Teacher Identity and Culture Teaching in Chinese Language Classrooms: A Case Study in a Canadian University

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Abstract
There has been a relative lack of research on lived experiences of minority immigrant teachers in Canada, particularly on identity issues of immigrant Chinese teachers in Canadian universities. Drawing upon identity theories, this paper presents a case study conducted with five immigrant Chinese teachers of Mandarin at a public university in Greater Vancouver. It investigates whether and how these teachers introduce Chinese cultural information in their Mandarin classrooms and how such teaching practices intertwine with their identity construction and negotiation in response to multiple cultures. Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. The research findings suggest that the teachers strategically integrated cultural knowledge with language teaching based on students' linguistic backgrounds and Chinese proficiency, and that the moments of their culture teaching foregrounded their cultural identity, ethnic identity, and professional identity as well as their 'third space' as a privilege to help students negotiate cultural differences. Further studies are encouraged to compare different groups of Chinese teachers teaching Chinese as a second language and to deepen our understandings of the richness of immigrant teachers' identities.

1 Introduction

It is becoming increasingly difficult to overlook 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. To many new immigrants, struggles are inevitable when they undergo cross-cultural encounters, constantly negotiating between their home culture and their host culture. They find themselves often inclined to resonate with other immigrants' sentiments, concerns, and expectations.

As an immigrant in Canada myself, I could tell a long story about my own experience living overseas and thus felt motived to explore other immigrants' lived experience. In the fall of 2006, I embarked

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on my PhD journey at a university in British Columbia (BC), Canada's most western province. From the second semester, I started to teach Mandarin part-time to undergraduates in this university. While I was delighted to see Canadian students taking a more active part in class activities than my previous Chinese students in China, 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. In general, I was proud of being a native Chinese who could inform my students deeply about Chinese culture; yet at other times, I felt short of confidence owing to a distance between myself and my students since I was not well acquainted with what they found familiar or interesting in Canada. 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.

Apart from my personal concerns, identity issues of immigrant Chinese teachers need to be addressed for several other reasons. According to reports issued by Statistics Canada (2017a)[1], Chinese is the second largest visible minority group in Canada, numbers1,577,060, and accounts for 20.5% of the visible minority population and 4.6% of Canada's total population. In addition, among the immigrants whose mother tongue is neither English nor French, Chinese languages are the most common mother tongues; in particular, Mandarin ranks first among the immigrant mother tongues and is reported to be among the top five immigrant languages spoken at home in Canada's large cities like Vancouver, Toronto, and Montréal (Statistics Canada, 2017b).

Around the world and in North America, Chinese has become a popular language to learn in educational institutions. The MLA report (Looney & Lusin, 2019) shows that nearly half the Chinese programs experienced stable or increased enrolments in the US institutions of higher education between 2013 and 2016. In British Columbia, the province of Canada that witnesses the increasing number of Chinese immigrants, administrators of some universities are optimistic about the coming years' considerable increase in the enrolment of their Chinese language programs due to China's growing economy and job prospects for their graduates (Xinhua News Agency, 2013; Wang, 2019). The popularity of Chinese thus calls for more professional Chinese instructors and "high quality Chinese language education and Chinese teacher education" (Duff, 2008, p.3). To a large extent, immigrant Chinese teachers serve as the backbone of Chinese language programs in Canada. How they position themselves with reference to their self-identifications and to their interactions with students has 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.

Moreover, Canada is generally well known for its welcoming policies for immigrants. For instance, the British Columbia government has been launching significant initiatives, including the organization of BC Anti-racism and Multiculturalism Awards and the establishment of BC Immigration Task Force, to promote multiculturalism and assist immigrant skilled workers and professionals (British Columbia, 2021). Such a climate should encourage educational institutions in Canada to give more attention to their diversifying teaching force. Through a deeper understanding of the multifarious identities of ethnic minority teachers, we are more 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).

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 have been relatively few studies that examine self identifications and related practices of immigrant Chinese teachers teaching Mandarin at the university level. Therefore, I conducted a small-scale case study with five immigrant Chinese teachers of Mandarin from a Canadian university in an attempt to investigate nuances and complexities in their identity construction and negotiation. To this end, I endeavored to address the following two research questions:

1. How do the teachers incorporate their identities into their teaching practices?
2. What identities are revealed in response to the moment of their teaching practices?

