5-14-2020

Hearing the Voices of Bicultural and Bilingual Teachers: Using a Case Study Approach to Explain the Professional Identity Development of Early Career Native Chinese Mandarin Teachers

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Recommended Citation

Hearing the Voices of Bicultural and Bilingual Teachers: Using a Case Study Approach

to Explain the Professional Identity Development of Early Career

Native Chinese Mandarin Teachers

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education
in
Educational Leadership: Curriculum and Instruction

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Portland State University
2020

Abstract

Increasingly, Native Chinese Mandarin teachers have been migrating to the United States and taking positions as Mandarin teachers in U.S. schools. Many have needed support for professional identity development as bicultural and bilingual teachers given their new social cultural context. The purpose of this study was to describe and explain the experiences and professional identity development of early-career Native Chinese Mandarin teachers in one Northwest Pacific city. Using a theoretical framework of social cultural theory in education and the bicultural identity integration construct, I conducted a multiple case study of four early-career Native Chinese Mandarin teachers in four different school contexts: public school, private school, Confucius classroom, and charter school. Data sources were two semi-structured interviews and the Bicultural Identity Integration Scale. Based on my data analysis, I developed four cases, conducted a cross-case comparison, and identified themes about the four early-career Native Chinese Mandarin teachers: (a) they experienced shifts, development, and transformation in their professional identity, (b) their professional identity was multi-faceted, (c) their professional identity interacted with their cultural identity, and (d) their bicultural identity integration described the connection between their professional identity and cultural identity. Conclusions drawn from these Native Chinese Mandarin teachers' voices include calling for a multicultural approach when teaching, encouraging educational stakeholders to take a leading role to support social and cultural teaching, providing parents with opportunities to be involved in their children's learning, and

establishing a community that empowers bicultural teachers' professional identity

development in U.S. schools.

Key words: Native Chinese Mandarin teachers, identity, professional identity, social

cultural theory, bicultural identity integration, bicultural teachers

Dedication

(献词)

此论文献给：

我正直无私、大爱无疆的父亲 —— 给予我无畏的勇气和智慧的光芒

我任劳任怨、温柔善良的母亲 ——给予我追梦的自由和飞翔的'翅膀'

我奋发进取、意志坚定的丈夫 —— 给予我鼓励支持和幸福能量

我聪慧乖巧、 刻苦勤奋的女儿——给予我爱的陪伴和勇敢前行的力量

Acknowledgements

Many people flashed in my mind as I am thinking of my journey to reach this moment. Without their encouragement, support, and love, I could not have climbed over mountains to reach this step—the completion of my dissertation. I owe my greatest gratitude to all the people who were with me to make this journey possible and achieve my growth.

My first greatest thank goes to my advisor, Professor Micki M. Caskey who led me to walk through this journey step-by-step over years. She nurtured my thinking and trained me in becoming a scholar in the academic world. Her rigorous attitude toward doing academic work, her outstanding leadership, her endless passion in teaching, and her love for her family all set a good example for me in my life. She not only facilitated my growth in my academic pathway, but she also gave me and my daughter tremendous love to live smoothly in a different social cultural society.

I am extremely indebted to Professor Dannelle D. Stevens who was my advisor when I was a visiting scholar in Portland State University. She led me to enter a different world. With her encouragement, I came out of my comfort zone and travelled far away from China to study in the United States. Thus, I started to embrace my dynamic identity day after day. She cultivated my thinking of being a life-long learner and a dedicated educator. Along my path to this point, she is always with me like an academic advisor, a friend, and a family.

I owe much to Professor Joanne Cooper. She is always ready to share and support doctoral students. In her classes, I made a lot of progress in improving my academic

writing techniques and enhanced my interest in doing research. I also feel grateful for

Professor Liu-Qin Yang who was a wonderful example for me in many ways. She

impressed me a lot in her work ethic, her devotion to teaching and research, and her

endless effort to pursue professional growth.

I am indebted to many faculty members in College of Education. Professor Will

Parnell, Curriculum and Instruction Department Chair, employed me as a graduate

assistant for three years. This supported me financially while pursuing my degree. Dr.

Anita Bright, my co-advisor throughout my two-year coursework journey, was a

wonderful scholar and supportive advisor. Her professional expertise and devotion to

academic work was admirable. Outside the academic world, she gave me care and

support regarding my personal needs. Dr. Bernd Ferner nurtured my understanding of

program management and coordination in U.S. higher education. My administrative

experience grew by assisting him and coworking with other faculty members on the

committee. Plus, I feel grateful for all the faculty members and staff who taught and

supported me: Dr. Pat Burk, Dr. Candyce Reynolds, Dr. Gayle Thieman, Dr. Dot

McElhone, Dr. Moti Hara, Dr. Amanda Sugimoto, Howard Yank, and Elizabeth Snyder.

I am indebted to some Mandarin teachers in Riverton (pseudonym for a

Northwest Pacific city). We became friends and walked along with each other to

transition to a new social cultural society. In our daily conversations, they shared

experiences in teaching in U.S. schools which helped me to gain insight to a marginalized

group of people and share their voices in a larger community. I am grateful for the four

teachers who were willing to participate in my study. Their detailed responses laid a solid foundation for framing my research.

In addition, I express my appreciation and thanks to my leaders, my colleagues, and my friends in China. Over four years, their care, encouragement, support, and love drove me through many hard times. I am thankful for the 2016 Curriculum and Instruction doctoral cohort functioning like a collective community to share resources, supports, and love as we grew along with each other. I feel grateful for my "American family"—the Nordland family. They gave me family love and warmth; they provided me with opportunities to experience U.S. family life and culture. They loved me, worried over me, hugged me and strengthened me to move forward.

My last expression of love and thanks attribute to my parents, my husband, and my daughter. My parents gave me endless love and support. They encouraged me to pursue my dream though my father had been seriously ill. It was my greatest pity that I could not take care of my father and stay with him during his last moments of life. I hope he can rest in peace as I accomplish this journey. I am thankful for my husband who always supported me whenever I felt confusion, hesitation, and anxiety in my life and study. Over four years, we were apart from each other in the two countries for most of the time, but we encouraged and supported each other to overcome this hardship. I feel blessed to have my daughter Li-Yu Chen with me to grow up in a different country. Over years, I am pleased and proud to see how she has grown from a little girl without knowing any English words to a sixth grader in a Talented and Gifted program in an area school. We went through all the happy and sad times together while being far away from

home. In her afterschool time, I always found her reading or studying around while I was engaged in my own work: meeting professors, using the computer lab, researching in the library, and studying in the meeting rooms. She gave me hugs when I cried, she gave me applause when I achieved. Without her accompaniment, I could not have made this journey done. My greatest thanks to everybody to be with me to navigate this journey.

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Chapter 1: Problem Statement

The "ever expanding mobility and migration" has been altering the demographic, sociopolitical, cultural, and linguistic faces of societies throughout the world for the past two decades (Arnaut, Blommaert, Rampton, & Spotti, 2016, p.1). Immigration centers around the world are not only restricted to large global cities like London and Los Angeles, but also include smaller provincial locations (Arnaut et al., 2016). In these various places—global cities or smaller provincial locations—around the world, super diversity, multiculturalism, and multilingualism are typical features.

As China's economy develops and its national power increases, more people around the world are interested in China and its language (Zhou & Li, 2015). People in the United States are also interested in learning Mandarin, so Chinese teaching has gradually become popular (Luo, 2016). Recently, a growing number of Native Chinese Mandarin Teachers (NCMT) are migrating to the United States and taking positions as Mandarin teachers in U.S. schools or school districts.

Currently, NCMTs in the United States include (a) Chinese immigrants who graduated from Chinese post-secondary institutions, (b) Chinese teachers who completed their post-secondary education in China and received their master's degrees from some international teacher education programs or training from other postsecondary teacher preparation programs in the United States, and (c) Native Chinese teachers working in Confucius Institutes that are affiliated with the partnership program between the Chinese government and the non-profit organizations in the United States. These NCMTs teach

Mandarin as a language in various K-12 schools across the United States (e.g., private Chinese immersion schools, Chinese-English dual language schools, Chinese Charter schools, Chinese immersion programs in public schools).

Examination of these NCMTs' experiences as they transitioned to teach in U.S. schools may present a picture of how the Mandarin learning and teaching goes on in the United States as Mandarin language is becoming an emergent curriculum. People can understand what challenges they may meet with and what growth they may achieve as they started a new journey of being Mandarin teachers in U.S. schools.

Describing these early NCMT's identification of influences in their teaching and learning may make stakeholders, school leaders, colleagues and district leaders and parents understand what support these early-career NCMTs need to develop and strengthen their professional identity. On this basis, this study can provide suggestions for educational and social stakeholders to pay attention to potential marginalized individuals such as foreign language teachers (e.g., Spanish teachers, French teachers, Mandarin teachers, German teachers) in education and give them enough supports.

In addition, examining the relationship between the early-career NCMTs' life experiences and their professional and cultural identity may lead to the rethinking and refining of the Mandarin curriculum and instruction (how to integrate language, culture, identity and teaching) in the local place. It will contribute to the Mandarin teaching in the United States and around the world.

Last but not the least, this study can provide examples and insights for those people who wanted to teach Mandarin or any other foreign language in U.S. schools. Understanding the early-career NCMTs' experiences to develop their professional identity, they can have better expectation of what they will meet with and be well prepared.

Background of the Problem

In this section, I articulate the existing problems experienced by some NCMTs in one local place in the United States, and then describe the situation of the problem and validate its existence.

Problem of Practice

Because Mandarin Chinese is a comparatively new area of study in American schools or districts, early-career NCMTs need support regarding constructing their professional identities to fit the contexts, norms, and expectations of U.S. schools or districts. Academically, few professional development opportunities or specific content area resources are available to early-career NCMTs. They have limited access to models of effective pedagogical practices, content standards, and so scholars criticize them for their pedagogy when teaching Chinese in most western countries (Moloney, 2013). Socially and culturally, they need support from social educational stakeholders (e.g., school leaders, principals, colleagues, parents, students) to respond to different social and cultural factors that may influence the development of their professional identity.

In this study, I focused on examining how some early-career NCMTs construct their professional identity as they experience their first years teaching of Mandarin in various K-12 schools or districts of Riverton (pseudonym), an urban city in the Northwest Pacific.

Context of the problem. Since the independence of the United States, it has been a country of immigrants, with different races and diverse cultural origins. Among the total population of the specified races, as of 2010, White people account for 63.7%; Hispanic or Latino people account for 15.4%; African American people account for 12.2%; American Indian and Alaskan native people account for 0.7%; Asian people account for 4.7%; native Hawaiian people and Pacific Islanders account for 0.2%. (U. S. Census, 2010). In each category, people are from diverse cultural background and speak different languages. Thus, as the world's most complex multicultural and multilingual society (Wang, 1996), there are four major non-English language groups in the U.S. including Spanish, other Indo-European languages, Asian and Pacific Island languages, and the final category of other languages (Ryan, 2013). Ryan (2013) provided evidence to illustrate that non-English languages play a continuing and growing role as part of the national fabric and that as the United States continue to be the destination for people from other lands, this pattern of language diversity will continue. In this situation, developing non-English languages heritage schools led to rethinking of the current language policies in the United States. Specifically, it led to a focus on new systems of language instruction and delivery and taking advantage of non-English languages in strengthening

the development of its diversity of languages and cultures and the national

comprehensive competency in the currently competitive worldwide globalization (Wang,

1996).

According to Wang (1996), Chinese heritage schools' establishment dates to 1848

to the time of Chinese immigrant laborers. At that time, teachers taught Cantonese in the

Chinese classes to serve the needs of those early immigrants and early residents in

Chinatowns in big cities in the United States. As different Chinese governments (Ch'ing

government, the newly founded China of Republic in 1911) made efforts to develop its

diplomatic relationship with the United States, more Chinese language schools were

established in many cities like New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Diego,

Washington, D.C., and others across the nation. A new immigration trend of well-

educated Chinese native speakers mostly from mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan

took place after World War II. The relaxation of the immigration regulations contributed

to the development of new formal or informal Mandarin language schools in the United

States. In the last decade, recent immigrants from China and the South-east Asia have

added more resources to Mandarin language school system.

Recently, China became the second largest economy in the world, so learning

Mandarin has become one of greatest interests of people in the United States. A variety

of partnerships were established between China's government and U.S. government and

some non-official organizations between the two countries led to a thriving situation of

Chinese Mandarin teaching and learning in the United States, which contributed a lot to

the development of Chinese language school systems in the United States. Compared to

the Mandarin language schools in the past, current school systems have established more

Mandarin language schools in many places throughout the United States and Mandarin

has become an immersion language program in K-12 schools in the United States.

In addition, the vibrant development of Confucius Institutes, sponsored by China

Hanban, a partnership program between China's government and U.S. government, has

also promoted the spread of Chinese Mandarin teaching and cultural communication.

Confucius Institutes have had branches in local universities and Confucius classrooms

affiliated with it in K-12 school. Every year, China Hanban has appointed qualified

Native-born Chinese faculty to teach Mandarin in local universities and K-12 schools.

Finally, due to more partnerships developed between some universities in China and the

United States, many Chinese graduates from China's universities entered the master's

programs related to Chinese language teacher programs or other foreign language

training programs in the post-secondary institutes in the United States.

Consequently, various kinds of Chinese language schools and programs in K-12

schools and post-secondary institution are available in the United States. There are for-

profit and non-profit Chinese language schools, classes, or programs in the United States

(Wang, 1996). Most of the for-profit schools or classes include the pre-schools, child-

care centers, and tutorial programs for K-12 school students and those private schools or

Charter schools of Chinese as a heritage language in communities. Most of the non-

profit Chinese language schools, classes, or programs refer to the Chinese immersion

classes or programs in K-12 schools and Chinese classes in post-secondary institutes and the Confucius Institute Programs in the United States.

The vibrant development of Chinese language schools and programs in for-profit and non-profit organizations led to a great demand of qualified Chinese language teachers in the United States. Thus, more immigrant Chinese native speakers are flooding into the United States to take positions of Chinese language teachers. However, most of the NCMTs are in early stages of their careers, and they are still in need of support related to the construction of their professional identities.

Validation of the problem. As Chinese teaching is an emergent content-based curriculum in most local places in the United States, most of the Chinese language teachers are only within the induction stage of teaching. As early-career Chinese language teachers who are bicultural and bilingual teachers, they face many social and cultural challenges.

To be specific, most Chinese language teachers are facing many struggles related to the teaching concepts, pedagogies, values, and beliefs in American classrooms (Yue, 2017). Some Chinese language teachers are experiencing a mismatch between their Chinese cultural expectations and their students' actual classroom behaviors and experience many struggles in terms of understanding the demands of the classroom management and lack of efficient classroom management strategies and language barriers (Zhou & Li, 2014). Xiang (2017) argued that many Chinese language teachers do not hold a strong teacher identity because they experienced many struggles in terms of their

teaching beliefs and values and have experienced a lot of transformation of their identity

as they transition to the American classroom teaching context. In addition, some Chinese

language teachers are facing some contextual challenges, such as inadequate teaching

materials, limited access of professional development or trainings and students' lack of

motivation to learn Chinese, which suggest that Chinese language teachers need supports

from institutions, parents, and students as they strengthen their professional identity

(Wang & Du, 2016).

My private conversations with some Chinese Mandarin teachers and my

observations of them during their first-year teaching indicated that at the induction stage

of their profession, they are really in great need of supports. For example, one teacher

who was hired as a Mandarin teacher in a K-12 school in a U.S. city, said that during the

first half of the year, she cried all the time when she was back home. She felt so

desperate about herself and just wanted to give it up and fly back to China as soon as

possible. She had to telephone her friends to ask for strategies in teaching. Whenever I

talked with her after work, she had no strength anymore and was not as energetic as

before. She called upon many friends to explain her stress and helplessness every day.

Finally, she went to a counselor to help her work out strategies to reduce her stress. She

told me she did not know how to manage the classroom; it was so difficult for her to

make the students well behaved and keep focus on studying in classroom. She also told

me that some of the parents complained to her about her policy about the restroom use for

students during class time, while she thought that what she has done was correct. She

told me that she had no idea about what text materials should be best choices to be used in classroom teaching and that she had no person to ask because in her school, she was the only Chinese teacher and in different school districts, the curriculum of Chinese was different and the only guidance book she could use is *the International Language Teaching Guide Book* issued by the state. In addition, she told me there was a lack of access of professional development or workshop related to Chinese teaching. She had to learn to teach Chinese gradually by herself. She told me that she needed people to amplify the voices for Chinese teachers like her.

My communication with another first-year Chinese teacher also surprised me as I consider the construction of the early-career Chinese Mandarin teachers' professional identity. She told me she was very dissatisfied with being a Chinese teacher in the United States even though she has two master's degrees in teaching Chinese as a foreign language: one from a Chinese university and one from a U.S. university. She told me that she did not feel any respect in her teaching, and she felt exhausted every day. She told me that there are so many differences in teaching in China and in the United States. After one year of teaching Chinese in one local private school, she gave up and told me she would never choose teaching Chinese as a career in the future.

Another Chinese friend felt sad all the time during her work at one private Chinese school. She told me that whenever she went to teach, she felt the sky was grey and she could not feel any goodness in the day. She told me students had some prejudices against her because she had newly immigrated to the United States.

My personal conversation with another Chinese Language teacher who was doing her internship in one public high school impressed me a lot. She mentioned that she found Chinese language teaching is not very popular in the school. She said whenever the students learned Chinese as an elective course, they showed less interest in it compared to other foreign languages like French, Spanish, German, and so on. I could feel the hurt my friend experienced when she described these situations.

In one conference about language, culture, and business between China and the United States, one principal from a Chinese immersion K-5 charter school mentioned that they are facing two big challenges in developing their school. One is that they find it difficult to keep teachers because of the visa issues and some problems such as equal pay and benefits. The other is some difficulty with Mandarin teachers' development of classroom management skills and their teaching beliefs about teacher-directed and student-centered teaching practice.

To sum up, for many early-career Chinese language teachers, it is difficult for them to shape their professional identity. They face many problems such as lack of teaching experience, inadequate text materials, limited access of professional development, and struggles associated with the cultural conflicts connected to teaching beliefs, values, and lack of efficient classroom management strategies—all of which may have a great impact on their self-understanding (Heikkinen, 1999; Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2013). Thus, they are in great needs of supports from leaders, institutions, colleagues,

parents, students, and other counterparts as they are establishing their professional

identity in their induction stage.

Research Statement

The purpose of this study was to describe and explain the early-career NCMTs'

experience and their professional identity development as bicultural teachers. This

exploration of NCMTs' professional identity included the different socioeconomic,

political, and cultural contexts from their experiences. I am interested in how they, as

bicultural and bilingual individuals, respond to the interdependence and reciprocity of

language, culture, and identity in the process of developing their professional identity as

bicultural individuals.

The intention of my study was to gain knowledge and share information with

those who have some desire to teach Chinese in K-12 educational context in the United

States. Second, this study may provide insight to the administrators in K-12 schools and

school districts, Chinese community schools, policy makers to rethink the Mandarin

curriculum and professional development of Chinese teachers and give support for those

early career teachers to construct their professional identity as soon as possible. As the

early-career Chinese teachers grasp the effective strategies to form their professional

identity, they may improve their job satisfaction; engagement in the teaching; establish

good relationship with students, parents, and other stakeholders; and be skillful in

blending the two cultures and keep a harmonious relationship between their heritage

culture and diverse cultures in the United States. Finally, this study may uncover ways to

inform post-secondary teaching programs for world language teachers as well as provide insights for other studies on language teachers' identity.

Research Significance

As I noted before, many early-career NCMTs face challenges in social, institutional, historical, and cultural contexts (Wang & Du, 2016; Xiang, 2017; Yue, 2017). Exploring the life experiences of early-career NCMTs can help us understand what challenges NCMTs are facing in current socioeconomic, political, and cultural context and what strategies they can use as they address those challenges when developing their professional identity as bicultural and bilingual individuals.

Exploring early-career NCMTs' professional identity can be favorable for their overall career progress, work performance, and stability of career growth. Skorikov and Vondracek (2012) suggested that the strength of occupational identity is closely related to various aspects of one's overall career development progress. In addition, studies have presented findings to indicate that occupational identity is an important predictor in one's work role and work performance (Baruch & Cohen, 2007; Kidd & Frances, 2006; Suutari & Makela, 2007). The induction stage has a great impact on teachers' self-understanding, thus examining the professional identity of early-career NCMTs may open new ways to support newly qualified teachers in their professional development (Heikkinen, 1999, Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2013). The study of the early-career NCMTs' professional identity may arouse stakeholders' attention to the challenges and growth most language teachers may encounter in their classroom teaching and provide sufficient

supports to help them transform and advance their professional identity. Exploration of early-career NCMTs' professional identity may call more scholars' attention to conducting research with this group of people; it may also prompt advocates to use their voices about the need for supports from various social and educational stakeholders.

Presentation of Method and Research Questions

In this study, I conducted a qualitative multiple-case study to explore the early-career NCMTs' professional identity development through the lens of social cultural theory and bicultural identity integration construct.

I chose early-career NCMTs as my participants from different K-12 school contexts in Riverton. First, various k-12 schools teach Chinese Mandarin in Riverton (pseudonym), an urban city in the Northwest Pacific. Each employs NCMTs with different experiences, life histories, and educational backgrounds, so a multiple case study approach afforded me with the opportunity to develop in-depth understandings of each teacher's process of developing professional identity within the specific context of their school, and the specific socioeconomic, sociopolitical, and sociocultural context.

Then, Chinese Mandarin is an emerging curriculum in Riverton, and as such, engaging in case study may help generate heuristic and ground-up ideas about Chinese learning and teaching relating to my problem. As Yin (2014) mentioned, many researchers have criticized case studies because there may be "a lack of rigor of case study research" (p. 9) and they "provide little basis for scientific generalization" (p. 10). Nevertheless, I contend that case study is an appropriate method for exploring my

problem. To address critiques of the case study method, I collected multiple case

evidence and engaged in systematic analysis to generate a set of theoretical propositions.

Research Questions

In this study, I explored the following three research questions:

1. How do NCMTs experience being Mandarin teachers in a local educational

    school context in the United States?

2. What do the NCMTs identify as influences in their teaching and learning?

3. How do NCMTs' experiences relate to their professional and cultural identity?

Definitions of Key Concepts

In this section, I define key concepts related specifically to my research problem.

