

Original Paper

The Construction of an Identity as “ESL Teacher” in Classrooms and Tutorials

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Abstract

The analysis in this study, using a data set consisting of 20 teacher-student meetings in two settings of formal classroom sessions and once-a-week tutorials, examines how ESL teachers in China construct their identities, by considering the use of person-referencing practices, speech acts, language selection and language styles. The results of the analysis are discussed with reference to the construction of different types of ESL teacher identities in these two settings.

Keywords

ESL teacher, identity construction, person-referencing, speech act, language selection, style

1. Introduction

This research paper draws upon ideas from social constructionist approaches to identities. Everyday discursive practices not only include the most personal aspects of people when they are at home or with their friends, but also relate to the roles they take on with another in particular institutions. Identity construction is a process that is situated in the individual, the social interaction and social institutions. In this sense, identities are not seen as fixed natural properties, rather they are forming into shape over time and space through discursive and other social practices. A number of studies have observed that individuals can construct identities in the process of discursive practices and have explored particular identity aspects in isolation to how they are co-articulated in talk-in-interaction (e.g., Holmes, 2005; Graham, 2007).

The identity of being an ESL teacher has many facets, and the present research focuses on the identity constructed by the ESL teachers in the formal two-hour classroom sessions and the once-a-week office-hour tutorials from a contrastive perspective. The collected data are all from the discursive practices between the ESL teachers and the English majors. Generally speaking, the ESL teachers are

older, and more experienced than the students, who took on something of a substitute parent role. The presumed relationship between an ESL teacher and an English major is, especially in a collectivist country like China, hierarchically based with the teacher taking responsibility for passing on his/her knowledge and experience to the student. The organizational socialization process involves the imparting of knowledge and guidance to the students, which is added with another layer of identity-work as the discursive practices concerning the relationship between an ESL teacher and an English major, to a very large degree, involves the usage of English. Helping the English majors become fluent and competent language users, being able to access multiple language resources and equip them with high level of language abilities is the major responsibility of the ESL teacher and the vital identity he/she is trying to enact.

Despite the extensive literature on teachers' identity construction, very little research has been undertaken on the discursive enactment of ESL teacher's identity construction in a non-English-speaking country.

The present research examines how the college English teachers in China construct their identities through their discursive practices. More specifically, the research question is addressed as follows:

To what extent do the institutional goals, like what is practiced in classrooms and tutorials, influence an ESL teacher's discursive enactment of his/her identity as a teacher when interacting formally or informally with his/her student?

2. Literature Review

Research on the identity construction of teachers has been discussed in sociology, psychology, pedagogy, anthropology, linguistics and so on since early 20th century. Researches on teachers' identity construction in sociology and pedagogy mainly study the definition and characteristics of teacher identity (Johnson, 2003; Varghese, 2006; Richards, 2008; Xu, 2013), relationship between teacher identity and teachers' professional development (Alsup, 2006; Tsui, 2007; Ajayi, 2011; Wu, 2008), the influencing factors and construction of teachers' identity (Phan, 2007; Trent, 2010; Sutherland & Markauskaite, 2012; Gaudelli & Ousley, 2009; Hao, 2010) and so on. Now, the research perspectives become more colorful. The focuses on teachers' identity are gradually shifted from static construction of teachers' identity in a particular time to dynamic changes of teachers' identity construction in a period and from external and social factors to psychological and cognitive factors that influence the teachers' identity construction. A number of studies on this topic select novice teachers as research subjects (e.g., Volkman & Anderson, 1998; Roberts, 2000; Flores & Day, 2006; Trent, 2012; Geng, 2014), ranging from kindergarten teachers (Wang & Yang, 2011) to college teachers (Tsui, 2007), mainly analyzing the dilemma novice teachers facing and factors influencing their identity construction process. Professional identities of teachers have been a main focus of these studies (Briggs, 2007; Cohen, 2008; Lyhty, 2013), primarily involving the construction process of teachers' professional identities to examine influences on their professional development in professional roles (Urzua &