This paper starts with the significance of addressing the immigrant teacher identity issues and is followed by a glimpse into the theories and studies centering on 'identity'. The third section introduces research methods, research site, and study participants. The fourth section presents the research findings in three thematic categories. The fifth section discusses how the findings are related to the identity theories and studies and answers the two research questions above. Future studies are recommended in the final section.

2 Theoretical Framework

To date, identity has been investigated in numerous fields – psychology, philosophy, sociology, anthropology, cultural studies, business, education, applied linguistics, to name a few. Surrounding this notion commonly studied are personality, race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, migration, gender, language, social class, profession, and so forth (Block, 2007; Brott & Kajs, 2001). For instance, 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, examined in relation to such concepts as professionalism, self-conceptualization, professional role, professional image, and professional socialization (Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004). As Brott and Kajs (2001) claimed, 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.

A perusal of academic literature on identity demonstrates that scholars conceptualize the notion of identity in diverse ways with reference to their research interests. Rummens (2000) construed identity as "the distinctive character belonging to any given individual, or shared by all members of a particular social category or group" (p.1), which suggests that identity can be seen as an individual attribute or a collective quality. As a cultural theorist, Hall (1996) mainly focused on cultural identity, defining identities as "points of temporary attachment to the subject positions which discursive practices construct for us" (p. 6). 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'.

Aside from the various conceptualizations of identity, there has been debate about the construction of identity among scholars. It seems 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). By contrast, 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, Ang (2001) observed 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.

Elsewhere, Holland et al. (1998) reminded us that identity combines "the intimate or personal world with the collective world of cultural forms and social relations" (p. 5). What they meant to communicate is that the self is personally, socially, and culturally constructed, and one's identity results from the interplay of one's inner world and outer world. Comparable with '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).

Similarly, 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 the individual and the social, the subjective and the objective, or say, internalization of the social structure (Maton, 2008; Eriksen & Nielsen, 2001).

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). However, there exists 'Hierarchy of Identities' – 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). Negotiation of these multiple identities results in a preferred identity (a one-or-the-other end product) (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004). Omoniyi (2006) 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" (p. 21).

In addition, 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. Individuals occupying a third space navigate between the home culture and the host culture and secure space within both cultural groups. Situated at the confluence of two cultures, neither do they claim their home culture as their sole culture and overlook the host culture or vice versa; nor do they prioritize one culture over the other. Nevertheless, they construct a new arena where they could examine their encountered cultures panoramically and dynamically, based on the specific goals of their communication (Zhang & Jian, 2021). Take Wang's (2002) research for example. Her study with eight immigrant teachers from Mainland China who were teaching in Toronto elementary and secondary schools 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. To diasporic individuals and collectives, the 'third space' holds both a challenge and a privilege. It seems that Wang's study participants surmounted the challenges and took advantage of their 'third space' to suit the new teaching milieu.

Undoubtedly, how ethnic minority immigrant teachers implement their teaching is conditioned by their responses to particular contexts, which 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 (1996) claimed that all these contexts jointly help shape immigrant teachers' fundamental orientations to teaching, their preference for particular resources and pedagogies, and their fulfillment of roles and responsibilities in schools. She 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; the life experiences of immigrant teachers likely make them more understanding and empathetic teachers, who are prone to acknowledge their students' cultures and teach them how to successfully negotiate different social practices.

The theories and findings above are significantly inspiring and helpful as they provide me with the guidance to explore how my study participants identified themselves within the university culture they inhabited, which identities they tended to project among their multiple identities, at what moment they projected such identities, and whether and how they exhibited a 'third space'.

3 Methodology

3.1 Research methods

I situated my research within a language institute of a public university located in Greater Vancouver, BC, Canada. For approximately one year from 2010 to 2011, I conducted a case study with five immigrant Chinese teachers of Mandarin working at the institute. Throughout the year, I scheduled one 60-minute-long semi-structured one-on-one interview with each participant and three observations in their Mandarin classes respectively, each observation enduring for 110 minutes. Eventually I collected data from 5 interviews totaling approximately 5 hours and 15 observations totaling 27.5 hours. With my participants' informed consent, I audio-recorded all the interviews and took field notes during the classroom observations. The interview data were used as a primary source to address my research concerns 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. To protect the participants' confidentiality, I used their pseudonyms in my data analysis and study report.