These concepts include Native Chinese Mandarin Teachers, early career teachers,

identity, professional identity, bicultural or multicultural individuals.

Native Chinese Mandarin Teachers

Native Chinese Mandarin Teachers (NCMTs) were born in mainland China and

spoke Mandarin as their mother language when migrating from China to the United

States. There are different kinds of Chinese speakers in the United States. For instance,

some were first generation immigrants from Mainland China, Taiwan, or Hong Kong to

the United States; some were second generation of family with mixed culture of Chinese

culture and other cultures. Others were American Native English speakers who were

Mandarin, Cantonese, or Taiwanese language learners. In my study, the criteria for

NCMTs include teachers who (a) emigrated from mainland China to the United States

within one to four years, (b) speak native Mandarin and write simplified Chinese characters, and (c) received their college education and below in Mainland China.

Early Career Teachers

Early career teachers, also recognized as novice teachers, are defined as newly qualified teachers who go through an induction stage usually encompassing the first four years (Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2013), in which they develop their understanding of teacher' work and develop experiences to deal with changing situations in their profession (Jones & Stammers, 1997; Le Maistre & Paré, 2010; Schempp, Sparkes, & Templin, 1998). In my study, the early career teachers are newly qualified teachers within their first one to four years of teaching.

Identity

Identity is fundamentally people's explicit or implicit responses to the question: "who are you?" It comprises not only "who you think you are" (individually or collectively), but also "who you act as being" in interpersonal and intergroup interactions—and the social recognition that these actions receive from other individuals or groups (Vignoles, Schwartz & Luyckx , 2012, p.2). In other words, identity integrates people's personal perception of who they are and how they act as they interact with people in their interpersonal and intergroup relations. In addition, it relates to how people with whom they interacted understand and recognize them in these interpersonal and intergroup interactions.

In my study, I define Mandarin teachers' identity as their personal perception of being Mandarin teachers, how they act as Mandarin teachers while interacting with people in their interpersonal and intergroup relations, and the social recognition they receive from other individuals or groups in U.S. society. According to researchers' interpretation of identity (Vignoles et al., 2012), I hold that Mandarin teachers' identity is simultaneously a personal, relational, and collective phenomenon; it is stable in some ways and fluid in other ways. Mandarin teachers' identity is formed and revised throughout their lifespan through the interplay of processes including self-discovery, personal identity construction, and social identity construction.

Professional Identity

Professional identity is also known as, "occupational, vocational work or career identity refers to the consciousness of oneself as a worker" (Skorikov & Vondracek, 2012, p. 693). It means how one understands who he or she is, and what he or she does in the shifting situation related to their working.

For my study, I view professional identity as a tool by which individuals understand themselves as they interact with the contexts and other people around them (Coldron & Smith, 1999; MacLure, 1993; Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2013). It refers to how teachers understand themselves as professionals (Eteläpelto & Vähäsantanen, 2006). For Chinese Mandarin teachers, it refers to how they integrate their sub-identities such as their individual personal self-identity, relational identity, and collective identity (Sedikides & Brewer, 2001) as they transitioned from their home country to a new

socioeconomic, historical, and sociocultural context. I define professional identity as the belief, values, engagement, commitment, and alignment that allow early-career NCMTs to identify themselves as teachers (i.e., distinct from other professionals such as doctors, nurses, engineers) and a second language teachers (i.e., distinct from teachers of English, math, social studies, or science).

Bicultural or Multicultural Individuals

With today's increasing diversity and globalization, a growing number of people have undergone the process of internalizing more than one culture. Benet-Martínez & Haritatos (2005) referred to these people as bicultural or multicultural individuals. Huynh, Nguyen, and Benet- Martínez (2011) explained that as an immigrant/ethnic minority/international student/expatriate living in the United States, individuals have been exposed to at least two cultures: his or her own heritage or ethnic culture (e.g., Mexican, Japanese, Russian), and the dominant or mainstream United States culture. In broader view, Huynh, Benet-Martínez, and Nguyen (2018) identified that "'bicultural individuals' include immigrants and their children, refugees, ethnic minorities, sojourners, indigenous peoples, biracial individuals, international adoptees, individuals in intercultural relationships, and so on" (p. 2). Huynh et al. (2011) defined bicultural individual in a strict way as "those who are exposed to and have internalized two cultures" (p. 828).

In this study, bicultural individuals are those native Mandarin-speaking teachers who work in the United States as immigrants, ethnic minorities, or international students

internalizing at least two cultures: Chinese culture as their heritage culture and the mainstream United States culture in their daily job and lives. As bicultural individual, these native Mandarin-speaking teachers can use Mandarin and English as languages in their profession.

My interest is in the early-career NCMTs' understanding and development of their professional identity as they respond to the different socioeconomic, social political, social cultural context as bicultural or multicultural individuals. I want to explore how their professional identity develops in relation to the process of their bicultural identity integration. Thus, in next chapter, I describe the theoretical framework for my study, provide a review of the research literature related to my problem and identify the methodological literature for conducting my study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this study was to describe and explain the early-career NCMTs' experience and their professional identity development as bicultural teachers. To explore how NCMTs develop their professional identity as they transition to the new socioeconomic, sociopolitical, and cultural context different from their experience in their home country, I selected a theoretical framework, reviewed the research literature, and reviewed the methodological literature.

I use social cultural theory in education (Nieto, 2002) and bicultural identity integration construct (BII) (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005; Huynh, Nguyen, & Benet-Martínez, 2011; Huynh, Benet-Martínez & Nguyen, 2018) to understand my problem. On this basis, I describe these two theories (i.e., social cultural theory, social cultural theory in education) and the construct (i.e., BII) to articulate the reasons for applying them to my problem. Then, I review the research on identity, recent research on professional identity and language teachers' identity, and discuss studies about the professional identity formation of early-career NCMTs. Finally, I review the research methodologies used in recent research and explain why qualitative research methodology was appropriate for conducting my study.

Theoretical Framework

In this section, I examine early-career NCMTs' professional identity development through the lens of social cultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978). First, I describe Vygotsky's

social cultural theory and Nieto's (2002) social cultural theory in education. Second, I explain the application of the bicultural identity integration (BII) construct (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005; Huynh et al., 2018; Huynh et al., 2011) to my problem.

Social Cultural Theory

Daniels (2016) linked the growing interest in social cultural theory to Vygotsky's (1978) work. For example, Daniels (2001) put forward with the idea that teaching, and learning are socially constructed, dependent on the culture and context, and influenced by historical political events by summarizing Vygotsky's (1978) social cultural theory. Lantolf (2008) stated that Vygotskian thinking indicated that the origin of knowledge construction includes social interaction. In other words, people not only develop knowledge in their minds, but also co-construct knowledge through social interaction. Vygotsky (1978) focused on developmental psychology and contributed to theories about how learning and teaching work in tandem with cognition (Daniels, 2001).

Walqui (2006) listed the core tenets that underlie Vygotsky's social cultural theory: (a) learning precedes development, (b) language is the main tool of thought, (c) mediation is central to learning, and (d) social interaction is the basis of learning and development. Learning is a process of apprenticeship and internalization in which learners transform skills and knowledge from the social into the cognitive plane, and (e) the zone of proximal development (ZPD) is the primary activity space in which learning occurs (p. 160).

Vygotsky developed educational concepts such as the zone of proximal development and scaffolding in the process of learning and development (Scott & Palincsar, 2013). Scholars have used his theories widely to understand teaching and learning in U.S. schools:

Vygotsky was not only interested in what more knowledgeable others brought to the interaction, but also in what the child himself or herself brought to the interaction, as well as how the broader cultural and historical setting shaped the interaction…Sociocultural theory has also been called upon to advance instructional practice that might redress disparities in the current educational system. (Scott & Palincsar, 2013, p. 5)

Vygotsky's (1978) social cultural theory "underscores the social situation of development that is the context in which social practices or activities occur" (Shabani, 2016, p. 3). Shabani (2016) suggested that Vygotsky's claim about students learning in school setting is applicable to teachers and Vygotsky's theory of development which mainly emphasized on the notions of social origin of mental functions, unity of behavior and consciousness, mediation, and psychological systems can help people better understand teachers' professional growth in their work landscape. "The goal of a sociocultural approach is to explicate the relationships between the human action, on the one hand, and the cultural, institutional, and historical situations in which this action occurs on the other hand" (Wertsch, Del Río, & Alvarez, 1995, p. 11). In addition, Larson (2018) contended that social cultural theory examines the interaction between

teachers and students in classrooms and emphasizes the influences that social, cultural, and historical factors may have on teaching and learning.

As aforementioned, it is obvious that people can apply social cultural theory in education to understand teaching and learning. In addition, culture, language, social context, historical factors, institutional context interweave with language teaching and learning. To understand how early-career NCMTs develop their professional identity, it is important to link language, culture, and teaching. Social cultural theory is a lens through which people can understand students, teachers, classrooms, schools situated within broader social, political, and cultural context (Larson, 2018).

Social cultural theory in education. To understand the experiences of my cases' professional identity development, I applied Nieto's (2002) social cultural theory in education (2002) and Benet-Martínez and her colleagues' (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005; Huynh et al., 2018; Huynh et al., 2011) bicultural identity integration construct (BII) to my study.

Nieto's social cultural theory in education. Stating that the traditional metaphors such as "I pulled myself up by my bootstraps," "melted," "I had joined the mainstream" embedded in the traditional theories are "unsatisfactory and incomplete because they place individuals in the center, isolated from the social, cultural, historical and political context in which they live" (p. 5). Nieto (2002) contended that social cultural theory gives us different lenses with which to view "learning, and different metaphors for describing" (p. 5). Nieto considered that to understand education through social cultural

theory lens is very significant because she agrees that "how one views learning led to dramatically different curricular decisions, pedagogical approaches, expectations of learning, relationships among students, teachers and families, and indeed, education outcomes" (p. 5). Assuming social relationship and political realities are at the heart of teaching and learning, Nieto forwarded the idea that "social cultural and socio-political perspectives are the first and foremost" (p. 5). In other words, learning emerges from the social, cultural and political spaces in which it takes place, and through the interaction and relationship that occur between learners and teachers. Nieto proposed five interrelated concepts which are the basis of her work which can help to understand countless learners' experiences that may "challenge traditional deficit views of learning" (p. 5). Nieto's five concepts that undergird social cultural and social political perspectives are agency/co-constructed learning, experience, identity/hybridity, context/situatedness/positionality, and community. Nieto claimed that these five concepts help to locate some fundamental principles of sociocultural and sociopolitical theory that are both deeply connected and overlapping.

To illustrate the concept of agency, Nieto (2002) suggested that in many classrooms and schools learning continues to be regarded as the transmission of official knowledge (Apple, 1993), or the banking of knowledge (Freire, 1970), or the reproduction of socially sanctioned knowledge rather than "as agency, or mutual discovery by students and teachers" (Nieto, 2002, p. 5). He supported the idea to apply Freire's (1985) definition of study as constructed by active agents to understand learning.

In other words, "to study is not to consume ideas, but to create and recreated them" (Freire, 1985, p. 4) and study is a mutual discovery by students and teachers. Based on her previous research (Nieto, 1999, 2000), Nieto (2002) found that students' views echoing largely those of educational researchers who had found that in most classrooms especially in secondary schools and even more so in those schools attended by poor students of all background, teaching methods vary little from chalk and talk methods, that textbooks are the dominant materials teachers relied on, that routine and rote learning are preferred by teachers to creativity and critical thinking, and that teacher-centered transmission models still prevail (Cummings, 1994; Goodlad, 1984). Nieto (2002) contended, "Learning is not simply of question of transmitting knowledge, but a question of working with students so that they can reflect, theorize and create knowledge" (p. 7). This kind of agency invites students to consider different options, to question taken-for-granted truths, and to delve more deeply into problems.

Most Mandarin teachers received their basic education in China, they have very different understanding about classroom learning and teaching. In Chinese cultural orientation, teachers are playing the leading role in the classroom learning and have higher power in managing the classroom teaching and learning because students easily regard them as the most knowledgeable person. In mainland Chinese education, learning is still a question of transmitting knowledge. That is why for most Mandarin teachers, when they teach Mandarin abroad, they tended to teach the same way as what they have learned in China. As to the development of NCMTs' professional identity in the United

States, there is a need for them to change their past understanding, views and beliefs of classroom learning. They need to understand that classroom learning is an agency in which both students and teachers' co-construct learning. They need to know that teachers are not the center of the classroom learning; instead, they guide to lead students to consider different options, to ask questions, to challenge taken-for-granted truths. In addition, they need to understand that teachers and students learn from each other, they contribute to the classroom learning together and that classroom learning is no longer a transmitting of official knowledge but the co-construction of knowledge between teachers and students.

Experience is the second concept of Nieto's (2002) social cultural theory in education. In Nieto's opinion, individuals' learning needs to build on experiences because this is an innately human endeavor accessible to all people. Usually this principle is often ignored as it comes to young people who have not had the kinds of experiences that are thought to prepare them for academic success, particularly those students who are not been brought up within what Delpit (1988) called the culture of power. Usually, the experiences of students from culturally and linguistically diverse background and those raised in poverty tend to be quite different from students who are from more economically and socially advantaged students. Students bring to school different cultural capital that is evident in such invisibles such as values, tastes, and behaviors and through cultural identity such as language, dialect and ethnicity which can help keep economic privilege. Some signs of cultural capital are more socially worthy

than others are though they are not necessarily intrinsic which means that power relations

are fundamental aspect of school life. Therefore, Nieto (2002) articulated that teachers'

attitudes concerning the cultural capital that their students bring to schools and teachers'

subsequent behaviors relative to this cultural capital influence their teaching beliefs and

understanding. All students come to school as thinkers and learners, aptitudes usually

recognized as important building blocks for further learning. Teachers should not

understand the kinds of knowledge and experience their students bring to schools in

different ways. For example, teachers should not regard speaking languages other than

English, especially those languages with low status as a potential detriment rather than a

benefit to learning, and likewise, teachers should not consider travelling to Europe to be

more culturally enriching than to visit relatives in some places like Haiti, or Dominican

Republic. In Nieto's (1999) study, one of her case participants mentioned that "being

nice is not enough to students because school is a foreign land to most students, and the

more distant a child's culture and language are from the culture, the more at risk that

child is" (p. 85). Because many teachers are reluctant or unable to accept and build on

students' experiences, they ask their students to forget to speak their home language or

give them easy tasks so they will not feel badly when the work becomes difficult. In

addition, many teachers never learn about what life is like at home, what their students

eat, what music they like, what stories they have been told, or what their history is. Nieto

(2002) argued that when dismissing students' knowledge and skills as inappropriate for

the school setting, schools lose a gold opportunity to establish on their students' lives in the service of their learning.

As far as my problem is concerned, students in the Mandarin classroom learning may have different home experiences of learning either Mandarin or other languages. Students are from different cultural and linguistic background. Some students may come from families with only English language speaking background, some may from Chinese cultural background, and some may come from families with Latino cultural background while others may come from families with mixture cultural background. The differences of their cultural background may also bring different learning experiences into the Mandarin learning. They can use their home experiences or home language to anchor their Mandarin learning. As to establish their professional identity, early-career NCMTs need to look at the different knowledge, skills their students can bring to classroom learning and their different experiences as they contribute to the co-construction of learning in the same classroom. NCMTs can promote students' Mandarin reading, speaking, and writing as they connect their students' experiences to learning and valuing their knowledge and skills that developed from their own cultural background.

In their study on culturally responsive instruction to improve reading for Latino bilingual students, Orosco and O'Connor (2014) stated, "I always try to make an effort to draw upon students' cultural and linguistic capital during instruction, as background knowledge is fundamental to developing reading comprehension" (p. 523). Orosco and O'Connor instructed their students to read books that their students relate to, in English

and Spanish, in this way, they explained, "these children come from competent and knowledgeable households, their parents, community and life experience give them so much knowledge, and I can use the cognitive sources to make me a better teacher, and my students better readers" (p. 524). They integrated their students' knowledge and skills into their classroom too and valued their students' assets their students and family bring. Their family and parents committed more to the school and classroom learning and teaching. For NCMTs, it is important to consider this idea, as they understand classroom teaching because their students' knowledge, family, life experience, and community all contribute to their Mandarin teaching and learning.

Identity/hybridity is the third major tenet Nieto (2002) use to explain learning through the social cultural theory lens. Beyond the traditional thinking that individual differences hold privilege over other circumstance, social cultural theory includes other issues such as students' cultural identity.

Nieto (1999) illustrated that culture is complex, dynamic, multifaceted, embedded in context, influenced by social, economic, and political factors, created, and socially constructed, learned and dialectical. Everyone has a culture because all people participated in the world through social and political relationships informed by history as well as by race, ethnicity, language, social class, sexual orientation, gender, and other circumstances related to identity and experience. As Kalantzis, Cope, and Slade (1989) described:

We are not simply bearers of cultures, languages, and histories, with a duty to reproduce them. We are the products of linguistic-cultural circumstances, actors with the capacity to resynthesize what we have been socialized into and to solve new and emerging problems of existence. We are not duty-bound to conserve ancestral characteristics which are not structurally useful. We are both socially determined and creators of human futures. (p. 18)

Cultures influence each other, even the minority culture and those regarded as less status have impact on majority cultures, sometimes in dramatic ways. Individuals' identity is complicated, as they get involved in the influences of the majority culture and their own minority culture, and other minority cultures. Identity is not only a personal attribute, but also relates to one's institutional life.

In one of Nieto's (2000) studies, one of her participant Linda identified as biracial of Black American and White American experienced a torturing school life and finally dropped out of school even though she won scholarship to enter a highly regarded university. She described her confusion with identifying as a member of one race; however, other people in her race may look at her as belonging to another race. In school, her teachers jumped to the assumption that she was Latina or even Chinese, and they identified her as such on forms without asking her. She felt like "a pea on a big pile of rice" (Nieto, 2002, p. 12). Nieto explained Linda's miserable experiences in school stemmed from the lack of recognition of her identity.

Nieto (2002) argued that hybridity complicated the idea of cultural identity and implied that assimilation was not the only alternative. The idea of identity and hybridity complicated teachers' curriculum and instruction. She contended that teachers should apply a culturally responsive approach and "question the structural inequality, the racism, and the injustice that exist in society" (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 128) rather than simply incorporate cultural practices of students' families' in the curriculum or replicate the stereotypical ideas of learning styles.

As mentioned previously, an individuals' identity is dynamic as they shape their identity by negotiating within their contexts. Individuals' identity changes because they are layered within cultural, political, linguistic, historic experience that also influence personal identity and how people view them as part of the school's curriculum or community (Larson, 2018).

Lave (1996) explained how identities are socially constructed and influenced by interconnected development of learning, community, and ways of knowing. She wrote:

> Who you are becoming shapes crucially and fundamentally what you "know?" "What you know" may be better thought of as doing rather than having something— "knowing" rather than acquiring or accumulating knowledge of information. "Knowing" is a relation among communities of practice, participation in practice, and the generation of identities as part of becoming part of ongoing practice. (p. 157)

Lave found that identity was central to teaching and learning because identities influence participation and community of practice.

Regarding NCMTs, it is important for them to understand the identity or hybridity that complicate learning and teaching. They need to consider that assimilation is not the only alternative for bicultural or multicultural individuals to establish their identity or understand others' identity. NCMTs need to develop their awareness to question the structural inequalities, racism, and the injustices that exist in society.

Following the concept of identity, Nieto (2002) described context (situatedness or positionality). She explained that if people thought of culture as context-free, then human's lives would be fragments. Differences of people's ethnicity, language, social status, genders need not be the barriers to learning.

Nieto (2002) articulated that "whether and to what extent a teacher realizes the influence social and political contexts have on learning can alter how they perceive their students and consequently, what and how they teach them" (p. 15). Nieto (1999) summarized her participant's idea to raise the major problem of bilingual education in the United States that many mainstream teachers, principals, and even entire school systems have misconceived bilingual education as remedial program and given little attention to it. She discerned that if teachers believe that intelligence and learning are divorced from context, they may conclude that the political and economic realities of their students' lives including their school environments have nothing to do with their learning. However, learning and teaching should not be separated from the context because "if a

curriculum that avoids questioning school and society is not, as is commonly supposed, politically neutral, it cuts off students' development as critical thinkers about their world" (Shor, 1992). In other words, teachers need to address contextual issues such as political environment, cultural context, economic reality of students' life, school environment.

Finally, Nieto (2002) indicated that in sociocultural theory, learning and achievement are not merely cognitive processes, but are complex issues that people need to understand in the development of community. As teachers, they need be able to create community. To change academic failure to success, appropriate social and institutional intervention need to occur. Nieto regarded that teachers should acknowledge students' differences and act as a bridge between the dominant culture and their students' background of diversity. She believed that it is not possible to separate learning from the context it takes place nor from an understanding of how culture and society influence and are influenced by learning. For example, Nieto asserted that her colleagues' action research provided a good example of using students' experience and identities as a basis for creating a community. Their action research demonstrated how parents could promote student learning by transforming the curriculum. In their study, they invited parents from widely diverse background to share their daily lives, talents, and skills through visits in school rather than just simply speaking about their culture or share food. In this way, they enhanced their children's school learning. Nieto summarized that collaborating with family required teachers to confront their own fears of difference and

open their classrooms to discussions of topics that may raise tensions among the values of different individuals, groups, and institutions.

How teachers understand their learners determines what they teach and how they teach in school, which in turn, can also influence how they understand themselves and how their students, colleagues, parents, and other stakeholders look at them as they are teaching in the school and community. In one of her studies, Nieto (2012) described:

> ESL and bilingual teachers are most successful when they draw on students'
> cultural backgrounds and experiences to make learning more meaningful. This
> mean that she needed to learn about the students she taught, about their identities,
> their communities, and their realities. (p. 134)

Nieto summarized that bilingual teachers should know how to engage with bilingual students of diverse language background through curriculum, pedagogy, outreach to family and engagement to the community (Nieto, 1999, 2000, 2002; Nieto & Bode, 2012).

As bilingual teachers and bicultural individuals themselves, NCMTs might find that the social, historical, and cultural communities influence their professional identity. In addition, what community NCMTs can establish and what relationship they can establish with parents from widely diverse cultural, economic, social background could make a difference to learning and teaching. Their professional identity changes and develops along with the context, the identities of their students, and the experiences of all the participants in the learning and teaching community.