Vasquez, 2008), characteristics (Beijaard, Verloop, & Vermunt, 2000) and factors (Alsup, 2006; Braine, 2010; Richards, 2010). Both personal and contextual factors exert a profound influence on the identity construction process of teachers. In addition, the construction of teachers' identity has been studied basing on different theories, such as cross-culture perspective (Gu & Benson, 2014), narrative analysis (SØreide, 2006), conversation analysis method (Lan, 2013), adaptation theory (Xu & Chen, 2015) and so on. Besides, online teaching identity construction has been a new trend with the popularization of modern educational technology (Chai, 2010; Wu, 2015).

With the growing tendency towards EFL research, the study of English teachers' identity is becoming a focus issue. Previous studies are mainly about native language teachers' identities (Clarke, 2008; Barkhuizen, 2017) and some are about issues of identities nonnative English-speaking teachers facing in English speaking countries (Figueiredo, 2011) and their reconstructing of their identities (Mawhinney, 1997). Furthermore, a number of studies have been carried out to discuss the construction of EFL teachers' identities in countries where English is not their native language (Huang, 2017), mainly clarifying from specific classroom teaching activity (Geng, 2014), probing into difficulties EFL teachers have during their teaching and some further illustrating challenges these EFL teachers is facing. However, few studies of teachers' dynamic identity construction by using specific discursive practice in non-English-speaking-countries has been conducted, especially in China. English teachers face the most significant identity conflict when they teach in English class. On the one hand, their preliminary task is to equip their students with high lever of language ability; on the other hand, teachers are supposed to construct equal relationship with their students at the same time. The different facets of teachers' identities are converted by specific discourse practice. Therefore, based on Tracy's identity theory, the study examines how Chinese college English teachers construct their identifies through specific discursive practices and to what extent do the institutional goals influence the way that they construct their identities so as to find more details about Chinese EFL teachers identity construction.

3. Data Collection

The data set is made up of 20 teacher-student meetings in two settings: formal classroom sessions and once-a-week tutorials. The subjects are four groups of ESL teachers and English majors with one group of a teacher and his undergraduate students and three groups of mentors with their mentees. With more than 20 years of research experience in the field of pragmatics and conversation analysis, we have gained extensive knowledge in data collection and data transcription, and we are able to ensure the quality of recording "authentic" interaction in specific situations. The original recorded materials and the transcribed data are then presented to the participants and their permission is asked for usage in the present study. All the information concerning the participants and the institutions are given pseudonyms for confidentiality purposes.

Table 1. Number of English Teacher-English Majors Meetings

Classroom sessions	Tutorials
Group 1-6 hours	
Group 2-4 hours	Group 2-6 hours
Group 3-4 hours	Group 3-6 hours
Group 4-4 hours	Group 4-6 hours
Total -18 hours	Total -18 hours

4. Analytical Approach

This is a qualitative research aiming to study how the college English teachers in China with Chinese as their native language construct for themselves various desirable identities through their discursive practices both in formal classroom sessions and less formal once-a-week tutorials. The discursive practices of the English teachers are chosen because they are intrinsically interesting: they may refer to the person-referencing practices; they may focus on the topics that are chosen; they may focus on the speech acts employed; they may reference sets of features such as dialect or attitude, which are all worthy of closer investigation with English and Chinese as working languages at the same time.