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 afterwards. In terms of the data analyses, I employed a combination of thematic analysis and comparative analysis with reference to sociocultural 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.

3.2 Research site

The language institute in my study 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 the aforementioned 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 Mandarin 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.

3.3 Study participants

Of the five study participants, four teachers are female and one is male. When I carried out the study with them, they all had been teaching for more than one year at the language institute. Table 1 below presents their demographic information that I gathered from my data collection.

Table 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)
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

Teacher Participants	Cindy	Jane	Lisa	Nina	Henry
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 the five 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 Chinese dialect at home. 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 the teachers received their higher education in the subject 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 the 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. Likewise, 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 had been devoted to it for more than 20 years by the time I involved 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.

4 Research Findings

All my study participants 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.

4.1 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 touched upon those cultural factors pertinent to the words, grammar, or exercise that the class happened to be dealing with. For instance, Henry mentioned his explanation to students of the Chinese character "家" (jiā: home), just as I had observed in his class. 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[2] 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?

4.2 Differentiating between heritage courses and non-heritage courses

For all my participants, 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 courses[3]. 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 quite superficial. For instance, all the students know the fact that they receive "red envelops" during Chinese New Year and go eat in Chinese restaurants, but what lies underneath 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.

4.3 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 risks[4].

During my data collection period, Henry was teaching a higher-level Mandarin course and using the textbook complied 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?" Then he chose a female student to answer, who replied, based on the text, "They normally bring flowers, chocolate, and alcohol." "How about Chinese people?" Henry 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 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 eat and Canadian people bring 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.

5 Discussion

How my study participants taught their Mandarin classes in connection with Chinese cultural information intensely revealed how they identified themselves in the teaching milieu. To be specific, their self-positioning and teaching practices shed light on their cultural identity, ethnic identity, professional identity, and their embrace of a 'third space'; these facets of teacher identity were intertwined with their teaching routines and brought to the fore depending on their particular teaching practices.

All the teachers communicated and showed awareness of 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. All my participants tended to feel that gaining a good command of a language inevitably involved learning about its 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 common cultural practices of Chinese people when teaching them the language.

Some of the teachers related to me that they differentiated between heritage students and non-heritage students and employed 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" (Li, 2020, p.175). This educational philosophy derived from traditional Chinese culture seemed to have a profound influence on the participants' teaching practices. 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 identity as well, 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 achieve 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, 1996). 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 expound 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. Even though the course content they focused on was Chinese language and culture, they did not forget to remind their students of the corresponding Canadian cultural practices. They employed their 'third space' (Bhabha, 1994) to address the topic in question fluidly and to help students develop cultural sensitivity and expertise in negotiating expectations across different cultures (Zhang & Jian, 2021). According to Bascia (1996), 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 underwent the process of constructing a 'third space' (Bhabha, 1994) themselves in Canada, they endeavored to instill the vision of the 'third space' into their students and help them to develop a new 'habitus' (Bourdieu, 1977) oriented to Chinese culture. In this way, the students would find it easier to effectively communicate with people from Chinese society. Competent to negotiate effortlessly between the home culture and the host culture, these teachers seemed to celebrate their 'third space' more as a privilege than a challenge in their Mandarin teaching.

In summary, development of multiculturalism in Canada undoubtedly calls for more research into ethnic minority teachers, especially minority immigrant teachers. My personal experiences as well as developing theories and empirical studies on identity prompted me to conduct a case study

with immigrant Chinese teachers of Mandarin in a Canadian university and to investigate how they constructed and negotiated their identities in their teaching practices along with their migration.