Nieto's (2002) social cultural theory provided a specific lens for educators to look at classroom learning and teaching and emphasized that classroom learning is co-constructed, learned through experiences, and dependent on social culture, context, identity, and community. Some scholars (Brock-Utne, 2003; Curry, 2002; Horváth, 2003; Varghese, 2003) spoke highly of Nieto's success in pulling together the theoretical notions of language, culture, diversity, and pedagogy with practical approaches to students from a variety of background. They also noted her advocacy for teachers and teacher educators in the United States and prompted them to consider diversity in their education program and their classroom. Varghese (2003) suggested that if teachers are not inclusive and reflective of the reality of the race, gender, ethnicity, and other factors in his or her classrooms, they are not successful. Nieto was among the few scholars who identified multicultural education and considered language minority students and their education as the integral part of the field (Varghese, 2003). Scholars agreed (Brock-Utne, 2003; Curry, 2002; Horváth, 2003; Varghese, 2003) that Nieto's work was well-designed for the in-service and preservice teachers and teacher educators, who are mostly White women from working and lower-middle class with little experience of racial minorities. Curry (2002) maintained that Nieto (2002) "constructed a case for the value of multicultural education for all students and for all the teachers through the process of identifying their own culture and the privilege that their skin, color, gender, social class and sex orientation may give them" (p. 610). In other words, teachers needed to understand how language, culture, and teaching connect to each other as they are

developing their teaching belief, values, as well as how teachers change their thinking about teaching. Brock-Utne (2003) also discerned that Nieto's social cultural theory in education has made a great contribution to teachers and teacher educators because she has aroused educators' concerns about minority children's integration into the majority culture. He maintained that Nieto has advocated that the immigrant children along with their language and their culture are resources rather than a burden in the two-way bilingual education. He also asserted that the largely monolingual American students could learn from their classmates from linguistically diverse backgrounds and could benefit from exposure to their classmates' home languages.

However, scholars identified some weakness in Nieto's (2002) social cultural theory in education (Brock-Utne, 2003; Curry, 2002; Horváth, 2003; Varghese, 2003). Curry (2002) mentioned Nieto did not provide teachers with specific suggestions for their teaching practice. Yet, Nieto did discuss the relationship between language, culture, diversity, and pedagogy in educating students from variety of background but neglected providing specific suggestions or strategies for teachers to deal with specific case in real life teaching. Another criticism that Brock-Utne (2003) raised about Nieto's work was she only discussed the situation in which the language spoken by the minority groups was oppressed by the majority culture and by speakers of the majority culture. Nieto had generalized the situation in discussing how to link language, culture, and teaching in the educational context. Brock-Utne (2003) suggested that it would be different if the language and culture of the majority were being oppressed as in Africa or in a classroom

where another language (e.g., Chinese, Japanese, French) was being taught to the speakers of majority culture and language. Varghese (2003) criticized Nieto's work for its lack of unity, which she suggested would have been better represented as a collection of her selected works.

In summary, I agree with Curry's (2002) idea that Nieto's (2002) findings can be applicable to teachers from different backgrounds when they are teaching students from a variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds though she mainly focused on White women teachers from the working and lower-middle class with little experience of racial minorities. I assert that Nieto's social cultural theory (2002) is applicable to my study on examining NCMTs' professional identity when they are teaching students from a variety of different backgrounds (in terms of race, culture and ethnicity, language background, social class, and other differences.) in U.S. schools. To understand how early-career NCMTs develop professional identity, it is important to explore how the NCMTs in my study understand the relationship between language, culture and teaching and learning, and how they integrate their students' linguistic and cultural diversity into the teaching and learning context. My study can provide a specific example for examining the pedagogies or language teachers' real-life teaching practice.

However, I found that Nieto's (2002) theory only emphasized the aspects about how to understand learning and how to teach students through social cultural mediators. Her theory focused on how teachers teach their students and what values teachers should hold in their classroom learning. It concerned what teachers should know and how they

should teach. Her theory emphasized the relationship between students' learning and

their life experiences, family, culture, identity, context, and community; however, it did

not address teachers' life experiences, cultural background, and social cultural factors

that influence their professional identity development in daily classroom learning and

teaching. Nieto did not discuss how teachers develop their values, beliefs, and

commitment and so on in the process of identifying who they are as bicultural and

bilingual individuals themselves in the multicultural educational context.

　　　　To understand early-career NCMTs' professional identity, it is not sufficient for

them to know what and how to teach. According to Varghese (2004), "Bilingual teachers

and their development must be understood as agents who make choices and have

differentiated understandings of their profession, rather than as individuals who replicate

the content and way they have been trained" (p. 222). As bilingual and bicultural

teachers, NCMTs have different life experiences and their cultural identity co-develops

with their professional identity as they experience linguistic, social, cultural, and

contextual transitions. Thus, NCMTs' cultural identity is a very central aspect of

professional identity development to take into consideration. In other words, how their

cultural identity develops has an influence on their professional identity.

　　　　Nieto (2002) also did not discuss how individual bilingual teachers' cultural

identity might influence their professional identity development. Arguing that there is no

systematic answer and empirically testable manner to explore the interrelation between

culture and identity, Côté (1996) endeavored to resolve this issue by using a culture-

identity link framework. On this basis, he put forward with identity capital referring to "what individuals invest in who they are in the identity market in the late-modern communities" (p. 424). He maintained that the individual invests in a certain identity during his interaction with others. According to Côté, the most successful investors in the identity market presumably have portfolios comprising two types of assets: (a) the assets that can be socially visible such as educational credential, and (b) the intangible assets including the exploration of commitments, ego strength, self-efficacy, cognitive and complexity, self-monitoring, and critical thinking abilities. He asserted that these assets can empower individuals to understand and negotiate the various social, occupational, and personal obstacles and opportunities they are likely to encounter throughout their life.

Another scholar, Reynolds (1996), thought of teacher as the landscaper, someone who endeavors to change the lay of the land. He argued, "It is unlikely to work well if teachers merely follow the dictates of an architectural landscaper who never gets down to the dirt, but it also won't work well if teachers focus only on their own garden and fail to see the relation to the larger overall design of the site (p. 76). In other words, individual teachers should invest in what they are by interacting with the occupational, social cultural context. Individual teachers are likely to make effective change when they possess powerful identity capital in both sociological and psychological aspects. On one hand, they have the tangible assets that support them to be what they are in the society,

on the other hand, they have the capacities to understand and negotiate with whatever

they would encounter in their life-passage landscape.

Macedo, Dentrinos, and Gounari (2003) described language as one of the most

important features of the identity and culture of a people and that language cannot be

seen only as a neutral communication tool, it should be viewed as the only means through

which learners make sense of their world and transform it in the process of meaning-

making. Varghese, Johnson, and Johnson (2005) noted, "We need to understand

teachers: the professional, cultural, political and individual identities which they claim, or

which are assigned to them to understand teaching and learning" (p. 22). Similarly,

Hollins (2008) stated that the construct of cultural identity allows scholars to explore how

professional teacher identity is historically and socially constructed. Cultural identity

refers to one's "sense of belonging or not belonging to particular groups, based on his or

her history and participation in particular practices and systems of meaning" (Menard-

Warwick, 2008, p. 624). It is rooted in shared norms and practices (Eriksen, 2001) and

"represents an individual's identity as a member of a group with shared characteristics,

which often (but not always) include racial, ethnic, or geographic origins" (Unger, 2012,

p. 811). As Mandarin teachers, NCMTs need to consider the relationship between

language, culture, and identity. How they deal with the relationship between language,

culture, and identity may influence how they develop their professional identity.

Because "cultural identity shapes people's understanding of the physical and

social world and their role in it" (Unger, 2012, p. 813), cultural identity also shapes

bilingual teachers' beliefs about their learning and teaching. Thus, I suggest that Benet-Martínez and her colleagues' (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005; Huynh et al., 2018) bicultural identity integration (BII) construct can be a great supplement to Nieto's (2002) social cultural theory to understand early-career NCMTs' professional identity development.

Huynh et al. (2018) noted that the increasing progress of globalization and advances in technology have dramatically increased cross-cultural contact across the globe. They explained that individuals who "have been exposed to more than one culture such as their ethnic culture(s) and the dominant culture in the case of immigrant and their children—can be described as bicultural or multicultural" (p. 2). They underscored that "bicultural individuals are undergoing acculturation" which refers to the process of "adapting behaviorally and psychologically to a second culture (or in the case of those born into two cultures, learning and adapting to these two cultures)" (p. 2). Huynh et al. (2018) indicated that according to some researchers' (Schwartz, Unger, Zamboanga, & Szapocznik, 2010) study, in the acculturation process, bicultural individuals must "negotiate different sets of affective, behavioral, and cognitive expectations stemming from membership in two or more different cultural groups, and these adaptations may occur in multiple dimensions of life (e.g., behaviors, values, identities, etc.)" (p. 2).

Many researchers (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006; Huynh et al., 2018) explained that most bicultural individual undergoing acculturation face two key issues: (a) how they are motivated or allowed to maintain their ethnic culture, and (b) how they

are involved in the dominant culture. Thus, Berry's (1990) model of acculturation has

been widely accepted and empirically supported (Huyhn et al., 2018). Berry's (1990,

2003) acculturation framework included four acculturation strategies that bicultural

individuals can use: (a) assimilation—those who do not want to or cannot maintain their

ethic culture and identity but only choose to involve in the dominant culture are using the

assimilation strategy; (b) separation—individuals who choose to maintain their ethnic

culture and identity but do not desire or cannot engage with the dominant culture use the

separation strategy; (c) integration—those who desire to or are allowed to maintain their

ethnic culture and while engaging with the dominant culture choose to use integration

strategy; and (d) marginalization—people who have involvement in neither their ethnic

culture not the dominant culture use marginalization strategy. Some researchers (Sam &

Berry, 2010; Van Oudenhoven, Ward, & Masgoret, 2006) identified that integration or

biculturalism is the most widely endorsed acculturation strategy and it is the most

adaptive strategy for bicultural individuals to solve the acculturation issues they may face

(Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2013). However, though Berry's (1990) framework of

acculturation addressed four acculturation positions (i.e., assimilation, integration,

separation, marginalization), Benet-Martínez and Haritatos (2005) argued that Berry's

concept of integration:

> failed to describe how people combine or integrate dual cultures and did little to
>
> uncover individual or social cultural antecedents that would explain why a given

individual would experience biculturalism as a dichotomy or paradox or make

them feel both special and confused. (p. 1018)

Further, Benet-Martínez and Haritatos (2005) articulated that most acculturation

studies regarded biculturalism as a uniform construct but overlooked the individual

variations in the way people negotiate and organize their bicultural identity (Phinney &

Devich-Navarro, 1997; Vivero & Jenkins, 1999). Benet-Martínez and Haritatos asserted

that the customary assessment of biculturalism based on traditional acculturation seems

insufficient to capture the individual differences of experiences and meanings associated

with bicultural identity. In other words, variations in "social cultural" (e.g., generational

status, cultural makeup of the community), "socio-cognitive" (e.g., personality, attitudes)

and "socioemotional factors" (e.g., stress due to discrimination or in-group pressures)

implied that there are significant individual differences in the process of bicultural

identity formation and the meanings associated with the experiences (p. 1019).

On this basis, Benet-Martínez and her colleagues (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos,

2005; Benet-Martínez, Leu, Lee, & Morris 2002) proposed the theoretical construct of

bicultural identity integration (BII) as a framework to investigate individual differences

associated with bicultural identity negotiation and organization by focusing on how much

their bicultural identity intersect or overlap. BII captured the degree to which bicultural

people "perceive their mainstream and ethnic cultural identities as compatible and

integrated vs. oppositional and difficult to integrate" (Benet-Martínez et al., 2002, p. 9).

In the next section, I discuss how I apply the Bicultural Identity Integration construct to my problem.

 Bicultural identity integration construct. Benet-Martínez and Haritatos (2005) demonstrated that BII is not a unitary construct but encompasses two different and psychometrically independent components. As they described:

> (a) cultural blended-ness versus compartmentalization—the degree of dissociation versus overlap perceived between the two cultural orientations (e.g. "I see myself as a Chinese in the United States" vs. "I am a Chinese-American"); (b) *cultural harmony* versus conflict-the degree of tension or clash versus compatibility perceived between the two cultures ("I feel trapped between the two cultures" vs. "I do not see any conflict between Chinese and American way of doing things." (p. 1022)

 Building on Benet-Martínez and Haritatos's (2005) ideas, Huynh et al. (2011) explained, "Lower blended-ness is associated with personality and performance-related challenge (e.g., lower openness to new experiences, greater language barriers, and living in more culturally isolated surroundings)" (p. 830). Whereas lower harmony "stems from other personality traits and strains that are largely interpersonal in nature (e.g., higher neuroticism, greater perceived discrimination, more strained intercultural relations, and greater language barriers)" (Huynh et al., 2011, p. 830). Benet-Martínez and Haritatos recognized that bicultural individuals might have any combination of high or low blended-ness and high or low harmony.

According to Benet-Martínez et al. (2002), individuals high on the BII framework tend to see themselves as part of a ''hyphenated culture'' (or even part of a combined, "third," emerging culture) and find it easy to integrate both cultures in their everyday lives. These individuals with high BII are described as "having developed compatible bicultural identities (Padilla, 1994; Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997; Rotheram-Borus, 1993), meaning that they do not perceive the two cultures to be mutually exclusive, oppositional, or conflicting" (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005, p. 1019). Bicultural individuals with low BII, on the other hand, report difficulty in incorporating both cultures into a cohesive sense of identity (Gil, Vega, & Dimas, 1994; Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997; Vivero & Jenkins, 1999). Although people with low BII also identify with both cultures, they are particularly sensitive to specific tensions between the two cultural orientations and see this incompatibility as a source of internal conflict. Moreover, bicultural individuals with low BIIs often feel as if they should just choose one culture (e.g., they often report that it is easier to take on either culture or none, but not both at the same time).

Benet-Martínez and Haritatos (2005) found that variations in BII seem to "involve two independent psychological constructs: cultural conflict and cultural distance, each representing unique and separate aspects of the dynamic intersection between mainstream and ethnic cultural identities in bicultural individuals" (p. 1038). They asserted that BII should be understood as emerging or resulting from variations in cultural distance and conflict. Thus, behaviors, attitudes, and feelings described as individuals with low BII

usually capture the phenomenology of most experiences of cultural conflict and cultural distance. They also found that perceptions of cultural conflict can be understood as "a product of both neuroticism (e.g., vulnerability, rumination, and emotional rigidity) and perceived contextual pressures, mainly stress in the linguistic, intercultural relations, and discrimination domains" and proposed that "these factors may challenge bicultural individuals' feelings of efficacy in maintaining consistent and harmonious self-images and group affiliations" (p. 1040). On the contrary, they described cultural distance as an approach related to seeing one's two cultures as being very different from each other. They asserted that cultural distance appears to be driven by dispositional factors (low openness), performance variables (low cultural competence), and acculturation-related contextual factors (e.g., living in a culturally isolated environment or having linguistic difficulties.) They proposed that these factors might challenge bicultural individuals' feelings of efficacy in creating a combined cultural identity thus leading to the perceiving one culture or the other.

As bicultural individuals in the U.S. schooling context, NCMTs may have different experiences as they undergone the bicultural integration process. When they are facing cultural issues in their classroom teaching or daily schooling, the NCMTs with high or low BII may present different understanding, behaviors, attitudes, feelings, and actions. For NCMTs with high BII, they may find it easier to blend and harmonize the two cultures or more than two cultures in classroom teaching and learning community; for NCMTs with low BII, it is easier for them to feel sensitive to the cultural conflict and

distance and tend to choose one culture or the other when dealing with culture in classroom learning and teaching and community.

In summary, the bicultural identity integration construct is applicable to my examination of NCMTs' strategies in dealing with their two cultural orientations in their acculturation process which may influence their professional identity and their handling the relationship between language, culture, identity and teaching and learning.

Review of the Research Literature

In this section, I review research about understanding of identity and professional identity, language teachers' identity, and Chinese language teachers' identity, and bicultural identity of language teachers in the United States.

Professional Identity

Professional identity has aroused many researchers' (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004; Rodgers & Scott, 2008) attention in different fields during recent decades, yet there is not a universally accepted understanding of its concept (Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2013). Based on their review of 22 research articles related to professional identity, Beijaard, Meijer, and Verloop (2004) grouped professional identity studies into three categories: (a) studies focused on professional identity formation, (b) studies focused on the characteristics of professional identity, and (c) studies focused on the narrative perspective of teachers' story telling about their professional identity.

Professional identity is an emergent and popular topic in academia (Varghese, Johnson, & Johnson, 2005), yet little research focus on theorizing professional identity given the various theoretical perspectives such as psychology, social linguistics, general education, and philosophy are borrowed in study related to professional identity (Barhuizen, 2017). Beijaard et al. (2004) suggested that in the future, researchers need to examine how individuals form their professional identity based on emphasizing the interplay between the self and identity as well as the roles of the context in the formation of their professional identity. Language teachers' identity and professional development is recently a great interest or topic in doing research (Varghese et al., 2005), but too little research has been conducted on theorizing language teacher identity. Varghese et al.'s (2005) research inspired Barhuizen (2017) to theorize language teachers' identity in a macro lens by including different factors relating to language teacher identity which can be applied to my study of the early-career NCMTs' professional identity. Few research studies focus on examining the bicultural identity of language teachers or the interplay of language teachers' cultural identity and professional identity. Little recent research (Weisman, 1995, 2001) studied the bicultural identity of language teachers or the cultural factors that influence Chinese language teachers' identity (Xiang, 2017). Thus, scholars need to act and conduct research focusing on language teachers' bicultural identities and the ways language teachers' bicultural or multicultural identities influence their professional identity as language teachers in U.S classrooms.

Review of understandings of identity and professional identity. In this section, I review the understanding of identity and professional identity in previous research and propose an integrative view to understand how the early-career NCMTs develop their professional identity in my study.

Review of understanding identity. The concept of identity has been a wide discussion in general education in recent decades (Beijaard et al., 2004; Connelly & Clandinin, 1999). Many researchers (Burke & Stets, 2009; Sikes, 2009; Schwartz, Luyckx & Vignoles, 2012) argued that identity is not static but dynamic; some viewed identity as forming anew in every situation (Blumer, 1969). Other researchers (Lee, Huang, Law, & Wang, 2013) explained that several complicated contextual factors would impact teachers' identity and emotions which were categorized into three factors, namely, personal experiences, educational policy changes, and institutional contexts. Day, Kington, Stobart, and Sammons (2006) found that teacher identity might be stable and fragmented at different times and in different ways according to life, career, and situational factors.

Scholars framed their explorations of identity in different disciplines and perspectives (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Taylor, 2017). For example, scholars in philosophy (Mead, 1934; Taylor, 1989), psychology (Erikson, 1959), and anthropology (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998) as well as those in postmodernism (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991; Sarup, 1996) and social constructivism (Bakhtin, 1981; Belsey, 1980; Egan-Robertson, 1998) have contributed to understanding the phenomenon

of identity. Thus, understanding identity has become more complicated and has been

explained from a variety of approaches and perspectives. Understandings of identity

shifted from regarding it as a set of genetically determined traits residing in a stable

individual (Cooley, 1902; Mead, 1934) to understanding it as a more complex and

cultural construct that varies across social settings and different discourses (Gee, 1990;

McCarthey, 2001; Street, 1994). Despite its complexity, there are generally accepted

viewpoints about identity (Xu, 2014).

Scholars asserted that identity is dynamic and socially constructed. Many holding

social constructivist and postmodernist perspectives emphasized that identity is dynamic

and goes through socially and culturally based process of construction (McCarthey,

2001). Others viewed identity as a complex cultural construct that varies across settings

and changes dependent on the discourses (Gee, 1990; Street, 1994). For example,

Erikson (1968) suggested that identity is embedded in social, cultural, and historical

contexts; that who people are is shaped by how others see them. Other theorists

(Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991; Bakhtin, 1981; Belsey, 1980; Egan-Robertson, 1998; Sarup,

1996) contended that identity is changing and contingent on situations. Sarup (1996)

suggested that identity is "a construction, a consequence of interaction between people,

institute and social practice" (p. 11). Aronowitz and Giroux (1991) found that aspects of

identity such as gender, ethnicity, and social class, once considered more essentialist, are

"local, partial, and contingent upon all" (Sikes, Measor, & Woods, 1985, p. 155). Cooper

and Olson (1996) argued that teacher's identity is constructed through an ongoing process

that is temporal and based on daily life. They noted that the meaning of identity is created by people through interaction, where identity is not fixed but is ever-changing, saying:

> Identity formation is an ongoing process that involves the interpretation and reinterpretation of our experiences as we live through them—suggesting that focusing on transactive relationships rather than linear models might provide a deeper understanding of the multiple 'I's' of teacher identity … teacher identity is continually being informed, formed, and reformed as individuals develop over time and through interaction with others. (p. 80)

Xiang (2017) reviewed three theories about language teachers' identity development. Based on her review of Varghese et al.'s (2005) research, she asserted that Tajfel's (1978) social identity theory, Lave and Wenger's (1991) theory of situated learning, and Simon's (1995) concept of the image-text did not align with her study on visiting Chinese Language Teachers' identity. First, Xiang (2017) argued that though social identity theory explored teachers' self-identity related to social categories (e.g., nationality, race, class) and membership of individuals in many groups, the theory neglected to account for the changing and shifting dynamics of professional identity. Second, Xiang maintained that while situated learning theory (Lave & Wenger, 1991) in which teachers learn and develop their identity as they participate in community activities, the theory might ignore other perspectives such as race, ethnicity, gender, age, or religion that may influence the development of the teachers' professional identity.

Xiang also reviewed Simon (1995) and Morgan's (2004) views on teachers' identity

formation based on image-text theory in which teachers' images are composed of both

observable phenomena (e.g., teacher-student interactions, classroom instruction,

evaluations and so on) and indirect factors (e.g., students' attitudes, students' prior

experience, a teachers' life stories, expectation). She also asserted that image-text theory

had the limitation that a contradictory image of teacher identity may lead to teacher's

negative feelings or image of themselves leading to self-doubt, confusion, especially in

language teaching field. In other words, teacher's professional identity is changing,

dynamic, and can be influenced by many different factors. Teachers' professional

identity is socially constructed and interdependent on socioeconomic, sociopolitical,

historical, and sociocultural contexts.