The reciprocal relationship between discursive practices and identity is explained by Karen Tracy's complementary views of the rhetorical and cultural perspectives. A rhetorical perspective assumes that people talk in particular ways in order to accomplish desired identities (or avoid disvalued ones). Talk is presumed to be instrumental and goal-oriented, and people are presumed to be strategic and purposeful (Karen, 2013). As active agents in daily communications, people are consciously or unconsciously making choices about what to say and what not to say so as to achieve certain rhetorical purposes. Some of their choices of talking will help them build positive identities—for example, confident, trustworthy, knowledgeable, warm-hearted, etc.—whereas other choices of talking will be judged as negative to their identities—for example, arrogant, self-centered, impolite, immoral, etc. Therefore, the rhetorical perspective focuses on how the discursive practices people choose to enact shape their identities in one way rather than another. However, communicative choices are deeply culture-loaded, which is generally ignored or to a large degree, downplayed by the rhetorical perspective. The imbalance is righted by the cultural perspective, which focuses on the fact that groups of people make choices about their discursive practices in patterned ways—as what is pointed out by Dell Hymes in his “S-P-E-A-K-I-N-G” model which represents the elements of cultural scenes as in Setting, Participants, Ends, Act sequence, Key, Instrumentalities, Norms and Genre (Hymes, 1974). The cultural perspective understands why people choose to talk in one way rather than another by taking all these frames into consideration. In order to understand how everyday talk works, we need to strike a balance in between the two perspectives. As the data in the present research reveal, the rhetorical choices that the English teachers make can be attributed to their master identities and their

different identities as are shown in the different setting of classrooms and tutorials can be perceived from a rhetorical perspective as well. In her book, “*Talk’s building Blocks and Complex Discourse Practices*”, Tracy elaborates upon how different discursive practices do identity identity-work and considers how some set of preexisting works to shape the unfolding of the focal practice (Karen, 2013).

Table 2. Karen Tracy’s Analytical Model of Discourse and Identity

Rhetorical Perspective	Cultural Perspective
Person-referencing practices	Style
Speech acts	Stance
The sound (and sight) of Talk	Narratives
Interaction structures	Genre
Language selection	

5. Analysis and Results

5.1 Person-Referencing Practices

Person-referencing practices of teachers in both formal classroom sessions and once-a-week tutorials are linked to different facets of ESL teachers’ identities. Tracy expounds at length different person-referencing practices, including marital names, personal address and group-level terms referring to ethnicity and gender (Tracy, 2013). The choice of these different person-referencing practices is a way for ESL teachers to highlight diverse facets of their identities. With reference to Tracy’s classification, this section mainly analyzed how personal address and names ESL teachers and students use shape ESL teachers’ identities.

5.1.1 Personal Address

Personal address is the label we give to terms used to refer to a person in his/her presence. They include five main types: proper names, kinship terms, titles, nicknames and endearments, and second-person pronouns (Karen, 2013). Kinship terms, nicknames and endearments anchoring the informal and close end and usually used between family members are hardly ever used during teaching whether in formal classroom sessions or once-a-week tutorials, where the relationship between teachers and students are supposed to be formal. The ESL teachers in China use person-referencing practices both in Chinese and English at their command, which are linked to different facets of ESL teachers’ identities. English titles have been a common choice for students to address their teachers in formal classroom sessions where the working language is English and students are usually asked to choose typical English title terms based on gender and combined with the teachers’ Chinese last name to address their teachers (Mr.+LN, Miss.+LN, Mrs.+LN), for example, Mr. Wang, Miss. Zhang and Mrs. Li (based on marital status). By the selection of titles in English, a natural and formal teaching environment is created and at the same time the formal and respectable identities are also created.

While in once-a-week tutorials, the main purpose is to answer the questions students facing in the process of study and guide them towards a better mastering of academic skills. Therefore, in the tutorials, the ESL teachers mainly communicate with their students in Chinese so as to explain abstract knowledge much more clearly and encourage students to be actively involved in the discussions. It is natural for students to address their teachers in Chinese than English in this aspect. “Nin(您)”, as a consequential second-person pronoun in Chinese, plays a significant role in daily communication and is widely used by younger generation to show respect for parents, teachers, leaders and other elders. “Nin” conveys how students see themselves in relation to their teachers, the option of which in tutorials fits the teaching institution and conveys students’ respect for teachers and better reflects the important role of teachers deserving of more polite respect. From the choices of these students, it can be concluded that the relationships teachers have with students is warm and equal, and teachers’ personal identities are also constructed indirectly as respectable professors.