The five teachers in my study reflectively communicated and demonstrated how they dealt with the cultural content in their Mandarin classrooms depending on the type of students they were teaching. 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 answer my first research question, owing to their country of origin and cultural adaptivity, their nature of course content and some other factors concerned, the teachers instinctively or consciously brought their cultural identity, ethnic identity, and professional identity into play in their Mandarin teaching. To answer my second research question, at the moment of introducing Chinese culture to their language classes, my participants' cultural identity and ethnic identity stood out among their multiple identities: they decisively claimed their ethnic identity as native Chinese and confidently demonstrated their expertise in Chinese culture to their students. Their collective Chinese identity, in other words, their sense of 'oneness' attached to China, found full expression in their moment of imparting cultural knowledge. Nevertheless, standing outside their home cultural frames of reference, these teachers also conveyed understanding and sensitivity to their students and remembered to utilize comparison of Chinese culture and Canadian culture to guide students into cultural appropriateness. In their Mandarin classrooms, the teachers resorted to their 'third space' as a privilege to enrich their students' learning experience and invited students to co-construct a 'third space' across cultures (Zhang & Jian, 2021). Such teaching practices also projected the participants' professional identity: upon requirements of their teaching profession, they proactively shoulder responsibilities to orient students for the maximum learning outcomes.

6 Conclusion

My case study seeks to share with readers the stories and thoughts several immigrant Chinese teachers revealed about their lived experiences in teaching. The findings of my study are intended to contribute to understandings of sociocultural issues in education overall and to educational research in the domain of minority teachers' experiences in mainstream society. As a Chinese saying goes, "The remembrance of the past is the teacher of the future". This study is expected to provide support for minority immigrant teachers of second languages in the multicultural context of Canada and to function as valuable references for other Chinese language teachers as well as for minority immigrant teachers of non-Chinese origin in North America. Nevertheless, it is important to note that my case study is rather small in scale and how my participants position themselves might or might not be transferrable to other second language immigrant teachers in Canadian mainstream universities.

To develop fuller understandings of Chinese teacher identity, I would recommend further comparative studies among different groups of Chinese teachers, including comparisons among Mainland Chinese teachers, Taiwanese teachers, and Hong Kong teachers who are teaching Mandarin in Canada, those between Chinese teachers teaching Mandarin in Canada and Chinese teachers teaching foreigners Mandarin in China, those between immigrant Chinese teachers of Mandarin and immigrant Chinese teachers of other subjects in Canada, and more beyond the abovementioned. As this paper focuses on immigrant Chinese teachers of Mandarin, a comparison between this group of teachers with other groups of teachers is beyond the scope of study. But we cannot rule out that teachers with different backgrounds may also have the same or similar identity. As a result, more studies on different groups of immigrant teachers deserve investigation in future.

Notes

1. The most recent Canadian Census data available are from the 2016 Census conducted by Statistics Canada.

2. The courses that the study participants taught during my study were all Mandarin language courses rather than courses of Chinese Culture. Despite the course content focusing on the language itself, the teachers often 'incidentally' referred to the Chinese cultural information pertinent to the language points they were introducing.

3. 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.

4. 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.

Appendix: Interview Questions

1. Could you tell me your experience as a Mandarin teacher? For example, how long have you been teaching Mandarin Chinese? When and where did you start to teach Mandarin? What are your students like?

2. Do you enjoy your current teaching of Mandarin? Why?

3. Is there any difference in the way you teach students at different levels of Mandarin? If yes, what are the differences? Could you give some examples?

4. Do you often introduce Chinese culture in your language class?

5. In what way do you try to teach Chinese culture while you teach Chinese language? Could you give some examples?

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教师身份认同与国际汉语课堂上的文化教学：
对加拿大大学中国移民汉语教师的个案研究

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摘要

目前加拿大对少数族裔移民教师生活经历的研究屈指可数，对加拿大大学中国移民教师身份认同问题的研究更是寥寥无几。作者结合'身份认同'的诸多理论，对大温地区一所公立大学的五位中国移民汉语教师进行了个案研究，旨在调查这些教师是否以及如何在汉语课堂上介绍中国文化，如何在这样的教学实践中对受多国文化影响的自我身份进行定位和协调。通过对五位教师的半结构式访谈和课堂观察，作者发现他们均根据所教学生的语言背景和汉语水平有策略地将文化知识融入到语言教学当中；他们介绍中国文化的时刻凸显了他们的文化身份、族裔身份和职业身份，展示了他们充分利用自己'第三空间'的优势来帮助学生调和文化差异。作者建议对不同类型的国际汉语教师进行更多的对比研究，以便加深我们对移民教师身份认同问题多方面的认知。

关键词

加拿大汉语教学，文化教学与语言教学，中国移民教师，教师身份认同

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