Scholars reported that identity is multifaceted, multidimensional, and composed

of sub-identities. Some researchers recognized that identity is multi-faceted (Schwartz et

al., 2012) and composed of individual, relational, and collective facets (Sedikides &

Brewer, 2001). Some researchers (Day & Kington, 2008; Lee et al., 2013) asserted that

identity is mainly composed of three sub-identities: (a) professional identity, (b) situated

or social located identity, and (c) personal identity. Several researchers (Hargreaves,

1994; Nias, 1989; Sumsion, 2002) noted that teacher identities are constructed from

technical and emotional aspects of teaching (e.g., classroom management, subject

knowledge, and students' test results) and their personal lives. Others added that teacher

identity forms also "as the result of an interaction between the personal experiences of

teachers and the social, cultural, and institutional environment in which they function on a daily basis" (Sleegers & Kelchtermans, 1999, p. 579). Certain factors (see Figure 1) such as individual experiences inside/outside school, educational policy changes, institutional context (e.g., district, schools), personal emotional responses, personal dispositions, and structural structures influence teacher' professional identity (Lasky, 2005) are implicated in the production and acting out of teachers' identity (Nias, 1989).

Personal factors   Professional factors

Professional identity

Situational factors
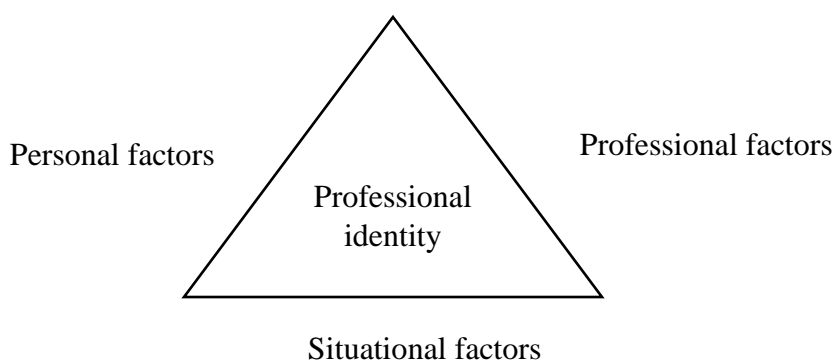
Figure 1. Factors affecting professional identity.

      Scholars noted unavoidable interrelationships and connections among individuals' sub-identities; these sub-identities can conflict or align with each other (Mishler, 1999). Mishler (1999) suggested the metaphor of "our 'selves' as a chorus of voices, not just as the tenor or soprano soloist" (p. 8) referring to multiple selves and echoing Bakhtin's (1980) view of ourselves as the result of internalized voices one encounters. Anzaldúa (1999) viewed identity as a cluster of stories, whereas Sarup (1996) asserted that identity is multi-dimensional space where discourses might blend or clash. For Mishler, construction of identity was like listening to a chorus. When there was harmony, the

multiplicity of voices singing together would make most listeners feel comfortable to hear, understand, and appreciate. Likewise, when there was harmony in the development of the multiple sub-identities, individual would feel more comfortable in understanding themselves and how they relate to people in their school, school district, and their social contexts. A lack of blending or harmony of the sub-identities might suggest discordant voices, conflicts, and personal discomfort. However, conflicts sometimes may also be positive—urging exploration and promoting growth.

James-Wilson (2001) concluded that there were unavoidable interrelationships between personal and professional identities, writing:

> The ways in which teachers form their professional identities are influenced by both how they feel about themselves and how they feel about their students. This professional identity helps them to position or situate themselves in relation to their students and to make appropriate and effective adjustments in their practice and their beliefs about, and engagement with students. (p. 29)

Scholars argued that the process of identity formation is complex. Drawing on the Wenger's (1998) theory of identity formation as the theoretical framework, Tsui (2007) examined how Minfang, an English as a Foreign Language teacher in a Chinese University, constructed his professional identity throughout his six years of teaching. By collecting and analyzing data through face-to-face storytelling and keeping diaries, Tsui found that Minfang struggled to form his identities because of the multidimensional and multifaceted nature of his professional identity. Based on her analysis, Tsui argued that

the "process of one's professional identity is complex" (p. 678) and determined Wenger's

dual process of identity formation—identification and negotiation of meanings—was

appropriate for exploring how individuals form their professional identity. Tsui

concluded, "The interplay of identification and the negotiation of meanings could

generate identity conflicts" (p. 678) that may lead to (a) new forms of engagement in

practice, (b) new relations of members of the community, and (c) new ownership of

meanings or could lead to identities of marginality, disengagement, and non-

participation. Tsui's conclusions about the complexity of identity formation for a foreign

language teacher seem aligned with early-career NCMTs' professional identity

formation.

Other scholars (Mishler, 1999; McCarthey, 2001; Vignoles et al., 2012)

proposed studying identity with an integrative view. As Mishler (1999) suggested, the

relationship among the sub-identities of identity is a metaphor of ourselves as a chorus of

voices. The better relationship between the sub-identities, the better the voices sound.

For my study, different sub-identities form an integrative framework for understanding

NCMTs' identity: personal identity, professional identity, cultural identity, emotional

identities and other sub-identities as individuals situated in different contexts.

After reviewing theories on identity formation, I found that most researchers (Gu,

2011; Gu & Benson, 2015; Lave & Wenger, 1998; Morgan, 2004; Varghese, 2000;

Varghese et al., 2005; Xiang, 2017) linked teachers' identity formation to social

categories: community participation, interaction with students, social context, and time.

Mishler (1999) and Vignoles, Schwartz, and Luykx (2012) noted the dynamic influence

of social factors and cultural factors on teachers' identity shaping and reshaping.

Although Xiang (2017) mentioned that cross-cultural communication was important for

visiting Chinese Language Teachers' identity formation, she only focused on how they

assimilated into the dominant cultural teaching context by developing cross-cultural

communication skills. She did not look at how Chinese language teachers' identity was

influenced by the process of their bicultural identity integration. Nor did she examine

how Chinese language teachers dealt with the two cultural orientations—Chinese culture

as their heritage culture and American culture in their classroom teaching, experiences in

their school, and the even larger lens of socioeconomic, sociopolitical, and sociocultural

contexts.

   Review of understanding professional identity. Lasky (2005) argued that

teachers' professional identity is how teachers define themselves to themselves and to

others. This construct of professional self-evolved over career stages and could be

shaped by school, reform, and political contexts. Professional identity also helped

teachers to make their experiences and actions meaningful and understood (Ruohotie-

Lyhty, 2013; Polkingthorne,1996). In addition, scholars asserted that professional

identity is fluid, so it is constructed and reconstructed when negotiating and renegotiating

the meaning of being a teacher through social contacts (Burns & Bell, 2011). The

development of teachers' professional identity occurred through interpretation and

reinterpretations of their experiences (Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2013). Kelchtermans (1993)

suggested that the professional identity evolves over time like one's personal identity. He

proposed that teachers' professional identity is composed of five interrelated parts : (a)

self-image which refers to how teachers describe themselves through their career stories;

(b) self-esteem which describes the evolution of self as a teacher, how good or otherwise,

as defined by self or others; (c) job-motivation indicating what makes teachers choose,

remain committed to, or leave the job; (d) task perception referring to how teachers

define their jobs; and (e) future perspective that means teachers' expectations for the

future development of their jobs.

Viewpoints related to how to understand identity and the interdependence of

individuals' sub-identities can be applied to my understanding of the professional identity

of the early-career NCMTs. I posit that their professional identity is not static but ever-

changing as NCMTs are negotiating the social cultural, political, historical, and school

contexts. Their identity is generally accepted as situated and multidimensional (Beijaard

et al., 2004). The process of the early-career NCMTs' construction and reconstruction of

their multiple selves is complex, their sub-identities are interdependent and reciprocal,

thus, I seek to understand their professional identity with an integrative view.   Early-

career NCMTs' professional identity would be unavoidably intertwined with their

cultural identity.

Language teachers' identity. Language teachers' identity has been an emerging

subject of interest and topic of research on language teacher education and teacher

development. Varghese et al. (2005) argued that relatively little attention is paid to the

ways of theorizing teacher identity. Varghese et al. explored how to theorize language

teacher identity by presenting three data-based studies of teacher identity and placing

three different theoretical frameworks side by side: Tajfel's (1978) social cognitive

theory, Lave and Wenger's (1991) theory of situated learning, and Simon's (1995)

image-text theory. Varghese et al. drew the conclusion that each perspective can be used

to understand the process of teacher identity construction whereas each has its limitations

when used in isolation. Applying multiple theoretical frameworks could provide richer

and more useful information to understand the process and contexts of teacher identity

formation. As to my research topic, early-career NCMTs face similar situations of

marginalization in their profession regarding the resources and access to professional

development as language teachers may have in the United States.

 Drawing on Varghese et al.'s (2005) effort to theorize language teacher identity,

Barkhuizen (2017) thought theorizing language teacher identity was more complex

because "more perspectives were borrowed from psychology, (social) linguistics, general

education and in different disciplines and even philosophy" (p. 30). He attempted to

theorize language teacher identity in a wide range of areas including teacher education

and professional development, second language writing, multilingual education, teacher

reflection and research, pedagogy, teacher autonomy, distance teaching, materials

development, and study abroad. He reported:

    Language teacher identities (LTIs) are cognitive, social, emotional, ideological,

    and historical—they are both inside the teacher and outside in the social material

and technological world. LTIs are being and doing, feeling an imagining, and

storying. They are struggle and harmony: they are contested and resisted, by self

and others, and they are also accepted, acknowledged, and valued, by self and

others. They are core and peripheral, personal, and professional, they are

dynamic, multiple, and hybrid, and they are foregrounded and backgrounded.

And LTIs change, short-term and over time—discursively in social interaction

with teacher educators, learners, teachers, administrators, and the wider

community, and in material interaction with spaces, places and objects in

classrooms, institutions, and online. (p. 4)

Barkhuizen (2017) explained that language teachers constantly strive to make

sense of who they are, desire to be, and fear to be. They understood themselves

cognitively because they connect their beliefs, theories, and philosophies about being

language teachers and try to relate their teaching with content and pedagogical

knowledge. Language teachers' identities were enacted, constructed, negotiated, and

projected with others—language learners, teacher educators, administrators, and policy

makers within both local and even macro context. Language teachers' identity was

linked with their emotions and perceptions as well as historical and ideological factors

that may have influence on language teacher identities. He further explained that

language teacher identities are not static, but change; over time; they change as language

teachers interact with *others* such as teacher educators, learners, teachers, administrators,

and the wider community within places and objects of classrooms, institutions, and virtual spaces.

Varghese et al. (2005) mentioned the need to identify teachers' identity through different perspectives but did not mention what perspectives could be applied to the formation of language teacher's identity. However, Barhuizen's (2017) examination of theorizing language teacher identities offered a macro lens to understanding NCMTs' teacher identity as language teachers because his effort is in an alignment with my view of how people understand identity.

Thus, I argue that Chinese language teachers' professional identity is an integration of sub-identities. First, professional identity is an individual and psychological matter because it is about Chinese language teachers' self-image and other image of individual teachers. Second, professional identity is a social matter that can be constructed, maintained, and negotiated, and grow in the institutional and social context. Third, professional identity is influenced by teachers' cultural identity and is a bi-cultural matter because Chinese language teachers are experiencing cultural conflicts or cultural distance, especially when undergoing the acculturation or bicultural process in U.S. classroom learning and teaching.

Chinese language teachers' identity in the United States. Many researchers (Chalker & Haynes, 1994; Chan, 2003; Dahlin, Watkins, & Ekholm, 2001; Ho, 2004; Ho & Hau, 2004; Jane, 2001; Lingbiao & Watkins, 2001; Liu & Barnhart, 1999; McAdams, 1993; Stevenson & Stigler, 1992) focused their research on making comparisons between

Chinese styles of instruction and the western teaching practices. They noted that Chinese

language teaching is teacher-centered, while in the western context, it is student-centered.

Other researchers (Gao, 2010; Sheets & Chew, 2002) noted the paucity of

research about Asian American teachers and Chinese Americans in the western context

(e.g., Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, the United States.). Of the research on

Chinese language teachers in the past eight years, only a couple of studies and published

dissertations (Gao, 2010; Xiang, 2017) focused on the formation of Chinese Language

Teachers' professional identity in U.S. context. For example, Gao (2010) studied the

professional identity of two immigrant Chinese teachers in U.S. foreign language

classrooms through the lens of figured worlds. Gao found that the process of

professional identity formation was complex and highly contextualized, reflecting

multiple memberships and orchestration in various discourse. In my study, I describe and

explain how the early-career NCMTs make sense of who they are as second language

teachers in the new socioeconomic, political, historical, and cultural and educational

context different from their home country and how the two competing storylines of

"Chinese" and "American" teachers interplay in their professional identity.

Using a mixed method to study 14 visiting Chinese language teachers'

professional identity with application of applying the transformational learning theory,

Xiang (2017) articulated that most of the visiting Chinese Language Teachers

experienced some changes in their teaching identity. Their general teaching identity and

teaching attitudes improved; however, their teaching beliefs changed negatively over four

months of teaching in U.S. classroom. She maintained that teachers' identity changes

over time, and they entered a new context. Xiang suggested that the U.S. classroom

could play a very important role in visiting Chinese Teachers' identity change.

Research on Chinese language teachers' professional identity has been an

important topic in the academic world.   Hsiao (2014) studied how a Chinese heritage

teacher's identity was constructed and evolved. Results showed how power structures

within the school influenced the teacher's identity and how her identity influenced her

teaching practice through the theoretical framework of identity, social cultural, post-

colonial theory, and cultural imperialism.   Most of the current studies on Chinese

language teachers' identity mentioned the interrelation of Chinese language teachers'

professional identity and contextual, social, and cultural factors. However, most of

studies discussed only one or two aspects of the Chinese teachers' professional identity

formation. For example, Xiang's (2017) research focused only on Chinese language

teachers' teaching identity—teaching belief, values, and teaching practice. On the other

hand, Gao's (2010) research explored the collective identity of Chinese language teachers

and Hsiao's (2014) research centered on the relationship between personal identity and

professional identity. Nevertheless, these studies did not examine Chinese language

teachers' cultural identity that had major influence and interplayed with their professional

identity construction and development (Barhuizen, 2017; Gu, 2013).

Bicultural identity of language teachers in the United States. Weisman (1995,

2001) examined the theoretical framework of linking language, culture, and power.

Weisman (2001) mainly addressed the issues related to bicultural development and

linguistic attitude four Latino teachers may have within the context of existing societal

power. Interviewing the four Latina teachers to examine the relationship between their

bicultural identities and their attitude toward English and Spanish. Weisman identified a

strong connection between identification with Latino culture, political consciousness, and

value for the Spanish language that can be used as a tool to affirm the cultural identities

of Latino students. She concluded that there is a need to incorporate issues concerning

bicultural development and language domination into the professional development of

bilingual teachers.

Xiang (2017) discussed how some cultural factors such as different values or

beliefs of teaching that the 14 Chinese teachers' hold really influenced their teacher

identity. She suggested that Chinese teachers need to consider intercultural

communication into their classroom teaching. Her findings explicated how bicultural

individual's cultural identity was a major influence on classroom teaching and learning.

Critique

Though professional identity prompted more researchers' (Akkerman & Meijer,

2011; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Beijaard et al., 2004; Rodgers & Scott, 2008)

attention, it remains a complicated construct to understand. So, more studies are

suggested to focus on how to understand professional identity and how individuals form

their professional identity in an integrative manner. Some previous research (Akkerman

& Meijer, 2011; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Beijaard et al., 2004; Rodgers & Scott,

2008) identified how professional identity interplayed with other social and cultural context but they did not identify an integrative way to understand individual's professional formation based on the idea that identity is socially constructed, dynamic, multifaceted, and interrelated with others. For example, Varghese et al. (2005) and Barhuizen (2017) discussed how to theorize language teacher identity, but they only focused on the theories to understand language teachers' identity not on theories about language teachers' professional identity formation. In another case, Weisman (1995, 2001) conducted studies on how individual Spanish teachers' bicultural identity interplayed with their professional identity and influenced their attitudes toward English and Spanish; however, her research focuses on Spanish teachers who have a different cultural identity from Chinese language teachers.

Regarding Chinese teachers, Gu (2013) found that preservice teachers from Mainland China experienced a transformation of cultural identity as they taught in a new context in Hong Kong; some participants constructed bicultural identity (or multicultural identity) and multilingualism when teaching in the hosting culture of Hong Kong. Gu (2013) suggested that more interconnection between teacher identity and the historical and social discourses could be considered. In her study, Xiang (2017) proposed that intercultural communication could be used for Chinese teachers' identity transformation and professional development, yet she only focused on Chinese visiting teachers' construction of a teaching identity and understanding visiting Chinese teacher identity in one way of biculturalism (Berry, 1990, 2003)—assimilating into the mainstream culture.

In summary, few researchers have examined the early-career Native Chinese Mandarin teacher's professional identity development through a social cultural lens. They have not focused on how native Mandarin teachers' professional identity is intertwined and interdependent on their cultural identity.

Review of the Methodological Literature

In this section, I review the methodologies used to explore language teachers' professional identity in my study. First, I discuss my selection of qualitative research method and case study as the design. Then, I review the research methods previous research or studies use. Finally, I summarize the research method that can be applied to my study.

Qualitative Case Study

For my study, I conducted a multiple-case study based on qualitative research methodology. I defined it a qualitative case study because it has some defining characteristics that are in addition to other forms of qualitative research. Some case studies employ both qualitative and quantitative methods (mixed method), yet my multiple-case study uses the qualitative research method exclusively.

Qualitative research method. Qualitative research is "an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (Creswell, 2013). Research that honors an inductive style, focuses on individual meanings and understandings, and attaches importance to rendering the complexity of situation align with qualitative research.

Importantly, qualitative research is an accepted form of research in many different academic and professional fields and represents attractive and fruitful way of doing research for many scholars who are focusing on different social sciences disciplines (e.g. sociology, anthropology, political science, or psychology (Yin, 2012). Creswell (2013) described that during 1990s and into the 21st century more visibility of the number and types of approaches in qualitative research have become clear. Although there are a variety of qualitative research strategies (Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2007; Creswell, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Fetterman, 2010; Tesch, 1990; Wolcott, 2008; Yin, 2009, 2012, 2014), Merriam and Tisdell (2016) maintained that some are more commonly used approaches to conducting qualitative research based on their many years of advising doctoral students, teaching qualitative research courses, and conducting their own qualitative research (i.e., basic qualitative research, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, narrative analysis, qualitative case study). These types of qualitative research fall "under the umbrella concept of qualitative but each of them has some different focus leading to different study design based on research design, sample selection, data collection and analysis and write-up" (p. 23). Because overlaps occur in these types of research, and a researcher may combine two or more such as the ethnographic case study.

Researchers (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2012) discussed the criteria, rationale, and features of doing qualitative research. Creswell (2013) explained that "worldview, design, methods, research problem, the personal experiences of the researcher and the

audience for whom the report will be written" (p. 20) are major factors that may affect a researcher' choice of the research approach. Yin (2012) identified five features of qualitative research:

1. Studying the meaning of people's lives, under real-world conditions.

2. Representing the views and perspectives of the people (participants) in a study.

3. Covering the contextual conditions within which people live.

4. Contributing insights into existing or emerging concepts that may help to explain human social behavior.

5. Striving to use multiple resources of evidence rather than relying on a single source alone. (pp.7–8)

Multiple-case study. Case study is "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-world context especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident" (Yin, 2014, p. 16). According to Yin (2014), case studies address situations in which there are more variables of interest than data points and incorporate the theoretical orientation of the researcher in design, data collection, analysis, and discussion of results. A multiple case design also uses multiple sources of evidence (i.e., triangulation). A researcher may consider doing a case study to understand a real-world case with the assumption that involving the important contextual conditions pertinent to the case may result in understanding.

Case study includes both single- case study and multiple-case study; often researchers prefer a multiple-case study. Any analytic conclusion arising from studies with more than two cases may be more powerful because it may help a researcher to offer complementary situations (Yin, 2012).

Review of the methodology in previous research. As noted in Chapter 2, Beijaard et al. (2004) reviewed 22 studies about teachers' professional identity, the majority relied on qualitative research methods. These studies used interviews, journal analysis, ethnographical investigation, portfolio analysis, case studies, theoretical analysis, or other qualitative methods. Two of the studies used quantitative research methods, and one study was a mixed method with the quantitative research method being the major approach.

More recently, Xiang's (2017) research about visiting Chinese language teachers' identity indicated that the majority used qualitative research methods. Only Sercu (2006) conducted research using a quantitative research method. In most previous research related to the topic of teacher's professional identity; qualitative research methodology was mostly used. Several researchers (Varghese & Huang, 2015; Varghese & Motha, 2018; Varghese & Snyder, 2018; Wolff & De Costa, 2017; Weisman, 2001) focusing on bilingual language teachers' identity used a qualitative research method. These studies illustrated that qualitative research has been a commonly accepted method to study language teachers' identity. In an earlier study, Weisman (2001) conducted interviews

because she thought that open-ended interview questions could help elicit a richer set of responses and allow teachers' more freedom to explore their personal life experiences.

Varghese and Huang (2015) used qualitative research methods of interviewing and observation because their study focused on a specific population, examined a relatively unknown phenomenon, and contextualized the activities and agents. Similarly, Wolff and De Costa (2017) used qualitative research methods to study language teacher identity including class observations, semi-structured interviews, stimulated verbal and writing reports, and journal entries. They gathered rich in-depth data and triangulated the multiple data sources. Later, Varghese, Motha, Gloria, Reeves, and Trent (2016) used narrative techniques to identify major themes about understanding language teacher identity. These methods enabled the researchers to complicate the everchanging, situated, and fluid nature of LTI (Language teacher identity). Then, Varghese and Snyder (2018) examined novice dual language teachers' professional identity development through a figured worlds approach. They conducted interviews, and observations to explore how the teachers develop their different understanding of being dual language teachers and their language ideologies given their individual trajectories. Varghese and Snyder cultivated an understanding of the multiple figured worlds that different teacher inhabited.

My review of research (Gao, 2010; Hsiao, 2014; Sheets & Chew, 2002; Sun, 2012; Wang & Du, 2016; Xiang, 2017; Zhou & Li, 2015) about Chinese language teacher's identity, except for Xiang's (2017), revealed that researchers primarily used

qualitative research methods. Noticing a gap in the methodological literature, Xiang (2017) used a mixed-method approach to study visiting Chinese Teachers' teaching identity. To conclude, qualitative research methodology was the most commonly used research design to study teachers' professional identity, indicating its applicability and appropriateness for my study.