5.1.2 Names

Teachers don’t always use the same naming practices when they address the students.

In China, selecting an English name is becoming more and more common in English classes for students of different grades. Different from primary and middle school ESL teachers, who assign English names to their students, college ESL teachers tend to provide students with background knowledge before naming. Based on these background information, these English majors choose their English names by themselves. The selection of English names is mainly carried out by ESL teachers during students’ first or second year study in formal classroom sessions so as to be better in line with the context and facilitate students’ complete understanding of the naming culture in western countries. Group 1 consists of 20 sophomores in a formal classroom session. According to the name list of group 1, there are mainly four types of names, three types of which are elaborated in Tracy’s introduction to names. Names evoke master identities, have cultural qualities and are associated with personal qualities (Karen, 2013). The most common names these students choose are considered to be typical boys’ and girls’ names, such as Lucy, Mary, John and so on, which evokes their master identities-gender. The next popular choice is names of famous people, characters from the Bible, fairy tales, myths (Michael, Sarah, Alyssa, Grace), etc. The third kind of names students choose is related to their personality. Students may look up the meanings of a series of names they are interested in to find one best fitting his/her character (Austin, Charles, Shirley). A minority of students choose some nouns they are fond of whether concrete or abstract as their names (secret, apple, flower, monkey), which is unique and more popular among girls. On the basis of the different features of the English names listed above, it could be analyzed that the self-naming process constructs students’ identities unconsciously: The choice of a masculine or feminine name evoke students’ gender identity; The selection of typical characters’ names show students’ desire to be connected with these distinguished figures and to become someone they adore, which reflects the construction of relational identity; The third and fourth choices manifest the personal identities of these students. Personal identity is what in ordinary life we think of as

individuals' personality and character, and their attitudes about events, issues, and other people (Karen, 2013). English names reveal the positive character of student self: as honest, diligent, tactful or fun-loving. Simultaneously, ESL teachers enact their own identities as the students' naming process is under the guideline of them. And the ESL teacher in Group 1 is revealing two important facets of his personal identities of being an information provider and expert in the field. In some cases, ESL teachers address their students with their Chinese full names, indicating a formal relationship between them.

On the contrary, in tutorials, ESL teachers neither address their students with their English names nor their full names, instead, first name (FN) is a preferred form for almost all tutorials to address their students, which creates a friendly informality. In addition, nicknames and endearments usually used among friends, family and classmates are hardly ever used in formal classroom teaching. Within Chinese, names can be arrayed in a rough continuum of formality. Nicknames and endearments anchor the informal and close end, titles are at the formal end, and use of first names or last names falls somewhere in the middle. From this perspective, use of FN indicates a close and less formal relationship between the two parties, as is described by Tracy in the following figure.

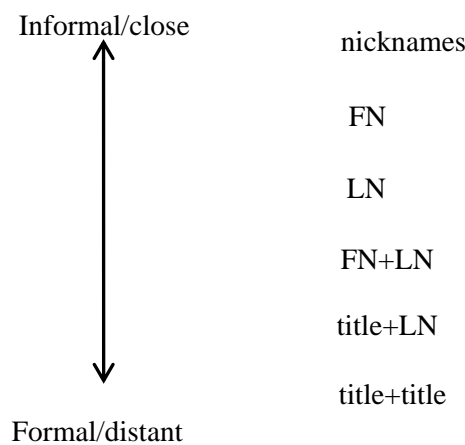


Figure 1. Distance Continuum and Likely Address Forms

By and large, teaching is replete with references to teachers and students, thus person-referencing practices are not something to be taken lightly, which reflects the identity construction process of an ESL teacher in classrooms and tutorials dynamically.

