity: A Case Study of Immigrant Chinese Teachers of Mandarin in a Canadian University		8 May 2010
SFU Status	Department / School	Supervisor	End
Graduate Student	Education	Toohey, Kelleen	8 May 2013

Hello Yujia,

Your application has been categorized as 'Minimal Risk' and approved by the Director, Office of Research Ethics in accordance with University Policy r20.01. (<http://www.sfu.ca/policies/research/r20.01.htm>).

The Research Ethics Board reviews and may amend decisions made independently by the Director, Chair or Deputy Chair at the regular monthly meeting of the Board.

Please acknowledge receipt of this Notification of Status by email to dore@sfu.ca and include the file number as shown above as the first item in the Subject Line.

You should get a letter shortly. Note: All letters are sent to the PI addressed to the Department, School or Faculty for Faculty and Graduate Students. Letters to Undergraduate Students are sent to their Faculty Supervisor.

Good luck with the project,

Hal Weinberg, Ph.D.
Director, Office of Research Ethics.

Hal Weinberg, Ph.D.
Director, Office of Research Ethics

Appendix B.

Amendment Approval



SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
THINKING OF THE WORLD

H. Weinberg, Ph.D.
Director, Office of Research Ethics
Simon Fraser University

8888 University Drive
Multi-Tenant Facility
Burnaby, B.C. Canada, V4A 1S6
778 782 6593



Amendment Approval

Date	File	Status	Principal Investigator		
18 Aug. 2011	[2010s0312]	Approved	Jiang, Yujia		
Title					
"Root "or "Route" A case study of immigrant Chinese teachers of Mandarin in a Canadian University.					
SFU Position		Department / School		Supervisor	
Graduate Student		Education		Toohey, Kelleen	

Hello Yujia,

The following amendment has been approved by the Director of the Office of Research Ethics in accordance with R20.01 Senate Policy. You should get a letter shortly. If there are any questions please contact dore@sfu.ca.

Thanks and Regards
Hal Weinberg
Director, Office of Research Ethics

-
1. Change in title to: "Root "or "Route" A case study of immigrant Chinese teachers of Mandarin in a Canadian University.
 2. Change in Schedule of interviews.
 3. Changes in Study Details as documented in correspondence of 15 Aug. 2011

Appendix C.

Consent Form

**Faculty of Education
Simon Fraser University**

Simon Fraser University
8888 University Drive
Burnaby, B.C. V5A 1S6
Web: <http://www.educ.sfu.ca>

**SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
Informed Consent By Participants in a Research Study**

The University and those conducting this research study subscribe to the ethical conduct of research and to the protection at all times of the interests, comfort, and safety of participants. This research is being conducted under permission of the Simon Fraser Research Ethics Board. The chief concern of the Board is for the health, safety, and psychological well being of research participants. Should you wish to obtain information about your rights as a participant in research, or about the responsibilities of researchers, or if you have any questions, concerns, or complaints about the manner in which you were treated in this study, please contact the Director, Office of Research Ethics by email at [REDACTED] or phone at [REDACTED]. Your signature on this form will signify that you understand the procedures, possible risks, and benefits of this research study; that you have received an adequate opportunity to consider the information in the documents describing the study; and that you voluntarily agree to participate in the study.

Any information that is obtained during this study will be kept confidential to the full extent permitted by the law. Knowledge of your identity is not required. Collected data will be kept in a locked cabinet and all digital data will be stored on an external hard-drive in a secure location and kept for 4 years after the completion of the study.

Project Title: Exploring the Labyrinth of Identity: A Case Study of Immigrant Chinese Teachers of Mandarin in a Canadian University

Application Number: 2010s0312

Duration: March 2010 – December 2010

Principle Investigator: Yujia Jiang

Investigator Department: Faculty of Education

Project Description:

This research project intends to examine how current conceptions of ‘identity’ help us understand the experiences of immigrant Chinese teachers of Mandarin in Canadian universities. More specifically, it will investigate how their self-perceptions as teachers have changed since coming to Canada, how they negotiate the tension between their ‘roots’ and ‘routes’, how they believe this negotiation impacts upon the pedagogies they use with students and the particular kinds of interactions they have in their workplace, and what expectations they come up with for their career.

Procedures, risks and benefits

Benefits of the Study:

This study is expected to provide a more nuanced understanding of how immigrant Chinese teachers in Canada negotiate the tension during their adaptation to the new sociocultural environment, and possibly encourage university administrators and educational policymakers to be more responsive and accommodating to the specific needs of immigrant minority teachers.