Based on my review of the methodological research used to examine individuals' identity, I contend that a qualitative research method is a valid and effective method for examining early-career NCMTs' professional identity development. Qualitative research methods demonstrate researchers' interest in how individuals interpret their experience, construct meaning of the world, make sense of their lives, and contribute to the world (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In addition, qualitative research methods could help researchers gather in-depth descriptions of individuals' self-sense, perceptions, experiences, and interpretations of their lives. Most importantly, these research methods need to be appropriate for exploring the problem of practice, the research purpose, the research questions, and align with the researcher's research goals, research interest, personal interest, and capability (Maxwell, 2013; Vogt, Gardner, & Haeffele, 2012).

Selection of Qualitative Case Study

I conducted my study by using a qualitative research method for several reasons. First, I preferred to examine how people make sense of their lives by listening to the voice in their inner hearts. Different people have described their experiences of life in different stories. People living in different place or situation have understood their lives

differently. In addition, people's interpretation of their life has changed as the context changed. Second, I wanted to understand and explain how situations or events influence people. Because individuals' identity is fluid and dynamic, not static, my study focused on early-career NCMTs' identity when they transitioned to a new country and experienced momentous changes in their lives and careers. I assumed that due to the profound changes of situation and context, NCMTs' professional identity may be interpreted differently. Finally, I wanted to read narratives from NCMTs' interviews and to interpret meanings based on their own words. My assumption was that the words of the early-career NCMTs in my study would reveal different storylines.

I conducted a multiple-case study because the participants in my study were different from each other. Though all are Chinese Mandarin teachers, they (a) have different life experiences, (b) have different education backgrounds, (c) work in different school settings (e.g., K-12 school, Chinese immersion charter school, private school, Confucius classroom), (d) possess different social status in the United States, and (e) have different cognitive and affective mechanisms for responding to socioeconomic, sociopolitical, social cultural factors that may influence their professional identity development.

Summary

In this chapter, I described the theoretical frameworks of social cultural theory and bicultural identity integration. I also explained how these frameworks would support the examination of my problem. Then, I reviewed research studies on identity and

professional identity. I concluded that individuals' identity was not static, but dynamic and fluid, that individuals' identity was multi-faceted with different sub-identities and each of the sub-identity interacts with the others. In addition, I found that the process of identity formation is complicated, and that a person's identity is strongly connected with contextual factors. These widely accepted understandings of identity were applicable for understanding early-career NCMTs' professional identity development.

Next, I reviewed research studies on language teachers' identity, Chinese language teachers' identity, and bicultural identity of language teachers. I realized that understanding early-career NCMT's identity required an integrative view of professional identity development: personal identity, relational identity, collective identity (e.g. cultural identity, spiritual identity).

Finally, I reviewed research methodologies related to my research topic and found that most researchers used qualitative research methods. I agreed with Maxwell (2013) who asserted that research method relates to many factors: personal interest, research goals, research questions, validity, and reliability. To consider my research question about "how early-career NCMTs respond to the social and cultural factors that may influence their professional identity," I determined that my research related more to people, situation, and complicated processes. I found few case studies focused on examining Chinese language teachers' identity that accounted for differences in their school condition, education background, life experiences, and their bicultural identity. For these reasons, I used a qualitative case study to examine the early-career NCMTs'

professional identity through the lens of social cultural theory and bicultural identity integration construct. I chose four early-career NCMTs from four different types of schools in one urban area in the Northwest Pacific.

Chapter 3: Methods

Early-career Native Chinese Mandarin Teachers (NCMTs) face challenges in developing their professional identity as bi-cultural and bilingual individuals and need supports in their new socioeconomic, political, and cultural context. Because Mandarin Chinese is a comparatively new area of study in some U.S. schools or districts, early-career NCMTs lack supports from district, school, leaders, colleagues, students, and parents regarding constructing their professional identities to fit the contexts, norms, and expectations of U.S. schools or districts. Academically, few professional development opportunities or specific content area resources are available to early-career NCMTs. Many Chinese Mandarin teachers are criticized for their pedagogy in emphasizing drilling, rote learning and reliance on character writing and lack of awareness of intercultural pedagogy (Moloney, 2013); however, they have limited access to models of effective pedagogical practices. Socially and culturally, Chinese Mandarin teachers need support from leaders, colleagues, parents, students, and other stakeholders to respond to different social and cultural factors that may influence the development of their professional identity.

The purpose of this study was to describe and explain the early-career NCMTs' experience and their professional identity development as bicultural teachers. This exploration of NCMTs' professional identity included the different socioeconomic, political, and cultural contexts from their experiences. I also explored how NCMTs as

bicultural and bilingual individuals responded to the interdependence and reciprocity of language, culture, and identity related to the development of their professional identity.

The results of this study may serve as a reference for those who desire or hope to teach Mandarin in U.S. K-12 school systems. Second, findings from this study may also influence administrators in K-12 schools and school districts, Chinese community school personnel, and policy makers to rethink the Chinese curriculum and the professional development of Chinese teachers, especially support for early-career teachers to build their professional identity in a different socioeconomic, social, political, and cultural context. As the early-career Chinese teachers develop their professional identity effectively, they may improve their job satisfaction and engagement in teaching; establish good relationship with students, parents, and other stakeholders. They may also become skillful in blending the two cultures and keep a harmonious relationship between their heritage culture and diverse cultures in the United States. Finally, the findings from this study may serve as a reference for improving post-secondary teaching programs, for world language teachers and provide insights about language teachers' development of professional identity.

In Chapter 1, I discussed the importance of exploring the life experiences of early-career NCMTs and the development of their professional identity. In addition, I noted that bicultural and bilingual teachers may face more complicated challenges as they deal with the social cultural factors that influence their professional identity construction and their pathway to career development.

In Chapter 2, I described the reasons for selecting Nieto's (2002) social cultural theory of education and Benet-Martínez and her colleagues' (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005; Huynh, Nguyen, & Benet- Martínez, 2011; Huynh, Benet-Martínez & Nguyen, 2018) construct of bicultural identity integration (BII) as the theoretical framework. My specific reasons included the knowledge that individuals construct their knowledge and develop their understanding of the world based on their interaction with the social and cultural context. For early-career NCMTs, they construct their professional identity as they build their relationships and interactions with their students, colleagues, leaders, and others in the community. In addition, for bicultural and bilingual individuals, their BII formation is an important factor of their professional identity formation. Benet-Martínez and her colleagues' BII construct suggested that individuals have differences in acculturation process. Individuals with high BII find it easier to integrate both cultures in their everyday life and feel less isolation from the mainstream culture. Those with low BII find it difficult to incorporate the mainstream and their ethnic cultures into a cohesive sense of identity and to deal with issues that arise from the two cultural orientations; they are inclined to choose just one culture or none (Gil et al., 1994; Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997; Vivero & Jenkins, 1999).

In Chapter 3, I introduced the research methods used to explore early-career NCMTs' life experiences related to the development of their professional identity as bicultural and bilingual individuals. I examined what social and cultural factors that might influence their professional identity development, and how they responded to the

relationship between language, culture, and identity as they transitioned to a new socioeconomic, sociopolitical, and sociocultural context.

Research Methods

In this section, I first describe my research paradigm. Then, I provide an overview of research paradigms. Next, I explain my research design rationale; and then, I offer a description of the participants, procedures, instruments, role of the researcher, data collection, and data analysis.

Research Paradigm

To begin, I selected the constructivist paradigm for my research study after considering four research paradigms: post-positivism, constructivism, participatory, and pragmatism. According to Creswell (2009), the four worldviews regarding human beings' understanding of the truth and knowledge include post-positivism, constructivism, participatory, and pragmatism.

Through these four worldviews, Creswell interpreted how people understand the nature of reality—ontology, how people gain knowledge from the world and epistemology, how people make use of their knowledge. Drawing on his interpretations, post-positivists tend to explore the truth and knowledge based on empirical observation, measurement, and theory verification. They seek to identify the cause-effect relationship between different variables. Regarding the constructivism paradigm, Guba and Lincoln (2005) explained that the constructivism describes how human beings build meaning through complex experiences; they regard reality as multi-faceted, constructed, and

holistic. Constructivists tend to specify research problems as situated and contingent on the context rather than generalize. Constructivists prefer to use qualitative research methods to examine and reveal a richer and fuller understanding of the world (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). A third paradigm, participatory, emphasized individuals' active participation in research by including the voices of marginalized individuals or groups. The fourth paradigm, pragmatism, acknowledges that individual have unique knowledge and experiences; yet, their knowledge comes from socially shared experiences. Morgan (2014) explained that pragmatists often conduct research with mixed methods. Creswell (2013) indicated that pragmatism includes the complexity of integrating qualitative and quantitative methods.

In my opinion, early-career NCMTs undergo complicated experiences when they develop their professional identity in a new socioeconomic, sociopolitical, and sociocultural context. NCMT have unique experiences given their lives and interactions with people in different local contexts. In addition, early-career NCMTs are bicultural language teachers, who may be marginalized in the mainstream educational context, so their active participation could influence the formation of their professional identity. For these reasons, I contend that constructivism paradigm is ideal for my study.

Qualitative Research Design: Multiple Case Study

For my research study, I used a qualitative research design: multiple case study. I selected qualitative methods because they help researchers understand how individuals experience the world and make sense of their lives (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Specifically, qualitative research methods can potentially help researchers get in-depth descriptions of individuals' self-perception, understanding of their experience, and interpretation of their lives.

Nevertheless, qualitative research and quantitative research have strength and logics, though a key difference between these two research methods is "variance theory and process theory" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 29). According to Maxwell (2013), quantitative researchers tend to explain a statistical relationship between different variables while qualitative researchers tend to see the world in terms of people, situations, process, events, and examine how some situations or events influence people. No matter which research method researchers use, the method needs to be appropriate for exploring the problem of practice, the research purpose, and the research questions. The methods also need to align with one's research goals, research interest, personal interest, and capability (Maxwell, 2013; Vogt et al., 2012).

As noted in Chapter 2, I selected a qualitative research design for a few reasons. First, I wanted to explore how NCMTs' make sense of their lives by listening to their voices. Second, I sought to understand how situations, events, and context might influence NCMTs. I focused on early-career NCMTs' professional identity development as they transitioned to teaching in a new social cultural context. Finally, I wanted to examine NCMTs' narratives and consider possible interpretations of their narratives. The qualitative design allowed me to capture the voices of early-career NCMTs—ones that could describe more vividly their experiences and reveal their different storylines.

While qualitative research design has different approaches (e.g., case study, narrative inquiry, ethnography, interview), each has affordances and constraints. Case study is one method investigating a contemporary phenomenon (i.e., the case) in a real-world context (Yin, 2014). According to Yin (2014), a case study (a) addresses situations with more variables of interest than data points; (b) incorporates the theoretical orientation of the researcher in design, data collection, data analysis, and discussion of results; and (c) uses multiple sources of evidence (i.e., triangulation). He also suggests that a case study is "holistic in nature" (Yin 2002, p. 40) and is appropriate when the "relevant theory underlying the case study is itself of a holistic nature" (Yin, 2002, p. 45). According to Merriam (1998), case study methodology is "an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single stance, phenomenon, or social unit" (p. 27); case study methodology has two advantages. The first advantage is that a case study "gives a detailed view of the actual structure and process of the program implementation" (Erickson, 1986, p. 131). The second advantage of case study methodology is that one case focuses on one single unit.

For this study, I chose case study methodology to explore the early-career NCMTs' professional identity through the lens of social cultural theory and bicultural identity integration construct. I agreed with Yin (2014) that case study research findings are not generalizable; however, generalizability was not the intention of my study. I determined that case study was an appropriate method for my exploring my problem of practice. Further, I selected case study methodology because it afforded me with the

opportunity to develop in-depth understandings of each NCMT's process of developing

professional identity within the specific context of their school, district, and society.

In my study, I defined the case by individual participant; each teaches Mandarin

in different school contexts. Because the participants worked in different school contexts

with different student demographic and school cultures. In addition, each NCMT had

unique life histories, educational backgrounds, personalities, teaching experiences,

beliefs, and values. I regarded the participants as a cohort of NCMTs because they

shared the common practice of teaching Mandarin. In addition, I used the conceptual

framework and theoretical framework to guide my data collection and analysis, so the

participants remained a cohort in my case study.

In my study, I described the process of the early-career NCMTs' professional

identity development and explored their experiences of developing their professional

identity as bicultural and bilingual individuals. Using interviews, I gathered rich

descriptions about (a) how each early-career NCMT felt about being a Mandarin teacher

in U.S schools, (b) how NCMT looked at teaching and learning in the U.S. schools, and

(c) what social cultural factors influenced their professional identity development.

Another reason I designed my study as a case study rather than a narrative inquiry

or phenomenology was that the conceptual and theoretical framework guided the process

of my data collection and analysis—rather than the stories of the participants guiding the

process. I also did not select to conduct an ethnographic study because my focus was not

on the shared culture of the participants, but rather on the unique journey of each participant becoming a NCMT in different school contexts.

After considering the affordances and constraints of the different approaches of qualitative research, I decided that a multiple-case study design was the best match for my research purpose. A multiple-case study design allowed me to examine the early-career NCMTs' individual lived experiences in the real-world context of their schools. In addition, conducting case study research could help me to uncover in-depth information about my participants and address my research questions.

Research Questions

I used three research questions to guide my study:

1. How do NCMTs experience being Mandarin teachers in a local educational school context in the United States?

2. What do the NCMTs identify as influences in their teaching and learning?

3. How do NCMTs' experiences relate to their professional and cultural identity?

Settings and Participants

The settings of my study were schools in an urban city—Riverton—in the Pacific Northwest. Because I have lived in this city for a few years, I knew which schools had Mandarin programs, and knew teachers who were teaching Mandarin. I was familiar with faculty and staff in the Confucius Institute at one local university that influenced Mandarin teaching, learning, and cultural communication. This Confucius Institute had 33 Confucius classrooms across K-12 schools in Riverton. About 40 Chinese language

teachers have been teaching each year in these K-12 schools. Some were newly

immigrated Chinese people who chose to teach Mandarin as their first job in the United

States, some were visiting Confucius classroom Mandarin teachers, and others were

graduates of international teacher preparation programs who started their career by

teaching Chinese Mandarin as a foreign language. These Mandarin teachers revealed

encountering challenges and conflicts in their teaching practice, beliefs, or values—

particularly at the induction stage of their teaching career. The settings or boundaries of

this case study were four different school contexts in Riverton. These four contexts

represented a holistic picture of Mandarin teaching in Riverton.

The participants in my case study included early-career NCMTs who (a)

emigrated from mainland China to the United States within recent one to four years, (b)

were native Mandarin speakers and who used simplified Chinese characters writing

system, and (c) received their primary, secondary, and college education in Mainland

China.

To select participants, I used two types of nonprobability sampling—convenience

sampling and snowball sampling (Creswell, 2013). In convenience sampling, the

participants were willing and available to be studied. Living in Riverton for several

years, I had information about the Mandarin programs in area schools and districts—a

sample of convenience. For example, I knew teacher educators at local universities who

knew Mandarin teachers in different schools and districts, and I knew school staff who

worked with Mandarin teachers in local school districts. I was also acquainted with the

Chinese Mandarin community, so community members helped me to identify Mandarin

teachers who might be a good fit for my study. Therefore, snowballing was a good

sampling strategy for recruiting more Mandarin teachers for my study. Convenience

sampling and snowball sampling helped to assure that I could identify Mandarin teachers

who would be good fit for inclusion in my study.

Procedures

After receiving Portland State University's Institutional Review Board approval

for my study, I collected data in the five phases.

In Phase 1, I gathered the email addresses of 12 Chinese Mandarin teachers who

were teaching in different schools and districts in Riverton. I sent the 12 Mandarin

teachers a recruitment letter that briefly described the purpose of my study. The letter

also explained the reason for recruiting them as participants and clarified how they could

participate in my study. Of these 12 potential participants, 10 agreed to participate in my

research. Then, I sent an email to each with the Informed Consent documents for them to

review and potentially sign. After securing these signed Informed Consent documents

from 10 participants, I moved on to Phase 2 of my study.

In Phase 2, I sent the 10 participants a demographic survey to gather general

information such as educational background, English language proficiency, teaching

license, professional development, years of teaching, and experience teaching Mandarin

before becoming a Mandarin teacher in a U.S. classroom (see Appendix A). This

demographic information helped me to identify possible participants for my study.

In Phase 3, I compiled the results of the demographic survey on an information grid (see Appendix B). When reviewing the demographic information, I noted the development of Mandarin Immersion Programs in one school district of Riverton. In this district, two elementary schools provide Mandarin Immersion Programs. In this same district, the Confucius Institute had established a good relationship with local schools and districts. Many Confucius classroom teachers worked in this school district. The emphasis on Mandarin made it easier for me to select my final participants from the public schools and Confucius classrooms. For the private schools, I used snowballing sampling to recruit participants. Because I knew a teacher at a private school, she helped me identify one who agreed to participate in my study. In addition, I knew about a charter school located in the same city. I was able to recruit one Mandarin teacher from the charter school who agreed to participate in my study. Through these efforts, I selected four early-career Native Chinese Mandarin teachers as participants (see Table 1).

Table 1

Early-career Native Chinese Mandarin Teachers

Name	School context	Program	Teaching years in current school
Snowy	Public School	Chinese immersion pioneer program	7 months
Emma	Private School	International language immersion program (i.e., Japanese, Spanish, German, Mandarin)	3.5 years

Katerina	Confucius classroom	Talented and Gifted program (i.e., Language art, math, intellectual)	6 months
Sophia	Charter School	Chinese immersion program	2 years

During Phase 3, I invited four early-career NCMTs working in four types of

teaching contexts in Riverton (i.e., public school, private school, Confucius classroom,

and charter school). I used multiple sources of data (i.e., survey, interview, BII scale) to

gain an understanding of how participants developed their professional identity as they

transitioned to the new socioeconomic, political, and cultural society. I based my

decisions about multiple data sources on Yin (2002) who claimed, "The findings and

conclusions in a case study are likely to be more convincing and accurate if it is based on

several different sources of information, following a corroboratory mode" (p. 97). I also

drew upon Patton (1990) who pointed out that using a combination of different sources of

data can help researchers to validate the cross-checking findings.   Plus, I considered

Creswell (2013) assertion, "When a researcher maximizes differences, it will increase the

likelihood that the findings will reflect differences and different perspectives, which is an

ideal in qualitative research" (p. 157). Consequently, I used a multiple-case analysis (i.e.,

survey, interview, BII scale) following Yin (2002) and Patton's (1990) suggestions to

maximize variation when sampling to reach the goal of representing different

perspectives to understand the experiences of NCMTs teaching in U.S. classrooms.

Using a multiple-case analysis, I compared NCMTs' perceptions related to their

individual school context. The four NCMTs worked in four types of schools and each represented different teaching contexts.

I assumed that the complexity of their experiences might help me to understand the development of their professional identity. Using a multiple case approach, I could gain insights into the commonalities and differences among these early NCTMs' experiences and professional identity development in their different teaching contexts. My previous conversations with some of the NCMTs suggested some barriers to developing their professional identity. Keeping this in mind, I sought to understand how each of the NCMTs experienced life as a Mandarin teacher in U.S. classrooms. I also wanted to understand how they interpreted their values, beliefs, and attitudes toward teaching and learning as well as their professional growth when transitioning to a new socioeconomic, political, and cultural society as bicultural and bilingual individuals.

In Phase 4, I made appointments with the four NCMTs to conduct two semi-structured interviews and to administer the Bicultural Identity Integration Scale-Version 2 (Huynh et al., 2018). Because they were busy with daily teaching and preparations, I arranged to meet each NCMT twice at a quiet place in their schools after the school day. I conducted two semi-structured interviews with each of the participants to gather information related to my research questions. In the first interview, I asked questions about their focused-life experiences (see Appendix C). In the second interview, I conducted the social cultural interview (Nieto, 2002) (see Appendix D). Then, I administered the Bicultural Identity Integration Scale-Version 2 (Huynh et al., 2018) to

gather additional information from the participants (see Appendix E). Prior to this administration, I had obtained permission to use the Bicultural Identity Integration Scale from Benet-Martínez (see Appendix F).

For each interview, I interviewed the participants individually to seek how they feel to be working as Mandarin teachers in a U.S. school. I met them face to face, so every interview was a personal interview. I audiotaped each of the interviews. In the interview process, I conducted the interviews in a dialogic way. In other words, based on my participants' answers to each interview question and at moments when my participants paused or hesitated, I shared some of my own experience and understandings regarding some interview questions. I used this approach to relax the interview process and encourage my participants to share their inner voice as much as they could. All my participants told me that they loved this kind of interview because it was more like a dialogue for sharing their life experience and the process of their professional identity development. They explained this interview approach helped them to understand themselves, their profession, and life better. In addition, my participants told stories of how they (a) understood learning and teaching in the U.S. school, (b) taught in their classrooms, and (c) dealt with the interdependence and reciprocity between language, culture, and identity in their teaching practice. This approach also allowed me to listen to their unheard voices and access to their inner heart.

Because Chinese was the heritage language for my participants, I conducted the interviews in Chinese. I thought it would be easier for my participants to engage in

higher order thinking and respond more fully to questions about their life experiences, their thoughts about teaching and learning in U.S schools, and their professional identity development in U.S. classrooms. Using Chinese also helped me to avoid confusing questions and losing information during the interviews. Furthermore, my participants did not think they could explain their thoughts one hundred percent accurately in English. Another consideration was that some Chinese people might hesitate to share negative feelings and might be unwilling to say something that authorities might regard as offensive. They assumed that no matter what might happen, they might deserve the blame. By using Chinese in the interview process, I could sense their apprehension and encourage them to speak freely about whatever was on their mind and in their inner hearts without any hesitation.   For these reasons, I decided to conduct the interviews with my participants in Chinese.

Then, I transcribed the interviews by listening and typing their words. In the transcribing process, I heard their voices repeatedly and had the chance to understand their inner voices deeply and gain some insights regarding their personal life experience in the United States when becoming Mandarin teachers. I explored their understanding of teaching and learning, and how they developed their professional identity in U.S. classrooms. After transcribing the interviews into Chinese, I did member checks with each participant to verify the accuracy of the transcript and to clarify points in the transcript. My participants reviewed the transcripts carefully; we engaged in good exchanges in terms of member checking with the transcripts. Then, I translated the

transcripts from Chinese into English before I started to conduct the data analysis. I

decided to translate the transcripts into English so my research findings would be more

accessible to people around the world who speak or understand English. English

translations could also allow me to exchange ideas with people who are interested in

understanding how early-career NCMTs develop their professional identity as bilingual

and bicultural individuals.