5.2 Speech Acts

People perform social actions through talk, in turn the speech acts they perform also present and construct who they are, what kind of personality they have and what their stance towards other people or things is. People build their identities and maintain their interpersonal relationships with others through various speech acts and at the same time their preexisting identities also influence what kind of speech acts they are going to choose and in which characteristic style. Then, what identities do ESL teachers construct through their various speech acts in formal classroom sessions and once-a-week tutorials and how do their preexisting roles influence their speech act performances?

In China, teachers are always expected to be models of academic study and virtue. People think that teachers should be knowledgeable, kind, friendly and good at communicating with students so that they can get better understanding of students' thoughts and problems in courses. Being ESL teachers, these preexisting expectations of teachers' role in Chinese culture decide that the main responsibility in both formal classroom sessions and once-a-week tutorials is to present and illustrate knowledge about the language they teach and the main speech acts ESL teachers perform in those contexts should be providing information, illustrating, greeting, questioning, advising and so on. In the data we collected, those are in fact the main speech acts ESL teachers perform in formal classroom sessions and once-a-week tutorials.

However, identity is not given by other people or built according to expectations from society totally. Identity construction is a dynamic process in which communicating parties interact and negotiate with each other and shape their own and others' identities. Teacher identity is also dynamically constructed in their interaction with students. In the beginning of formal classroom sessions and once-a-week tutorials, ESL teacher always greet students, ask and evaluate their performances about the homework. During the classroom sessions and once-a-week tutorials, ESL teachers in those groups mainly explain and illustrate the course content, pose questions, clear up confusions from students and organize students to discuss the course content. Through these speech acts, those ESL teachers in the data construct themselves as knowledgeable in instructing and authoritative in controlling the class.

Although there exist lots of similarities, there are still big differences in ESL teachers' identity construction in formal classroom sessions and once-a-week tutorials. Firstly, the data show that in formal classroom sessions, ESL teachers mainly choose short greetings like "Good morning, boys and girls", "Hello, everybody" in the beginning of the lessons while in once-a-week tutorials the ESL teachers in group 2, 3 and 4 usually choose some small talks about interesting and hot news just happened to start the lessons. Through those small talks, the ESL teachers in these three groups usually get better understanding of their students and build themselves as kind and friendly, which is always more helpful for intimate relationship between them and also good for improving the teaching effect and students' learning interest. Then, during the process of teaching, different from the serious speech acts in formal classroom sessions, in once-a-week tutorials, a less formal and more relaxed context, those ESL teachers in group 2, 3, 4 often choose discussions and debates with students in classroom discussions, make themselves as one member in student groups, which builds them more like a friend and participator than a leader of the class and shortens the social distance between teacher and students. Besides, they play jokes more often in tutorials than in formal classroom sessions while students are absent-minded, upset or anxious. Those small jokes put the teachers and students in the equal position, bridge the gap between them and help teachers establish harmonious relationship with his students. Finally, from the data we can see that while changing the teaching context from formal classroom sessions to once-a-week tutorials, the ESL teachers' role has moved from guides and evaluators to academic partners and intimate friends of students through shifts from speech acts of questioning,

evaluating to discussing, joking, confabulating with students and shifts of their ways of talking.

Tracy has proposed that the speech acts a person selects, as well as his or her characteristic style, is key to how people build personal identities (Karen, 2013). In formal classroom sessions, ESL teachers usually choose brief and routine greetings, less interactions with students, more illustrations of course content and take more and longer turns during the lessons. They often order students to do what they ask in such a formal context, not to negotiate with them, through which their personal identities are assumed to be assertive, superior, and higher in status and the relationship between them and students will be alienated. However, when the same ESL teachers in group 2, 3, 4 participate in once-a-week tutorials, they often choose more informal speech acts like discussing together with students, joking and some small talks as well as humorous style while teaching and instructing, which builds them as kind, amiable and easygoing.