Procedures:

I will be conducting one-on-one interviews with Chinese teachers of Mandarin and making observations in their classes. Classroom observations will take place once a month, 2 hours each time. I will take field notes in the observational process. With each teacher, I will schedule three interviews in the teacher’s office. Each interview will last for 45-50 minutes, audio-recorded into a digital recorder. The initial interview attempts to gather the information about their life histories, struggles and strategies for adaptation to their career in Canada, and their goals in a Mandarin class. The midway interview, along with the classroom observations, will explore whether and how they incorporate their self-definitions as immigrant Chinese teachers into their teaching practices and particular interactions with their students and colleagues. The course-end interview will inquire about teachers’ expectations of their career and of desirable support from their workplace, suggestions to other Chinese teachers, and reflections on their experience as the informants. After transcribing all the interview data, I will send the transcripts to the participant who provided the relevant information for checking of the accuracy of my translation and transcription.

Risks: I do not foresee any risks to participants as a result of taking part in this study. Participants’ refusal to participate or withdrawal from the research will have no adverse effect on their employment or evaluation.

Thank you for allowing me to involve you in this study!

Your signature on this form will signify that you have received this document, which describes the possible risks, benefits and procedures of this research study, and that you have received an adequate opportunity to consider the information in the document.

I certify that I understand the procedures to be used in this study and I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time, and that any complaints about the study may be brought to the Director, Office of Research Ethics Dr. Hal Weinberg by email at [redacted] or phone at [redacted]. I understand the risks and contributions of my participation in this study and agree to participate:

Anonymity and Confidentiality:

Any report or publication of the research will change participants' names to assure confidentiality and anonymity.

For any questions about this research and for obtaining copies of the results of this study, upon its completion, please contact the principal investigator of this study: Yujia Jiang, [redacted], all found at Faculty of Education, 8888 University Drive, Burnaby, B.C., Canada V5A 1S6.

I certify that I understand the procedures to be used and that I have been able to receive clarification of any aspects of this study about which I have had questions. I have read, understand and agree with the above, and have been offered a copy for my records.

First and last name of participant	Phone and/or email Contact

Signature	Witness (signature):

Date

--

Appendix D.

Interview Questions to Study Participants

1. How long have you been teaching Mandarin Chinese? Do you enjoy your current teaching of Mandarin? Why?
2. In what way do you try to teach Chinese culture while you teach Chinese language? Could you give some examples?
3. In your opinion, what are the roles of teachers perceived in China and in Canada respectively?
4. How does the way students treat teachers in China differ from the way students treat teachers in Canada? How do these differences make you feel as a teacher in these two countries respectively?
5. Is there any difference in the way you interacted with students when you were in China and the way you interact with students while teaching in Canada? Could you give some examples?
6. The British sociologist Stuart Hall suggests that immigrants normally negotiate the tension between their 'roots' and 'routes'. 'Roots' are about 'where we came from' and 'routes' are about 'what we might become'. So what are your 'roots' and what are your 'routes'? How does the relationship between 'root' and 'route' feel to you?
7. Do you enjoy working in this university? Why? Is there anything you feel uncomfortable with in your workplace?
8. How do you feel about your relationship with your colleagues? Do you receive any support from them? For example?
9. What support do you think your workplace should provide for Mandarin teachers?
10. What is your ultimate goal of teaching for your students?
11. Did you do anything to gain students' feedback on your teaching? How did you react to their feedback? How did their feedback affect the alteration of your teaching?
12. For you, Mandarin teaching is to spread Chinese language and culture or to make contributions to Canada? Which aspect are you more focused on?
13. Do you feel comfortable about this interview? What experience has this interview possibly given to you? Is there anything else you want to share or discuss?

Appendix E.

Observational Protocol

1. **Date:** _____ **Duration:** _____
2. **Location:** _____
3. **Teacher:** _____
4. **Describe site** (details: type of room/building, lighting, atmosphere, odor, walls, posters/decoration, condition of cleanliness, noise level, ceiling height, windows, facilities, etc.)

5. **Layout of the classroom** (number of students, arrangement of facilities, location of the teacher and students)
Draw diagram of layout here

6. **Describe race/gender/age make-up of students**

7. **Classroom activities**

At the beginning of class (greetings, in what language, T's tones, facial expressions, gestures, who's arrived late, T's reaction to the late student)

In the middle of class (how cooperative Ss are to the T and others, often talk in what language, Ss' seriousness in learning---follow instructions, ask questions, request, complain, who stands out, Ss' attitudes towards teachers, T's reaction to Ss' attitudes, T's manner when answering questions and when walking around to help Ss with learning tasks)

At the end of class (the T's manner in wrapping up and giving assignments, class atmosphere--Ss hurry to leave or stay down to talk to the T, how the teacher interacts with the Ss who stay down to ask questions)

8. Is language teaching mixed with culture teaching? How?

9. Is Chinese culture compared with Canadian culture? How?