Finally, in Phase 5, I used Bicultural Identity Integration Scale-Version 2 (Huynh

el., 2018) to gather additional information from the participants (see Appendix E) and

scores about their bicultural identity integration. I obtained permission to use the

Bicultural Identity Integration Scale-Version 2 (BIIS) (see Appendix F). My participants

completed the BII after I clarified each of the items.

Instruments

First, I used a demographic survey to collect the basic information about each of

my participants to understand their prior life experiences, skills, and educational

background (see Appendix A). The survey was open-ended survey. The purpose of the

survey was to obtain specific demographic information about each participant regarding

their prior skills, teaching experiences, educational background, school context, and

professional development (see Appendix B). Based on analyzing the demographic grid

information, I selected four early-career Native Chinese Mandarin teachers as

participants. Next, I used two data collection instruments to gather information

including: (a) two semi-structured interviews (see Appendices C & D) ranging from 35 to

65 minutes, and (b) the Bicultural Identity Integration Scare-Version 2 (BIIS) (Huynh et al., 2018) (see Appendix E), which took participants 10-15 minutes to complete. The semi-structured interviews included seven items for focused-life experiences interview and nine items for the social cultural interview. As noted previously, the semi-structured interviews helped me to understand the life experiences of being Mandarin teachers and their perceptions of teaching and learning in U.S. classrooms.

Bicultural Identity Integration Scale—Version 2 (BIIS). I used the Bicultural Identity Integration Scale (BIIS)-Version 2 (Huynh et al., 2018) to measure the experience of bicultural individuals having and managing two (or more) cultures. The BIIS included 20 items organized in two parts: (a) bicultural harmony vs. conflict items (1–11), and (b) bicultural blended-ness vs. compartmentalization items (12–20). Each item had a 5-point scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. According to Huynh et al. (2018), "Cultural harmony captures the affective component of managing two cultures" (p. 3) and cultural blended-ness "capture[s] the more cognitive and behavioral aspects of the bicultural experience" (p. 3). I administered the BIIS following the social culture interview. My purpose of conducting the BIIS was to understand how the early-career NCMTs' bicultural identity related to their professional identity development.

Together, the interviews and BIIS were appropriate data collection methods because they allowed me to explore the experiences and perceptions of the participants.

After the data collection, I kept the data saved in a password-protected laptop and a locked cabinet for later analysis.

Role of the Researcher

Given my Chinese background, I was curious about Chinese Mandarin teachers in the United States and their professional identity development. After becoming acquainted with some native Chinese Mandarin teachers, I felt encouraged to consider the problems they encountered. I wanted to learn more about their experiences and give them an opportunity to share their voices.

However, as a Chinese native speaker, I could not avoid being subjective given my own understanding and experience of Chinese culture. Plus, I have taught English as a second language in China for many years. My prior working experiences as teaching English as a second language in China made me familiar with topics about language learning, teaching, and language teacher identity. My experience of being a bilingual and bicultural individual in a U.S. social cultural context may influence how I viewed my participants' experiences. I experienced conflicts, doubt, anger, disappointment, excitement, a sense of fulfillment, a loss of identity and transformation of identity as I went through the transition from my home country to the United States. My experience of constructing my own professional identity in the U.S. higher education context might have been an influence in my process of data collection and the data analysis.

To address this influence, my advisor supported my research process including providing guidance regarding the data collection and analysis process. As a native

English speaker, she helped me with the writing process for my study. She also gave me suggestions about conducting the data collection and the data analysis. Before I collected the data, I reviewed the instruments with my advisor many times to make sure each interview question was appropriate for my participants. Based on my advisor's suggestion, I conducted a pilot study with three Mandarin teachers from three types of schools: a public school, a private school, and a Confucius classroom. The process of conducting the pilot study gave me the opportunity to (a) adjust the interview questions, (b) familiarize myself more with the interview process, and (c) be a more skillful interviewer for my participants in the real interview. I developed a case study database with my advisor. In addition, in the process of the data analysis, my advisor was a good coach regarding the understanding of the data analysis that helped me to ensure an accurate interpretation of my participants' ideas and thoughts as well as clarify my English language expression.

The participants in this study considered themselves foreigners in the U.S. teaching context. I needed to keep in mind their unique cultural and language background. As I interviewed my participants, I told them that my study proposal got the approval from the IRB (Institute Review Board)—a committee that reviewed the integrity of the research plan in the university where I was studying. The IRB approval helped me to assure participants about the protection of their human rights. I also shared that the Riverton school district's research review board had approved my study proposal. So, my participants knew that both the university and the school district had approved my

study. In addition, I also secured approval letters from the principals of their schools that

confirmed that I could interview the Mandarin teachers in their schools. As noted, I

recruited my participants through emails; I did not know them well. Therefore, it was

important for me to let participants know that I would maintain a neutral stance as I

interviewed them and analyzed the data. I used pseudonyms to refer to each participant

and the settings as well as kept all research information confidential. Finally, I assured

the participants that I would share my research findings with them before any publication

of the research.

Data Collection and Analysis

As noted previously, I collected and analyzed several sources of data for my

multiple case study including a demographic survey, two semi-structured interviews, and

the BII Scale scores. The process of data collection and data analysis echoed the research

questions in my study. To show the connection among my data collection sources and

my research questions, I developed a methods matrix (see Table 2).

Table 2

Methods Matrix

Research Question	Data Sources
1. How do NCMTs experience being Mandarin teachers in a local educational school context in the United States?	Focused-life experience interview Demographic Survey
2. What do the NCMTs identify as influences in their teaching and learning?	Social cultural interview

3. How do NCMTs' experiences relate to their professional and cultural identity?   Bicultural Identity Integration (BII) scale

To address the first research question (i.e., how do NCMTs experience being Mandarin teachers in a local educational school context in the United States?) and the second research question (i.e., What do NCMTs identify influence their teaching and learning?), I used the demographic survey. One's prior knowledge, skills, experiences, educational background, and teaching practice can have a lot of influence on one's experience of being Mandarin teachers in a local school context in the United States. Therefore, to gather the preliminary information was necessary before I started to dive into the more detailed and specific experiences of each early-career NCMTs.

I designed the two semi-structured interviews to address the first and the second research questions. The seven interview questions in the focused-life experience interview (see Appendix C) gathered specific information about how the participants in my study understand themselves as being teachers in U.S. schools. These interview questions also addressed the social factors that may have influenced their teaching and learning. In addition, I used nine questions of the social cultural interview (see Appendix D) to gain an understanding of early-career NCMTs' perceptions of teaching and learning. During the interview, I asked questions about the curriculum they teach, how they teach, and the social cultural factors that may influence their teaching. Plus, my

questions probed how they deal with the relationship among language, culture, and identity in their teaching practice as well as their professional identity development.

To address the third research question (i.e., how are NCMTs' experiences related to their professional and cultural identity?), I conducted the Bicultural-Identity Integration Scale to rate the experiences of my participants as bicultural individuals. These scores helped me explore how they developed their professional identity and how their cultural identity influenced their professional identity development.

Survey analysis. First, I compiled the survey data using a Demographic Information Grid. The data from the four early-career NCMTs' responses included gender, educational background, teacher licensure, English language proficiency, school context and grade levels, professional development experiences, years teaching in the United States, and Mandarin teaching experiences before coming to the United States. Responses to the seven demographic questions provided me with information about each participant. Their responses also led to an overall preliminary impression of who they were, where they were teaching, and how they were prepared to teach in the U.S. school context. I used attribute coding (Saldaña, 2016) to analyze the demographic grid for my participants. Saldaña (2016) asserted, "Attribute coding provides essential participants information and contexts for analysis and interpretation" (p. 83). In other words, it was important to understand each participant's essential personal information before diving into the detailed accounts of their personal life experiences and professional identity development as an early-career Mandarin teacher in U.S. schools. As Saldaña explained:

Attributive coding is the notation of basic descriptive information such as: the

fieldwork setting (school name, city, country), participants' characteristics or

demographics (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity, health status), data format (e.g.

interview transcript, field note, document), time frame (e.g., 2014, May 2015,

8:00-9:00 a.m.), and other variables of interest for qualitative and some

applications of quantitative analysis. (p. 83)

For this reason, I decided to use attributive coding to analyze the demographic

information of my participants. I used the attributive coding method to describe the

teachers, their educational background, their current teaching context, their opportunities

for professional development, and their teaching experience prior to moving to the United

States.

Interview analysis. As noted previously, I used two semi-structured interviews:

(a) the focused-life experience interview, (b) social cultural interview. To analyze these

two interviews, I relied mainly on Saldaña's (2016) and Miles and Huberman' (1994)

coding strategies to code the data. Specifically, I used the strategy of two or more cycles

of coding for my data analysis. In the first cycle of coding, I integrated the In Vivo

coding method, the affective coding method (emotion and value coding), and the concept

coding method. In the second and more coding cycles, I used the concept coding and

pattern coding. After conducting multiple cycles of coding, I used Miles and

Huberman's (1994) method of making matrices to organize the codes into clusters and

categorizing the clusters into themes.

I analyzed the interview data by reading and digging into the transcriptions of the semi-structured interviews. First, I transcribed the interview data in Chinese because the language used in my interview were Chinese. Using Chinese helped me understand the participants' responses in a clearer way. After the transcription, I did the member checks in Chinese with each of my participant. I read and reread the Chinese version carefully and made clear the meaning of each sentence. During this time, I wrote some analytic memos as I listened to the audio recording of the interviews. Most of my analytic memos were reflection on some points my participants described. This helped me to navigate through the whole process of data analysis.

 Second, I translated the Chinese version into English. In this process, I went back to my participants to help me clarify some terms or expression in English. I also checked my language expression in the translation with two of my English native speaking colleagues to ensure that each sentence would be clear to native English speakers; this was also helpful for the data analysis and use of quotations in my writing.

Finally, I analyzed and coded the transcripts by using Saldaña's (2016) coding strategies. According to Saldaña, "A code is most often a word or short phrase symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data" (p. 4). He stated, "Coding is a cyclical act because the nature of code is reverberant—comparing data to data, data to code, code to code, code to category, category to category, category back to data" (p. 68). In other words, researchers are expected to expend effort in the second cycle of recoding (and

possibly a third and fourth cycle), which could help them to manage, filter, highlight, and focus the salient features of the qualitative data to generate categories, themes, concepts, and grasp meaning.

In this study, I did multiple cycles of coding. In the first cycle of coding, I initially summarized the segments of data. I combined the In Vivo coding with the affective coding method (i.e., emotion coding and value coding) and concept coding. My reason for combing coding methods was first cycle of coding was better for taking note of the detailed words or phrases the participants used to describe their life experiences, feelings, values, attitudes, and beliefs in teaching and learning. This coding process also allowed me to capture how participants reported their teaching during the interviews.

Saldaña (2016) maintained that In Vivo coding is "appropriate for studies that prioritize and honor the participants' voice" (p.106). According to Saldaña (2016), using In Vivo coding to code their actual words enhances and deepens one's understanding of their cultures and worldviews. Saldaña (2016) also asserted, "In Vivo codes can provide imagery, symbols and metaphors for rich category, theme and concept development, plus evocative contentment for arts-based interpretations of the data" (p. 109). Emotion coding and value coding were good supplements to In Vivo coding. According to Saldaña (2016), emotion coding was particularly appropriate for exploring intrapersonal and interpersonal participant experiences and actions especially in matters of social relationships, reasoning, decision-making and judgment and risk-takings. Value coding has been regarded as particularly appropriate for studies that explore cultural values and

belief systems, identity, intrapersonal and interpersonal participant experiences in case studies. Emotion coding and value coding were good strategies for me because many of the interview questions explored the participants' intrapersonal and interpersonal experiences as well as their values, beliefs, and identity.

In the first cycle of my coding, I condensed clusters of words or phrases that described the participants' actual words, emotions, feelings, what they think of teaching and learning, and how they practice as a Mandarin teacher in U.S. classrooms. I used a combination of the In Vivo coding, emotion coding, and value coding, and concept coding to identify clusters of words from the data corpus.

In the second (and third and fourth) cycles of coding of my data, I used the concept coding and pattern coding method as the major coding approaches. Saldaña (2016) considered that concept coding was appropriate in both first and second coding cycles. For these multiple cycles of concept coding, I summarized the ideas based on concept codes, grouped similar ideas, and developed these into larger concept codes.

Next, I used pattern coding because these codes to serve as explanatory or inferential codes to identify an emergent theme, configuration, or explanation (Saldaña, 2016). Pattern coding helped me develop meaningful and succinct units of analysis from my first cycle of coding (Saldaña, 2016). I coded the data corpus including participants' individual experiences, personal perceptions of their school experiences, their personal understanding, beliefs, and values about teaching and learning as they interacted with different stakeholders in U.S. school contexts. I also coded their teaching practice

through the lens of social cultural theory in education (Nieto, 2002). This helped me to condense a large amount of data into a smaller number of analytic units, develop major themes from data, and lay the groundwork for cross-case analysis (Saldaña, 2016).

As I analyzed my data, I began to make comparisons within the cases embedded in the four different school contexts and across the cases in the varied school contexts. I framed the description of each of my four cases into four categories of school context: (a) public school context, (b) private school context, (c) Confucius classroom context, and (d) charter school context. Then, I summarized the holistic commonalities and differences of the four early NCMTs in the four types of school contexts.

It is worth repeating that in the process of my data analysis, I used member checking and negotiated the meaning of expressions with my participants. After conducting the member checks, I wrote and rewrote my drafts of the findings.

BII scale analysis. Using the BII scoring guide (Huynh et al., 2011), I scored my participants' bicultural identity integration (see Appendix G). Then, I described my participants' scores in detail based on bicultural identity construct theory and interpreted how that reflected each of my participants' cultural identity relating to their professional identity development. I summarized their responses and interpreted the commonalities and differences in their bicultural identity integration process. I also examined how professional identity was related to their bicultural identity in an inductive analysis approach.

Comparison analysis. Because I made comparisons among my participants, I used matrices with categories of similarities and differences relating to my participants' data and identified evidences for the theoretical propositions and explained some new themes based on the categories.

Playing with the data was a good metaphor for this process. Researchers play with the data in many ways: reading, re-reading, examining, interpreting, synthesizing and member checking the data. I argue that the more recycling function of the process is, the better interpretation a researcher can make. Thus, to keep validity and trustworthiness and reliability, I often discussed my research and data analysis with my advisor and colleagues that helped me understand the analytic dilemmas of my research. In addition, I invited my native English-speaking American friends to review my analytical memos and read my interpretation of the themes that could help me avoid some misunderstandings and misinterpretations in language. As I composed the writing, I had my participants review my draft of the case study reports. Their review of the draft helped to ensure the reliability and trustworthiness of the research.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this study was to describe and explain the early-career NCMTs'
experience and their professional identity development as bicultural teachers within a
new socioeconomic, political, and cultural context. I wanted to learn how they, as
bicultural and bilingual individuals, responded to the interdependence and reciprocity of
language, culture, and identity while developing their professional identity. The problem
of practice was that early-career NCMTs often lack support regarding their professional
identity development within the norms, expectations, and contexts of U.S. schools.
Because of their limited access to models of effective pedagogical practices, content
standards, or instructional resources, scholars have criticized how NCMTs teach Chinese
in western countries (Moloney, 2013). Nevertheless, NCMTs needed support—socially
and culturally—from leaders, colleagues, parents, students, and other stakeholders to
respond effectively to factors that may influence their professional identity development.

The research questions that guided my study were:

1. How do NCMTs experience being Mandarin teachers in a local educational
   school context in the United States?

2. What do the NCMTs identify as influences in their teaching and learning?

3. How do NCMTs' experiences relate to their professional and cultural identity?

In this chapter, I describe the results in two parts. In Part One, I analyzed the
participants' answers to the (a) demographic survey, (b) focused-life experience
interview, and (c) social cultural interview to develop the four cases. Then, I

calculated the BII scores for each case and interpreted the meaning of their BII scores. In Part Two, I synthesized the themes from the data and interpreted the findings to address the research questions.

Data Analysis

In this section, I describe the analysis of the participants' demographic survey, focused-life experience interview, and social cultural interview. Then, I explain the development of the four cases. Next, I report and interpret my analysis of the participants' BII score.

Survey and Interview Analysis

As described in Chapter 3, I used three instruments to collect information about the four NCMTs: demographic survey, focused-life experience interview, and social cultural interview. First, I applied the attributive coding method to analyze the demographic survey and describe the NCMTs' educational background, teaching context, opportunities for professional development, and prior teaching experience. Then, I analyzed the qualitative data (i.e., transcripts) from the two semi-structured interviews: (a) the focused-life experience interview, (b) social cultural interview. To analyze the interviews, I relied on Saldaña's (2016) and Miles and Huberman's (1994) coding strategies to code the interview transcripts. For the first cycle of coding, I combined In Vivo and affective coding (i.e., emotion coding and value coding), and concept coding (Saldaña, 2016). For the second (and third) cycle of coding, I used concept coding and pattern coding (Saldaña, 2016). Later, I made matrices to organize, cluster, and

categorize the data (Miles & Huberman (1994). My participants responded to the open-ended items of the demographic survey that related to their education, credentials, prior knowledge, skills, and teaching experiences before their entry into the teaching landscape in the United States (see Table 3).

Table 3

Participants' Demographic Information

NCTM	Educational Background	Credentials	School Setting	U.S. Teaching Experience	Prior Teaching Experience
Snowy	Bachelor's (China) Master's in Teaching Mandarin (China) Master's in Curriculum & Instruction (U.S.)	K12 World Language: Chinese High School Teacher License of Chinese	Public school Grades 4-5	7 mo.	Chinese Immersion Program (China)
Emma	Bachelor's (China) Master's in Teaching English as a Second Language (U.S.)	K-5 Teacher License High School Teacher License of Chinese	Private school Grade 2	3.5 yr.	English in elementary school (China)
Katerina	Bachelor's (China) Master's in Teaching Chinese as a	High School Teacher License of Chinese	Confucius classroom Grades 6-8	6 mo.	Confucius Institutes (Indonesia, South Africa)

	Second Language (China)				Chinese Language Institutes (China)
Sophia	Bachelor's (China) Master's in Teaching Chinese as a Second Language (China) Master's in Curriculum & Instruction (U.S.)	K12 World Language: Chinese Middle School Teacher License of Chinese	Charter school Grade K	2 yr.	Chinese as a Second Language at university (China)

In addition, my participants shared detailed information related to Mandarin teaching and learning in their schools as they responded to the focused-life experience interview (see Table 4). Their interview responses added to their demographic information providing specific data about their different school contexts for Mandarin learning and teaching in Riverton.

Table 4

Participants' School Context Information

Participants	School types	Numbers of students	Number of Mandarin learners	Number of Mandarin teachers
Snowy	Public school	488	170	5
Emma	Private school	399	85	8

| Katerina | Confucius classroom | 160 | 50 | 1 |
| Sophia | Charter school | 235 | 235 | 15 |

After summarizing the demographic information with the contextual information of Mandarin teaching and learning in different schools, I analyzed the qualitative data (i.e., transcripts) from the two semi-structured interviews: (a) the focused-life experience interview, (b) social cultural interview. Later, I made matrices to organize, cluster, and categorize the data (Miles & Huberman ,1994).

Case Study Development

To develop and write the cases for the four NCMTs—Snowy, Emma, Katerina, and Sophia—I drew upon the categorized data. Then, I reviewed the transcripts from the NCMTs' focused-life experience and social cultural interviews to select verbatim quotes for each data category. For each case, I described how the NCMTs understand and experience being a Mandarin teacher in U.S. schools. Next, I described the NCMTs' understanding of what to teach, how to teach, and how they practiced teaching through a social cultural lens. I organized four cases by school category (i.e. public school, private school, Confucius classroom, and charter school).

Snowy: Public School Teacher

Snowy, a public school teacher in Riverton, graduated from an international teacher education program at a local university in the United States. She earned master's degree of Teaching Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages (China) and a master's

degree in curriculum and instruction (the United States). To work as a Mandarin teacher in a U.S. school, she also held a K12 preliminary teaching license in world language: Chinese.

Snowy had learning experiences in China and the United States. As a native Mandarin teacher, her first master's degree was related to teaching Chinese and prepared her to have the knowledge and skills to teach Mandarin to speakers of other languages. Her second master's degree advanced her understanding of how to teach well and how to teach Mandarin as a world language in U.S. classrooms. Speaking Chinese as her home language, she reported that her own self-assessment of English proficiency was at a medium level. Snowy had been teaching in a Chinese immersion program in a public elementary school for seven months. Before she worked as a Mandarin teacher in a public school, she had little experience of teaching Mandarin. In summer 2016, she had a brief experience of teaching Mandarin to visiting students from Princeton University. This teaching experience occurred before she had pursued her second master's degree in a U.S. teacher education program and worked as an intern for three months. In other words, Snowy was at her beginning stage of her Mandarin teaching career in the United States.

Snowy worked in a public elementary school. According to her description, the school had 488 students. Among them, 170 students were learning Mandarin as a second language. Five Mandarin teachers were teaching Mandarin to these students. She described that this school has a low-ranking score. Most students came from low-income

families, families with different problems and social status. She explained that some

parents forced their children to learn Mandarin because the U.S. government sponsors the

school's Mandarin immersion program. Parents hoped that their children might have

more job opportunities in the future after learning Mandarin.

Snowy was teaching Grades 4 and 5 students in the school's Chinese pioneer

program, a new immersion program. She was also responsible for developing this new

program. According to Snowy, the school district recently purchased Level Chinese, an

online assessment system, to evaluate and assess students' Chinese reading level. She

shared that Level Chinese is also a language learning software with curriculum and

instruction components. She explained that the program used standardized language

learning organized by different reading levels in Chinese that was parallel to English

language learning. Since Mandarin language learning has undergone this reform,

teaching has been very stressful for her. As an early-career Mandarin teacher, Snowy

also had opportunities to attend professional development including Chinese language

and Chinese immersion programs. In the next section, Snowy disclosed

her personal feelings and experience of being a Mandarin teacher in a public school.

Snowy as Mountain Climber

Snowy used a metaphor of a mountain climber to describe her personal

experience of being an early-career NCMT. She described her transitioning experience

from China to the United States as how one feels in the process of climbing a mountain.