5.3 Language Selection

The ESL teachers who teach English as a second language in China have both Chinese and English at their command, then what identity do they construct by choosing one language over the other? How does the language(s) they use link to their identities?

The data in this study show that having two languages at the ESL teacher's disposal provides them with more resources in different teaching institutions. They choose to speak either Chinese or English in a certain context or switch back and forth between languages. Switching from English to Chinese or from Chinese to English (code-switching) is a way for them to highlight diverse facets of their identities. The code-switching of ESL teachers not only occurs in the formal classroom sessions and less formal tutorials, but also occurs within the same utterance, which enables them to present themselves in particular desired ways and to resist others altercasting them in negative or undesired ways. Then what identities are made salient under these two teaching environments and what kinds of discursive activities are associated with them?

The total lengths of one group's formal classroom sessions and the other three groups' formal classroom sessions and less formal tutorial are recorded. Then the total amount of time spent on English and Chinese are calculated respectively. Table 3 shows the percentage of time spent on these two languages under the two language teaching situations.

Table 3. Percentage of Time Spent on English and Chinese in Classroom Sessions and Tutorials

	Classroom sessions		Tutorials	
	English	Chinese	English	Chinese
Group 1	81	19		
Group 2	90.5	9.5	35	65
Group 3	91.5	8.5	25.5	74.5
Group 4	95.5	4.5	39	61

The special environment of ESL teaching results in code switching over the course of interaction between the participants. Group 1 recording is from the formal classroom session between an ESL teacher and his sophomores on the course of “Advanced English”, which mainly centers around the detailed analysis of the language points, comprehension of the content and the appreciation of the writing style of each essay. Compared with the recordings from Group 2, 3 and 4, which are on the same course but for juniors, the percentage of time spent on English for the ESL teacher in Group 1 is apparently lower. The relational identities of ESL teacher-sophomore and ESL teacher-junior help account for this discrepancy. A year ahead in academic achievement has made the English majors of juniors to be linguistically superior concerning their mastery of the English abilities, which sets higher standards for their ESL teachers. Therefore, the relational identities that the ESL teachers prefer to enact before the juniors would be of a more formal nature—being erudite, knowledgeable, professional, academic, etc. is what is desired of them and using English as the working language during most of the classroom sessions is generally required of and practiced by them. Different from teachers of other branches of humanities or social sciences, the personal identity of an ESL teacher as an expert in the field is mainly manifested in his/her language abilities of the target language, thus the choice of language is the main rhetorical perspective to reveal their major identity as an ESL teacher.

The reason that less time is spent on English for the ESL teacher of Group 1 than the other three groups is not only because that he spends less time in producing long stretches of discourse in English than the other three ESL teachers, but also because he code-switches in single utterances more often than the other. One typical example is shown as follows:

Ex 1: (from Group 1, classroom session)

1. ESL teacher: In what sense (.) is these metaphor different from the
2. ones that we've seen before?
3. (0.6)
4. Student A: Err (0.3) there is only one tenor, but two (.) er (.) two=
5. ESL teacher: =VEHICLES, 喻体↓ right? So::(.) It's a sustained
6. metaphor. 博喻. Is that right?

The similar kinds of conversations also occur in the recordings of the other three groups, but the ESL teachers in these groups do not code-switch as often as the ESL teacher in Group 1 does within utterances. The code-switching within one utterance is mainly used to explain special terms, to facilitate understanding, etc., which may not be necessary for the other groups as the juniors are all familiar with these background knowledge. Therefore, the ESL teacher in Group is revealing one important facet of his identities of being the facilitator of knowledge and language helper for the students.

The more obvious discrepancy in language selection seems to happen between the two situations in which the language teaching occurs: in classrooms and at tutorials. The participants of Group 2, 3 and 4 choose to speak Chinese more than English during tutorials, which is quite different from the practice

in the classroom sessions, in which it seems to have already been agreed upon as a rule that the working language is English. The once-a-week tutorials in the present university are times when students and the ESL teachers have the chance to meet each other in relative privacy. The ESL teachers for tutorials are tutors for graduate students as well, so the students under their guidance or others who are interested in their research are interested in joining the tutorials. The purpose of tutorials involves course materials, questions and clarifications, assignment and assessment, academic advising and guidance and so on. The atmosphere of tutorials are relatively relaxing, although the topics are more academic and harder to tackle with. The relational identities between the ESL teachers and English majors under this institution is more of an individual and intimate nature, and the personal identities of the ESL teachers are supposed to be a good adviser and a friendly helper. Therefore, in the tutorials, the ESL teachers mainly enact these identities by showing interest in the students and encouraging them to be actively involved in the discussions. Chinese, as their native language, functions as better lubricant for communication than English in this aspect.

5.4 Style

Style is an indispensable aspect of all aspects of life. When it comes to style, a large amount of people will regard it as unique and special ways of speaking, writing, dressing and so on. As a matter of fact, style does not refer to special ways only. Normality is as much a style as unique. Teachers can no more teach without style than they can live without water. Broadly speaking, the ways ESL teachers use during teaching reflect particular styles. Anything they speak, write or design constitutes their styles to some extent. This section mainly focuses on the discursive styles of ESL teachers, characterized by a series of speech features these teachers display during their teaching.

5.4.1 Directness Styles

Of the many ways of describing style, “direct” versus “indirect” is the most common way to characterize how people talk differently (Karen, 2013). Style directness is reflected by choices of discursive practices which may to some extent be related but distinct. Due to time limitation, formal classroom teaching is highly structured and task-focused. Under the circumstance, the ESL teachers mainly explained the language points, writing styles and comprehension of the content by themselves directly. According to the recordings of group 1, time ESL teachers spent on expounding takes up around 80 percent in the whole classroom teaching. In addition, directives are most commonly used by teachers to achieve certain goals, including direct directives and indirect directives classified in terms of the degree of directness. Teaching institution influences the form the teacher will select. The ESL teacher usually select direct directives rather than query directives or hint directives which require students to do more inferential work, such as “Grace, please answer this question”, as in the situation the teacher has the right to direct the action of students. Therefore, the most salient feature of ESL teachers’ discursive practices in formal classroom teaching is directness style, which evokes the traditional professional identities of ESL teachers: responsible and knowledgeable professors. However, classroom sessions are not without less direct style. Teachers vary their degree of directness on the

basis of teaching procedure. Sometimes the teacher begins his/her teaching with small talk whose topic is related to the essay and lasts for five to ten minutes in order to arouse students' interest in the course. Small talk to some extent means phatic communion not directly connected with the target topic with the function of building up and strengthening relationships, through which the ESL teacher introduces background knowledge of the essay to students in a more relaxing way thus making their relational identities to the students as much closer. In group 2, 3 and 4, small talk is replaced by presentation which aims to enhance both the language ability and the expression ability of juniors and usually lasts for 15 minutes in every class. Both of the two forms are less formal in classroom session. In brief, during classroom teaching, teachers develop a direct and formal style on the whole to design and organize teaching systematically in class, and occasionally use a less direct and formal style by engaging students in small talk or presentation to build intimate relational identities.

While in tutorials, ESL teachers prefer a less formal and indirect style as there are fewer students than in formal classroom teaching and the main purpose is to answer the questions students face after a week's study and give specific advice to them. Specifically, rather than telling students the answer directly, ESL teachers are more likely to claim the reasons first and let students draw the conclusions by themselves. The more indirect way teachers choose when interpret, the more inferential work students should do. Using the reasons-claim package is a more effective strategy than stating an explicit claim at the beginning of explaining and is also stimulative to develop students' abilities of generalization and logical thinking. In this regard, the personal identities of the ESL teachers are more like a promoter and guider. The preference of story-telling is another factor contributing to indirectness, which is often adopted by ESL teachers during small talk to make their points. In this way, ESL teachers not only claim their ideas in a more memorable and effective way, but also construct their intimate relational-linked identities with students.