I think working as a Native Chinese Mandarin teacher in the United States is like

climbing the mountains. As people climb the mountain, at the very beginning,

they are very excited. That is the same with us as working as Mandarin teacher in

the United States. As we came to the United States, we were excited at the very

beginning. As we became a Mandarin teacher, we felt excited at the beginning

but on the midway, you will feel out of strength. You may feel fatigue,

exhausted. But in this process, probably many people gave you a favor. But what

will be in the end [future], we are uncertain and have no idea because we don't

know what difficulty or challenges will be ahead.

At the very beginning, Snowy felt excited because she had the opportunities to

experience life in the new country. As a Mandarin teacher in a public school, she was in

the teaching landscape of the United States. However, like a mountain climber, she

experienced fatigue and exhaustion midway. While receiving support from people

around her, she was uncertain about the future. In this process of mountain climbing,

Snowy described that she felt both hardship and growth as she became an U.S. public

school teacher.

Snowy's Feelings of Hardship and Growth

Snowy described her experiences in terms of hardship and growth related to her

experiences as an early-career Mandarin teacher in a public school (see Figure 2).
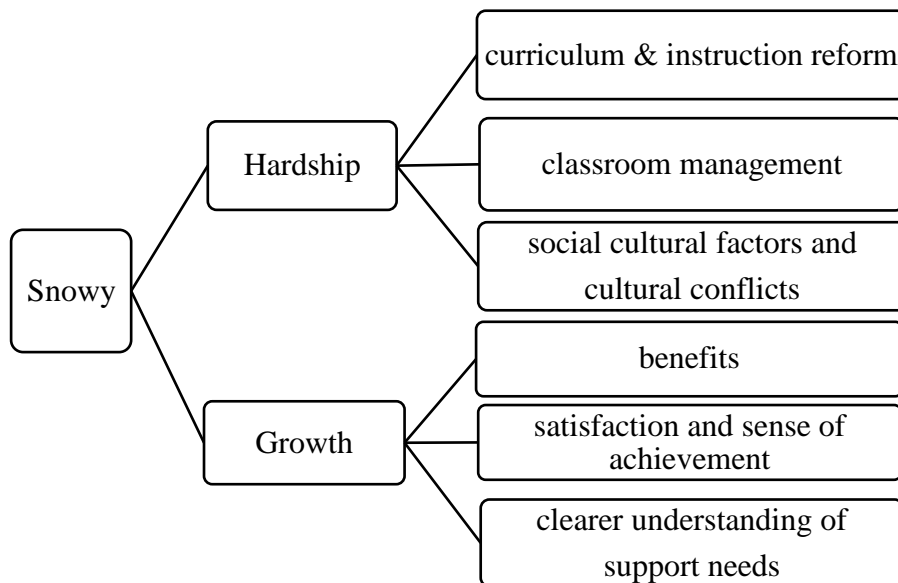
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                        ┌─────────────────────────────────┐
                        │ curriculum & instruction reform │
                        └─────────────────────────────────┘
           ┌──────────┐ ┌─────────────────────────────────┐
           │ Hardship │ │      classroom management       │
           └──────────┘ └─────────────────────────────────┘
                        ┌─────────────────────────────────┐
 ┌───────┐              │   social cultural factors and   │
 │ Snowy │              │        cultural conflicts       │
 └───────┘              └─────────────────────────────────┘
                        ┌─────────────────────────────────┐
                        │            benefits             │
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           │  Growth  │ │     satisfaction and sense of   │
           └──────────┘ │           achievement           │
                        └─────────────────────────────────┘
                        ┌─────────────────────────────────┐
                        │    clearer understanding of     │
                        │         support needs           │
                        └─────────────────────────────────┘
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Figure 2. Snowy's feelings of being an early NCMT in a U.S. classroom.

Hardship. Snowy revealed that being a NCMT in the United States was hard. She gave detailed reasons for describing the hardship of being as a NCMT including curriculum and instruction reform, classroom management, English language appropriateness, and cultural differences.

Curriculum and instruction reform. Snowy said that curriculum and instruction reform in her school district was very stressful because the Mandarin immersion program was just beginning. As a first-year teacher, the school district had assigned her to teach in a pioneer group program that required her to deal with curriculum and instruction reform. She said:

> In the pioneer group, the students' Mandarin proficiency levels were low. In
>
> addition, the students didn't behave very well and have been in a mess in

classroom learning in the past. As I am a new Mandarin teacher for the first year, the school district required that students in the pioneer group must pass two levels a year.

According to Snowy, the school's curriculum and instruction reform brought her stress because the new assessment system (Level Chinese) had higher expectations for student's learning achievement. The expectation of the school district was far beyond students' real level in Mandarin proficiency. So, it was stressful for her to meet the district requirements using the new curriculum and instruction program.

Snowy maintained that the Mandarin curriculum and instruction reform also caused her more difficulty and challenges in teaching practice. She said:

We are changing the textbook comparing to other schools in the same district. In addition, recently, our school has introduced an assessment system—Level Chinese. We didn't have any assessment system to evaluate students' reading and writing before. This level Chinese is not only an assessment, but also provide standards for learning Chinese. But, we used to teach Chinese more casually without any standard like this. We just designed assessment based on what we are teaching. Now, Level Chinese has already set up the standards to learn Chinese and English.

Classroom management. Another hardship for Snowy was classroom management. In U.S. schools, classroom management was an important and necessary task for teachers. Snowy found it difficult to deal with classroom management,

especially in her first three months of teaching. She said her students lacked engagement in class, and they showed less respect for teachers. She also disclosed having unclear expectations of classroom behavior due to her lack of teaching experience.

Snowy had strong feelings of devastation and frustration every day because she felt that her students were not engaged in her classroom teaching. She described:

To be honest, I felt hard at the first three months of teaching. For example, in the classroom, when you are speaking in the front, nobody will listen to you, and some students may walk around and were not seated on their seats…Too many students were not on their seats, too many students talked, they stood up and talked, did whatever they liked. So, within September, October, and November, my class was in great disorder. I didn't know how to manage students in class. I was devastated every day. I wanted to cry every day. I didn't know what to do.

As Snowy described her experience in the first couple of months, she had tears in her eyes. She expressed feelings of helplessness and frustration. The students were not engaged in her class. She gave an example:

One day, a student tested my boundary and made me mad. He talked in class, I told him that I reduced his score, and he said he had not and rejected me in a very loud voice. I asked him to go to the principal's office, he was not willing to. He had a very bad temper. He just poured all the pens out of the pen container on my desk. I could not keep teaching at that time, and waited him to go the principal's

office, but he did not go. Finally, other classmates pulled him to the principal's

office, and I couldn't stop crying.

In other words, Snowy felt frustrated and devastated in dealing with the students'

behavior in class. Students' lack of engagement was a big problem for her.

Snowy explained one reason for this classroom disorder was her newcomer status.

She did not know about spending time explaining her expectations of the classroom

behavior at the beginning of the school year. Instead, she only wished to teach as much

as she could to her students. She shared that she had not established a good relationship

with her students and did not have good communication with them. Snowy described

that due to her lack of experience of setting classroom expectations, she was less strict,

and her students did whatever they liked in the classroom. Based on her reflections, she

shared that a new teacher should at least spend one month training his or her students to

learn the class expectations at the very beginning of school year.

Snowy mentioned that another problem with classroom management was

students' lack of respect for Mandarin teachers. She explained the reason for this lack of

respect was because Mandarin teachers are not native English speakers. She said:

> … they love to make jokes and talked whenever the Mandarin teachers are
>
> teaching or speaking in classroom. I often observed my English teacher partner's
>
> classroom teaching, I found they knew how to respect their English teacher. I felt
>
> that they just didn't want to respect Mandarin teachers.

Snowy went on to explain:

Because English is my second language, I can't express English as well and

accurately as the native English teacher in classroom management. For example,

we usually say 'be quiet' '安静' when we hope our students to be quiet, but the

native English-speaking teacher would say 'right now, be totally quiet.' I found

just one word 'totally' was added to the sentence, the effect was different.

However, I couldn't translate the word 'totally' to Mandarin, and my students

would not understand that because their Chinese vocabulary was small.

She said even though her English qualified her for teaching in a U.S. school, she was not

able to use English as well as native English speakers. She pointed out that if she spoke

some words in Chinese, it was easy for her to keep classroom order; however, her

students would not understand her very well because they do not understand the meaning

in Chinese.

Snowy added that as a foreigner she did not know the appropriate way to manage

the students. She was afraid of crossing the line of being too strict as a teacher. She

heard that in the United States teachers cannot shout at students. She also worried that

students might think that she was mean. As a new Mandarin teacher, she usually felt that

she was in an inferior position to her students and she was afraid of managing them

strictly. She did not know appropriate ways to deal with students.

Social cultural factors and cultural conflicts. Another hardship for Snowy as a

NCMT was meeting with social cultural factors such as historical problems, social justice

issues, social status, parents' lack of support, loneliness, and changes in policy. These

factors were beyond her knowledge, so she did not know how to deal with them. She reported:

> One day, observing my classroom teaching, my mentor found that I was illustrating a word by using an image of a monkey eating bananas. She corrected me later that day by explaining that in the United States, anything related to monkeys or apes are regarded to have connections with African American or racial issues, which was a historical problem.

Snowy said if her mentor had not observed this class, she would not have understood the issue and could have hurt some of her students without any awareness. Her mentor also mentioned that even if one knew American history, it would be difficult to understand this kind of issue without many years of living in the United States.

Another example Snowy gave about cultural differences was how a teacher should deal with social justice issues in her teaching practice. She said:

> As born and raised in Chinese culture, I would not think it was a serious problem if parents beat children at home. But it was a seriously lawful thing in the United States. According to the law, if any student let a teacher know that his or her parents beat them at home, he or she must make a mandatory report immediately. One day, one of my students told me that his dad pushed him against the wall. I was hesitating to make the mandatory call before I called my English teacher partner…she told me how to report.

Though Snowy knew that the teacher is the academic mentor for students, she had a lot of confusion about how to play the role well. She remembered that a social worker gave her a lot of suggestions about how to deal with social issues. Snowy could not imagine what kind of consequence would come to her if she had not made the mandatory call.

Social status was a big concern for Snowy when thinking about her career growth and professional identity. She explained that though her school gave her a lot of support, she still felt uncertain about her future. No matter how much she loved to teach in a U.S. school, she could not stay in U.S. without an H1B visa or any legal social status approval (e.g., green card). Snowy noted the importance of getting the social status approval, so she could stay in the United States to teach. However, she also worried that the longer she teaches in a U.S. school without social status approval, the less opportunity for her to get a good job in China. In China, there are few opportunities for teaching Chinese to speakers of other languages. Snowy also shared that her situation was different from Confucius classroom teachers who are visiting teachers, master students in Chinese universities, or teachers in Chinese schools. The master students can join the job market after they finish their visiting teaching terms abroad. The visiting teachers already have jobs in Chinese schools, so they do not need to look for jobs after they complete their teaching abroad.

Another issue for Snowy was that some U.S. parents were not as supportive in facilitating their children' academic learning. She thought that parents' support was very important for teachers and students. With a supportive attitude, parents could (a) know

what their children are learning in school, (b) supervise their children's homework, (c)

communicate with teachers, and (d) feel confident in the teacher's classroom teaching

and management. A lack of support caused problems for her and her students. For

example, she said:

> Some parents would like to attribute any mistake to teachers whenever teachers
>
> called them or inform them of their children's misbehaviors. One day…, I
>
> informed a student's parent [father] that his son always spends longer time in
>
> using bathroom by showing him the sign-in sheet. The parent said 'Oh, I think
>
> you should have a timer as a teacher, tell him he can only have 3 minutes
>
> whenever he is going. If you don't have a timer, I can buy one for
>
> you.' …Whenever I told his mother about his misbehavior at school, she would
>
> say 'Oh, he has bad temper, he just needs break. You should give him breaks in
>
> your classroom teaching.'

Snowy thought that the parents' non-supportive attitude toward facilitating their

children's classroom learning added to her difficulty in dealing with classroom

management and teaching practice.

In Snowy's eyes, another hardship as a teacher in the United States was that she

felt deep loneliness. She had no family members living in U.S., so she felt lonely in this

different society. Though she had Chinese colleagues in her school, they did not meet

with each other often because they needed to work in their classrooms. She admitted that

her situation was better than other Mandarin teachers who are the only Chinese teacher in the school.

Changes in school policies was also a hardship for Snowy. She worried whether their pioneer program would continue because their program faced grant funding issues. Due to the planned budget reduction, the school would merge classes to larger groups and need fewer Mandarin teachers. Furthermore, the budget reduction would increase the teacher-students ratio leading to more problems with classroom management, classroom teaching and learning, and communication with parents. In the past, Snowy had support from the Confucius classroom teachers such as grading homework, printing materials, and facilitating classroom management. Now, this support was gone.

Growth. Snowy described she experienced growth in her short period of teaching in U.S. schools. She identified benefits, job satisfaction and sense of achievement, and was clearer about what support she needs.

Benefits. Snowy benefited from teaching in the new landscape of U.S. schools. Everyday, her professional identity developed as she learned about her students, the school curriculum and instruction, and so on. Change was a challenge on one hand, but it also meant learning and growth on the other hand. Snowy said:

> Every day, I can learn a lot. Although Mandarin teaching is emergent in the United States, other foreign languages teaching like Spanish teaching and ESOL teaching are developing very well and provide many good models for Mandarin teaching in the teaching landscape.

Snowy thought that as a teacher, her identity was dynamic. Though it was a challenge being a new teacher, she learned during the change process. She developed more skills and learned from others in the school district.

Snowy also mentioned that she grew by integrating her home country culture and U.S. culture. She said:

I felt that I not only develop more skills in my job, but also grow a lot in daily life. For example, I live with U.S. people every day, I understand U.S. education, understand how parents and students in U.S. look. Every day, it happened in front of you, it was the real examples of life. It allowed me to experience everything myself.

Her life experience led to growth and helped her to integrate the two cultures daily. For example, she understood more about U.S. people's values, mindsets, and the relationship between teachers and the district. She revealed, "Last time, we went to protest in Salem. I understood that teachers could protest for their rights. These are something I would not experience or understand in my home country." Snowy felt that her life experience helped her discover more about classroom teaching, learning, and culture that were different from her own country.

Another benefit for Snowy was an increased sense of belonging after she started to develop some community and interpersonal relationships. In the community, she began developing her spiritual strength and used it whenever she met with difficulties or needed to solve a problem. Snowy's interpersonal relationships also furthered her sense

of belonging. Support came from her boyfriend and a social worker who knew policies

that opened more windows for her to understand U.S. society. For example, Snowy

described:

> My boyfriend told me that in this society, there are many factors leading to
>
> students' misbehavior. I understood that I could not only blame my students for
>
> some classroom management or achievement gap. As I understood more, I would
>
> have less confusion and complain or blame for myself because … it is the societal
>
> problem.

According to Snowy, developing community and interpersonal relationships empowered

her to deal with her confusions with her professional identity. She felt strongly supported

and was more able to think about problems in teaching.

Satisfaction and sense of achievement. Snowy felt challenged and cried

sometimes, though she still loved her current job. She also felt a sense of satisfaction and

achievement whenever she overcame challenges and solved problems. Snowy's

satisfaction came from her observation that her students loved to learn Mandarin and

were highly engaged in her classroom teaching. She was skillful in designing instruction

to increase her students' classroom engagement, so she and her students had positive

outcomes. She remembered:

> …I did not focus too much on students' behavior but on how to strengthen the
>
> relationship between my student and me. I knew most of my students are African
>
> American students who love music, so I used a rap to teach them how to sing out

the Chinese words we have learned in class with body movements. All my

students were so engaged at that moment, I could see they loved that way to learn

Mandarin and they took video and photo for me. I suddenly got their point.

Snowy understood that music was an inspiring tool to arouse her students' interest in

learning. She was also excited when her students started to appreciate how she was

different from other Chinese teachers. Using the rap performance, she showed her

appreciation for her students' culture; this made them feel closer to each other.

Snowy attached more importance to improving her students' classroom

engagement by integrating classroom learning and teaching with music, body

movements, breaks, and games. For example, she would play a Chinese song as a

transition to the next classroom activity. Students could dance to the music and move

their bodies. She would also let students learn Chinese by playing some games. Snowy

found it was important for teachers to know their students well to engage them in

learning.

Clearer understanding of supports needs. Snowy also understood what supports

she needed to develop her professional identity. She shared that her career development,

teacher educator program, professional development, staff teamwork, and supportive

district policy were very important.

Prior to be a NCMT, Snowy studied in an international teacher educator program

at one U.S. university. In the teacher educator program, she found that classroom

management was very important for the preservice and in-service teacher. However, she

thought the course should have been offered in her internship so she could apply the theories to her teaching practice.

Snowy felt that early-career teachers needed more professional development. For example, the school and the district could collaborate and provide more high-quality professional development. Currently, the dual language program did not provide the Mandarin teachers with enough professional development. In addition, there was a lack of connection between Mandarin teachers and the school district. She said, "As a new teacher, I couldn't' check myself what support I need before I met some difficulties. I can only be aware of the difficulty as I happen to experience it." Therefore, Snowy suggested that every year the school and school district should check what professional development new teachers need. Snowy mentioned specifically that cases in classroom management were important for early-career teachers. She thought presenters could collect as many specific examples as possible in classroom management to train the early-career in-service teachers.

Snowy realized that participating in staff teamwork could facilitate navigation of her teaching experience. In her school, the school expected every staff member to join different staff teams like the care team or positive behavior team. Snowy joined the behavior team to do some data analysis in her school. She learned that teachers in the immersion program did not give students referrals. Snowy reported:

> I didn't know what referral is before I read the data. We did attend orientation
> training in the school district prior to teaching, but the training was very

brief …We still didn't know how to operate in the real-life teaching. For example, I didn't know how to grade, give referral, and write records in these permanent cards. These are very important profiles for students' school learning experience. …I didn't' get information about these important issues. If I didn't attend the staff teamwork meeting that day … the staff would not realize that we should provide a training about referral for the newly coming teachers.

When Snowy joined the staff team, she gained knowledge outside her teaching routine. In addition, her experience with the action research team helped her understand ways to study her own teaching.

Snowy had a classroom assistant in her first year of teaching. She thought it would be more helpful for the school district to recruit an English native speaker as her teaching assistant; however, she understood that the district might lack the budget. Snowy noted that she learned a lot from the English teacher. Thus, she suggested that the district rethink how to support the early-career second language teachers.

For Snowy, teaching in U.S. school was a mixture of hardship and growth. Part of the hardship was thinking about her future, she wanted to have a stable teaching career in a U.S. school.

Snowy's Social Cultural Experience in Teaching

In this section, I describe Snowy's understanding and beliefs about teaching and learning in U.S. schools. Then, I discuss her teaching practice and the interactive relationship among language, identity, and culture in her teaching.

Snowy's understanding of teaching and learning. Snowy thought that a language teacher should guide students to use their own skills and strategies to learn rather than focus on vocabulary and grammar only. Thus, she guided her student to use different strategies to practice Mandarin. She engaged her students by having them set learning goals and internalize effective learning skills. Her role was not only to teach, but it was also to motivate and guide her students constantly to integrate various learning skills to reach a learning goal. For example, she shared:

> Once we are learning the Chinese words "时" and "间," I encouraged my students
>
> to think about the words they have learned in the past. I asked them to find
>
> connections between the new words and the old ones they have learned. For
>
> example, I found some words like "是," "诗," "史" [that] we have learned before
>
> have the similar pronunciation with the word "时." I wrote the words beside the
>
> word "时" on my notebook. In this way, I guided them to use a strategy to
>
> connect the old words with the new words. They can use their own ways to
>
> display the words.

Snowy's idea was that students should think about ways to find links and connections when learning content and apply these to learning Mandarin.

For Snowy, students should be at the center of the classroom learning because she thought the aim of teaching Mandarin was to educate students who could use Mandarin to communicate. In other words, students played the major role in practicing and

communicating in Mandarin. She wanted students to learn how to apply what they learned in her classroom to real life. Snowy thought that teachers played the leadership role in classroom learning. Teachers were responsible for designing effective curriculum and instruction to make full use of class time, maintain the learning pace, and tap into students' talents.

Snowy believed the teachers and students should establish a relationship of cooperation rather than a compliance. In classroom learning, teachers needed to encourage their students to think, rethink, question, and re-question instead of asking students to "repeat, after me, repeat, after me" during the whole class. Snowy thought that good relationship between teachers and students was "the catalyst" and "the lubricant" for successful teaching. She acknowledged that teachers' personal characteristics as well as commitment to teaching would influence their classroom teaching. Because she was an introverted person, she did not know how to strengthen the relationship between her students and herself when she began teaching. Later, Snowy found that by showing her real care to students, she had established a good and close relationship with her students. She understood that teachers could establish a close relationship with every student subtlety. For example, she said: "Every morning, there is time to greet my students. I will show my special care to the students who were absent the day before with some questions. They may not answer you immediately, but you showed your care about them." She explained that this was different from polite formulaic comments like "good to see you!" or "nice to see you!" Snowy mentioned that

if teachers focus on teaching content only but fail to care about their students, their teaching would not be as good.

Snowy's integration of language, identity, culture into teaching. The school district's reform efforts required Snowy to teach Mandarin based on the standard-based assessment system. This assessment determined the standard for her students' learning outcomes and the teaching strategies for her to use. She used a bilingual education approach to facilitate students' learning of Mandarin because her students' Mandarin proficiency was at the lower level. She needed to provide explanations in English for the Mandarin learning objectives and requirements. In this way, her students could more easily understand what they are going to learn. She also needed to design her own curriculum and instruction to coordinate with the standard-based assessment. She reported: "I will guide my students to compare the standards for different levels, then they will easily identify what is in level C, and what is in level D." She explained that this way allowed her students to know what they were learning and the meaning of their learning.

Snowy pointed out that one limitation of the standard-based assessment was students' practice. The standard-based assessment's worksheets were not enough for students to practice their language usage. In this situation, Snowy used various ways to engage her students in Mandarin learning. For example, Snowy encouraged her students to learn words, phrases, and sentences by using games, body language, and flash cards.

She shared, "My students like to draw; thus, I will let them illustrate the new word, or sentence by drawing. Then, I pick one word or sentence, my students lift their painting."