5.4.2 Expressiveness Styles

Expressiveness style concerns how directly ESL teachers display their feelings. Based on observation of formal classroom teaching in group 1 and less formal tutorial in group 2, 3 and 4, the difference in expressiveness style is clearly illustrated and here are two main expressiveness styles showing the way ESL teachers expressing their emotions that differentiate formal classroom teachings and tutorials. In formal classroom teachings, the main focus of which is on completing the teaching tasks in line with teaching syllabus, therefore, they seldom express their own feelings or attitudes, while in some cases, there are demands for them to ask students about their opinions under which circumstance ESL teachers express their feelings to encourage students to display their ideas. When they express their feelings, they tend to favor indirect expressions, that is to say, they prefer a more low-keyed and subdued style as they are inclined to provide students with more opportunities to express their feelings in English and ensure students have more time and space to express the emotions they feel so as to cultivate students' practical ability to use English.

In tutorials, as in shown in group 2, 3 and 4, the expressiveness style ESL teachers display is more

direct and demonstrative, closely related to the informal setting of the tutorial. The differences of ESL teachers' expressiveness styles between formal classroom sessions and tutorials can be traced to the ways ESL teachers think about the rights and responsibilities of themselves. Different from traditional classroom teaching mainly aiming at imparting knowledge, tutorials keep a watchful eye on developing students' ability of expression and critical thinking. They regard expressiveness as a way to inspire students' positive initiative and creativity thus make communication more lively. In this kind of context, the relational identities between the ESL teachers and students is more of a cooperative and interdependent nature, and the personal identities of the ESL teachers are supposed to be cooperators. Therefore, direct expression is seen as appropriate to achieve the goal for ESL teachers. More specifically, they mainly build these identities by taking an active part in discussing and communicating with students rather than keeping their feelings in mind.

However, discursive practices of teachers from both formal classroom teaching and tutorials also reflect certain common styles to some extent, such as politeness style and style linking to their professional identity. With regard to politeness style, it focus on the way people treat others and is characterized by the use of a series of courtesies, such as "please", or "thank you". The use of discrete language practice such as "please" by teachers when questioning shows their politeness. According to Tracy's classification, politeness styles are of two main types. An involvement politeness style is one that puts a premium on recognizing others' positive face wants, whereas an independence politeness style puts a premium on recognizing others' negative face wants (Karen, 2013). The recordings of group 3 shows that teachers prefer to use an involvement style characterized by addressing students' first names, talking a lot in discussion, inquiring information, complimenting students to build a closer and more friendly relationship with students, while students prefer an independence style as they are more likely to address their teachers with their Chinese family names with titles in order to show respect to their teachers and avoid infringements on their teachers. As for the profession identities of ESL teachers, they are mainly evoked by teachers' specific discourse practices used under the teaching context. As a typical institutional conversation, classroom discourse becomes the marker and carrier of ESL teachers' master identities-professional professors.

6. Conclusion

The present study indicates that the teaching institutions influence ESL teachers' discursive enactment of their identities when interacting with their students during formal classroom sessions and once-a-week tutorials. When in formal classroom sessions which is highly structured and task-based, ESL teachers tend to construct a formal relationship with their students and show their master and personal identities as knowledgeable professors; when in once-a-week tutorials, they build a more informal, friendly and intimate relationship with their students under which circumstance their personal identities are supposed to be a good adviser and a friendly helper. In addition, these various identities are not independent but closely related to each other. ESL teachers' specific discursive practices may

build several different identities simultaneously but highlight one of them. However, to some extent, the research is not comprehensive as it mainly discusses identity construction process of ESL teachers by analyzing the use of person-referencing practices, speech acts, language selection and language styles. Further research should take interaction structures, stance and narratives into consideration and collect a larger number of data set.

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