She also used a reward system by Class Dojo. In this system, Snowy described, every student had a virtual image with scores. Students felt excited and strong sense of achievement if they had high scores. They received scores about learning content, categories of leadership, being helpful, being enthusiastic, having good ideas, teamwork, hardworking, as well as consequences for being out of seat, interrupting, no homework, and disrespect. This system allowed parents to see data about every aspect of their child's classroom performance. Snowy was satisfied with this system because it was a good supplement to the standard-based teaching approach.

Snowy summarized that the core of her classroom teaching design was to give rewards and consequences for every activity she used to facilitate the Mandarin learning. She reported:

> When they reach the goal, what you will give them. When they did not reach the goal, what will be the consequence. Then, you should think about the differentiation. What you will give to those students who learned and completed faster? What will be the consequence if some students learned slower and did not complete the work?

Snowy thought that teachers need to scaffold their students' learning based on students' differences.

Snowy identified that besides her content-based Mandarin curriculum and
instruction, students' family, experience, identity, context, and community influenced her
classroom teaching practice—either positively or negatively. She believed that teachers
need to consider these factors in their teaching practice.

Snowy's students came from different family backgrounds. Most families had
problems and low income that had a negative influence on their children's daily
classroom learning. She described:

> One student who came from a divorced family. He stayed with his mother and
> stepmother from Monday to Friday. He lived with his father on Weekends. I
> found every Monday; he was in a bad mood. He showed his emotion through his
> work. For example, he wrote 'I don't like my dad to lie.' He asked me how to
> speak the word "to lie" in Mandarin. I decided to give more care and support to
> this kind of student.

Snowy found that this student's daily life experience influenced his emotions. Because
his family life experience brought a negative influence into his classroom learning, she
gave him more care and support.

Snowy suggested that teachers need to be aware of their students' family
experiences and problems so they could give them more support. When teachers
understood what caused their students' inappropriate behaviors, they would not give their
students a hard time. Snowy shared that she would not make any change in her
curriculum and instruction due to her students' emotional problems; instead, she would

deal with student's problem individually. She explained that by establishing individual relationships with students, she would understand her students' emotional moments and potential. Then, she would make use of the moment to support her students.

Snowy found that parents from different backgrounds differed in their support and care for their children's classroom learning and her teaching. She reflected that White students' family were more supportive to their children's learning than families with lower income and of African Americans. She explained:

> … I found that whenever I gave my students homework to do at home, White students' parents played their roles in supervising and supporting their children to get homework done. However, for my students who are from a lower income family or an African American family, their parents did not have time…[for] supporting their children's homework. I think parent's support and supervision in their children's homework will be helpful for my students' Mandarin learning.

Snowy believed that family supports were very important and helpful for students' learning. However, students from lower income family and non-dominant cultural backgrounds did not get support at home to learn Mandarin like the White students. She felt that this was not because of parents' intentional ignorance, but was due to socioeconomic and sociopolitical factors.

Thinking of how to handle problems with students who are from lower income families or non-dominant cultural backgrounds, Snowy suggested that teachers' need to spend more time communicating with parents. She also thought parents needed

encouragement to consider their children's classroom learning. Thus, whenever her students made progress, she would let their parents know. She thought this positive feedback to parents was helpful for her classroom teaching.

Snowy's efforts to care about a minoritized student' identity or cultural capital positively influenced Mandarin learning. She described having an African American student with low level Mandarin proficiency. When Snowy showed her special interest and appreciation of the student's scarf, she was giving her individual support. She commented, "Your scarf looks so beautiful. You changed the color today. Can you tell me what it is called and how to spell it? I can record it and look it up later after school. Then I can know more about your culture." Snowy explained that this student might feel that she cared about her sincerely and was open to learning more about her and her culture. This was Snowy's first attempt to show her care about minoritized students' cultural capital. She found this was an effective way to improve her student' interest and engagement in Mandarin learning. However, Snowy admitted needing to find effective ways to integrate culture or identity into curriculum and instruction. Despite receiving some professional development about the information gap, she felt a lack of awareness of how to bring minorized students' identity or cultural capital into classroom teaching. Snowy knew her students' Mandarin level was very low, yet, she needed to attach importance to their cultural similarities and differences when teaching.

Snowy thought that the socioeconomic and sociopolitical contexts were a big influence on her Mandarin learning. First, she explained that her African American

students chose to learn Mandarin so they could have more job opportunities in the future due to China's economic development. Their parents enrolled them in the Mandarin immersion program because they hoped that their children would have an advantage in future. Second, she shared that U.S. political context in school and district was a factor influencing Mandarin learning. Her school district was trying to increase the number of language immersion programs to deal with equity issues. With immersion programming, students could make use of their heritage culture and ethnic language for their future success. Third, Snowy thought U.S. public schools encouraged people to value diversity and differences. Snowy described:

> One day, students from a school of China visited our school for a day. That experience was so inspiring and encouraging to my students. My students were so excited and active because they met more Chinese people other than their Mandarin teachers in our school. That day, the language art teacher in my class said: 'We value the difference, we should respect each other.'

Snowy's description revealed her agreement that educators should respect difference. The school's action of inviting students from a Chinese school made a difference in transforming the traditional curriculum and instruction. By integrating culture and identity into curriculum and instruction, the outcome had been impressive.

Snowy also thought that school context influenced her understanding of her own identity and her students' identity. On the one hand, she had insufficient communication with principal, administrators, staff, and parents. In the school, their interactions were

basic like offering daily greetings or bringing food to staff meetings. She used texting as

only way to communicate with parents. In contrast, Snowy had more communication and

closer relationships with the English partner teacher and Mandarin teachers in her school.

On the other hand, she felt confused about her identity as a language teacher and her

students' identity, specifically the newly immigrated minoritized students, in the

dominant culture school context. She noted that her Hispanic students were learning

English as a second language in her classroom; it was hard and stressful for them to learn

Mandarin as a third language. She described:

> Sometimes, I felt very confused when ESOL teacher came to my Mandarin class
>
> to escort the Hispanic students to go out to learn English. So, they did not learn
>
> Mandarin in my Mandarin classroom teaching because they had to go out to learn
>
> English at that time. Of course, Mandarin was regarded as the third
>
> language. …They could not learn Mandarin well if we get rid of their Mandarin
>
> learning time.

Snowy explained her confusion about her language teacher identity and her Hispanic

students' identity as a second language learners of English in her school context. She

thought it was more difficult and complicated for Mandarin teaching and learning.

Snowy agreed that a learning community was very helpful for teaching and

learning Mandarin in her school. Her district and school provided support for

establishing learning communities. Her mentor helped to establish a professional small

learning community between Snowy and one third-grade Mandarin teacher as well as a

larger professional learning community among all Mandarin teachers in her school. In the professional learning communities, Mandarin teachers shared their curriculum, instructional practice, and students' homework assignments. In this way, Mandarin teachers learned from each other regarding teaching pedagogy and students' Mandarin level in each grade. Therefore, they could grasp Mandarin teaching and learning in a systematic way.

Snowy explained that the district's dual language immersion department supported Mandarin teachers to establish cross-school professional learning communities. They received training together and communicated with each other regularly. Snowy said the Mandarin professional learning community helped teachers with their Mandarin teaching.

Snowy also benefited from cross-subject professional learning community at her school. Colleagues teaching different subjects shared their classroom practices and how to support students as a second language learners of English. In addition, her school's afterschool program provided support for Mandarin learning community. This after school program was a homework club that was responsible for helping students with their Mandarin homework.

Snowy's school PTA also established a "Jin Ren," a parent-run nonprofit association that provided cross-cultural learning opportunities. This association developed and sent monthly newsletters about Mandarin program including teachers' classroom teaching and students' progress in learning Mandarin. The Jin Ren community

supported the Chinese immersion program externally and internally. Externally, this group raised funds to promote Mandarin teaching and learning in the school and recruit more students to the program. Internally, they helped students to learn Mandarin by offering additional academic support.

In summary, Snowy recognized many ways that social cultural experiences contributed to her sense of agency and identity as well as her teaching practice in the context of an immersion program in a public school, and school's community.

Emma: Private School Teacher

Emma, a private school teacher, had been teaching for three and half years in an international school. She earned a bachelor's degree in teaching English at a Chinese university and her master's degree majoring in teaching English to speakers of other language (ESOL) at a U.S. university. Emma held teacher licenses in China and the United States. She was knowledgeable about teaching and learning in both countries.   In addition, having the U.S. teacher license made Emma more competitive in the job market.

Emma assessed her own English proficiency at a medium level. She had been teaching English in an elementary school in China, though the U.S. employers did not recognize her experience in the same way. For this reason, she pursued a master's degree and a U.S. teacher license. She secured a teaching position at a private international school. For her first three years at the school, Emma taught fifth graders. In her fourth year, she taught Mandarin to the second graders.

In her school, among the total 399 students, 85 students were learning Mandarin as their second language. Teachers taught different languages such as French, German, Spanish and Chinese to English-speaking students. Eight Mandarin teachers came from mainland China, Taiwan, Hongkong and Singapore. Emma's school was known for Mandarin teaching, but recently began to face challenges because of the increased number of Mandarin immersion programs. Teachers in Emma's school collaborated with teachers in a private middle school with a Chinese immersion language program. Their collaboration focused on teaching in private schools and sharing Chinese community resources.

Emma shared that the Chinese textbook used in her school is *Lexue*, a textbook widely used in Singapore, with five levels. She said *Lexue* is well-designed for speakers of languages other than Chinese, especially for students in the United States. She noted how the step-by-step curriculum helps students to progress and improve their Chinese proficiency. Using this series of textbooks, her students perform well in speaking, listening, reading, and writing Chinese.

Emma mentioned that within the last four years of teaching, she received professional development training about IB courses and non-discrimination. However, she did not get professional development about Mandarin curriculum and instruction, classroom managements, or updates about teaching and learning.

Emma as a Gardener

Emma used the metaphor of gardener to describe her work as a Mandarin teacher. She expressed:

> I feel I am like a gardener working as a Mandarin teacher in a U.S. school. In other words, what I am doing is important though people don't show me enough respect because of ignorance. My job is to protect the 'nature' and 'plant' what people need.

She explained that being a Mandarin teacher is important because Mandarin teachers can educate children and contribute to the U.S. society. Yet, Emma also felt a lack of recognition in the United States when teaching in her U.S. private school.

Emma's Feelings of Lack of Recognition and Being Important

Emma had feelings of being important but also a lack of recognition in the United States. Emma disclosed contrasting feelings—a lack of recognition and being important—regarding her experiences as an early-career NCMT in a U.S. private school (see Figure 3).
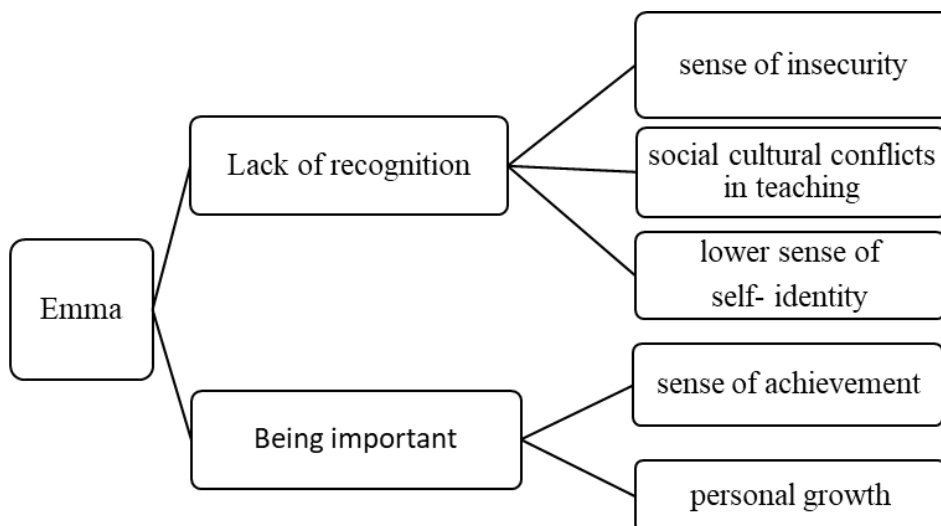
Figure 3. Emma's feelings of being an early NCMT in a U.S. classroom.

Lack of recognition. Emma reported that she felt a serious lack of recognition as a Mandarin teacher in the United States. This lack of recognition showed up in three ways: strong sense of insecurity, social cultural conflicts in teaching landscape, and low sense of self-identity.

Strong sense of insecurity. Emma felt insecure working as a Mandarin teacher in the United States. First, she did not feel secure in her job because in Riverton there are few opportunities for teaching Mandarin. She shared that it was more competitive for private schools because more public schools in Riverton were opening Mandarin immersion programs. She felt both insecure and anxious about her job stability.

Another reason for Emma's feeling of insecurity was the China–United States relationship in recent years. She explained that the tense relationship influenced new immigrants' lives. Emma's school could not guarantee her job if the relationship

between the United States and China became worse. If the relationship got worse, she would lose her job.

Emma felt insecure and fearful when communicating with parents during her first year of teaching in the United States. She did not know how to communicate with them—what she should say or what she should not say. Even though her husband's family were from the United States, Emma found it difficult to start a conversation with them. For example, U.S. people liked to talk about politics, but she did not like to talk about politics. Whenever she was talking with her students' parents, she was so fearful that she would violate one of their taboos. Emma was so afraid of saying something wrong that she would talk only briefly with her students' parents. Her sense of insecurity was a barrier for having rich and deep communication with parents. Thus, Emma kept her distance from parents so she would not do or say something unexpected.

Emma also felt insecure about observing students in her classroom. At the beginning, she did not understand her students' differences or how to teach them differently. She did not know how to answer the children's questions because she had no experience with teaching preschoolers in China. She disclosed that she did not know the appropriate way to answer children's questions in the United States. Her insecurity interfered with her ability to establish good relationship with her students. Thus, she felt frustrated with her job as a Mandarin teacher. She lamented that it was very hard for a beginning Mandarin teacher in the United States.

Social cultural conflicts in teaching landscape. Emma experienced some social cultural conflicts related to teaching in her private school. One ongoing conflict was valuing time for quality teaching and spending time in meetings. On the one hand, the school required teachers to teach well and focus on the quality of teaching; on the other hand, teachers must attend a lot of meetings. As a first-year teacher, Emma needed more time to prepare for teaching because she had to design the hands-on activities. However, she also had to participate in school meetings that consumed most of her planning time.

Another social cultural conflict Emma faced was the conflict between White leadership and the Chinese language teaching. In her school, the White administrators did not understand Chinese culture and Mandarin teaching well, but controlled the teaching approach. For example, the administrators required Emma to teach Mandarin in a westerners' mindset. This approach did not work well because Emma need to embed Chinese culture in language learning. In another example, she said to learn Mandarin the students need practice at home; however, the leaders said that the students do not need to do homework.

Emma described the differences between her and her colleagues from other cultures in her school. There were some cultural conflicts between her and the other international language teachers in the western countries. These cultural conflicts would influence her own understanding of what they are doing as a Mandarin teacher. She said:

Generally, Mandarin teachers in our school value more on how much our students grasp the knowledge. We have high expectations on our students' academic learning outcomes. Every teacher will follow the syllabus and teach to make the teaching objective to be the learning outcomes. This is also similar to Japanese teachers because they are also from Asian culture. The other international teachers like Spanish teachers, French teachers, and German teachers usually value more on the formative learning. That says, they will ask their students to spend more time on learning things by doing hands-on activities.

Emma made a comparison of teaching pedagogies between Asian language teachers and the western language teachers. She respected the differences in teaching pedagogies; however, she felt that students spent too much doing hands-on work (e.g., one-hour to paint a poster) especially in higher grades. While parents loved seeing their children's beautiful visual products, Emma felt children needed to focus on learning Mandarin. Mandarin teachers spent a lot of time teaching their students the Mandarin language, but this was invisible to the parents.

Emma mentioned another social cultural conflict that put Mandarin teachers' work at a disadvantage. In her mind, Mandarin teachers did not communicate directly with the administrators in her school. Emma said Mandarin teachers did not express their performance and needs very directly. They preferred to solve problems themselves when they have difficulty in their work. In contrast, the other foreign languages teachers used more direct communication with the principal about their performances or needs. For

example, the Spanish teachers preferred to talk to the principal directly about the difficulties they were having. In this way, the administrators understood them well and felt impressed by their work. Emma like other Mandarin teachers worked very hard and exhausted themselves in dealing with issues rather than seeking support from the leadership. She thought the administrators would view her as incompetent if she exposed her problems or difficulties. In a Chinese culture mindset, individuals should find solutions for themselves.

Emma experienced another cultural conflict—the difference between Mandarin teachers and U.S. parents' values of teaching and learning. As a Mandarin teacher, she would like to teach her students to reach higher levels in Mandarin. She was not satisfied with teaching only the minimal objectives. She thought her students had the ability to learn more Mandarin. However, to her surprise, most White parents did not want the Mandarin teachers to teach as much or require homework of their children.

Lower sense of self-identity. Emma felt a lower sense of self-identity as a Mandarin teacher in U.S. schools. First, she felt that in the United States, people do not attach much importance to education, and teachers have low social status generally. Working as a teacher in the United States, she did not get as much respect as in China. For example, one of her student's parent wrote her an email letter and attacked her verbally at midnight because she was strict with the student's learning. Emma cried aloud when she read the letter because she had good intentions when reminding the student to be more engaged in learning. The parent did not understand and wrote bad

words to her in the letter arguing that whatever his son did was right. She could not understand parents' overprotection of children regardless of whether they were right or wrong. This hurt Emma.

Another negative and insulting experience during her first-year teaching was when a parent said, "You are a douchebag." Though she did not understand the word, she still smiled at the parent. When she checked with her husband about the meaning of that word, Emma felt so insulted. She felt that most parents' attitudes toward teachers in the private school were unsatisfactory. In her opinion, parents had more voice in school decision making than teachers.

Emma shared that preservice Mandarin teachers have fewer job opportunities; it was very hard for them to start their teaching career in the United States. In her early job-hunt, she found that no one would accept her education background, her diploma, or her teaching experience in China. With a college diploma and several years of teaching experience in China, Emma had difficulty getting a satisfactory job in the United States. After graduating with a U.S. master's degree, she assumed she would be qualified to work as a public school teacher. However, in the job market, U.S. schools seemed to prefer White teachers. Emma thought because she was a second language learner, it was hard for her to secure a teaching position except teaching Mandarin. Because of the limited number of positions for teaching Mandarin, she joked that getting a Mandarin teaching position was like winning the lottery.

Emma also observed that few opportunities in leadership existed for non-White teachers. While her personal goal was to become a principal or a program coordinator, she did not see any Chinese people in leadership positions. For this reason, Emma thought she needed to earn a doctoral degree if she wanted to advance her career. She suggested that Chinese people or other minoritized groups could bring different perspectives, concepts, and thoughts to education. She shared:

> Sometimes, I think there is still racism in the teaching landscape. In our school, we have Spanish program, Japanese program, and Chinese program. All the administrators are White people. How can they administrate us well if they do not understand what we are thinking… Now, many Chinese teachers in our school do not agree with this situation. We found that we worked a lot but did not get a deserving payment whereas the administrators got higher payment…this is unfair…very serious capitalism. Those who do the most work at the lowest level of the institute got the lowest payment. They have no voice in decision making and do not know how to make voice.

Emma explained that in the teaching context, racism and inequity still exist. She hoped that earning a doctoral degree or becoming a program coordinator would make a difference. She wanted to move beyond her comfort zone and pursue professional growth.

Being important. Emma described that being a Mandarin teacher, she felt important because she had a sense of achievement and grew professionally in the teaching landscape.

Sense of achievement. Emma felt happy and excited whenever she saw her students' growth in learning Mandarin. Her students brought her happiness every day because they were very creative. Emma felt a strong sense of achievement when she witnessed her students' transformation day after day. Thinking back, she reflected that her happiest days were when her students were highly engaged in learning and enjoyed the process.

Emma was happy when she had good relationships with her students and parents. She felt close to her students, and she loved when students would share their feelings with her. She would also feel happy when parents appreciated her work.

Emma also expressed her job satisfaction because she enjoyed the flexibility and autonomy in teaching. She could design how to teach and set expectations for her students' Mandarin proficiency. In addition, she enjoyed the freedom to manage her own teaching and her students' learning.

Personal growth. Emma experienced a lot of personal growth working as a Mandarin teacher. For example, she learned about different perspectives to understand teaching and learning. She saw a big difference between her teaching experience in the United States and China. In her U.S. private school, teachers guided students' growth through self-engagement and self-achievement. Teachers used activities to motivate

students' interests and inspire them to learn. In China, she used a reward system to motivate her students to learn. Emma grew to understand the importance of students' growth and the essence of learning in the United States.

Another growth area for Emma was differentiating instruction for her students. After teaching for a while, she learned to distinguish students' learning habits, personalities, and learning styles. Some students learned well when they were moving and some students preferred being still, so she provided different kinds of seats in her classroom. Her students could sit on bubble seats, rocking chairs, the carpet, or regular chairs—whatever was most comfortable for them.

Emma also encouraged her students to present their learning in different ways. She thought teachers should design their instruction based on their students' differences and give them options for learning performance.

Emma learned from her challenges in teaching in a U.S. classroom. She faced many challenges, but she learned to overcome them and grow from the experience. One challenge was the increasing achievement gap among her students as they moved toward higher grades. When the students fell behind in achievement, they lost their interest in learning Mandarin and would give up learning Mandarin in middle school and high school. Emma thought it was important for her to understand and bridge her students' achievement gap when they were in lower grades.

Another motivating challenge was her students' social emotional needs in classroom learning. She found that most students had been friends since kindergarten, so

they liked to participate in their peer groups. However, these groups were not as helpful

for some students, especially those students who were shy or introverted; it was hard for

them to make friends with classmates. She said:

> In the big environment in the United States, people who don't like to talk are most
>
> easily neglected. However, in most case, there are many introverted students in
>
> your classroom. So, it is important for teachers to help their students to fit in the
>
> big environment and care about the students' social emotional needs.

Emma explained that it is necessary for teachers to help their students to develop

communication skills and find opportunities to make friends in lower grades. These

friendships would be helpful for entering the higher grades and their social emotional

growth.

Emma's Social Cultural Experience in Teaching

In this section, I provide a description of Emma's understandings and beliefs

about teaching and learning in U.S. schools. Then, I discuss the interaction among

language, identity, and culture in her teaching.

Emma's understanding of teaching and learning. Emma thought that teaching

and learning was a process of teachers guiding their students to learn skills and

knowledge to connect what they know with the content they are learning. In this process,

students learned to establish connections and construct their own learning system. She

understood that students should play an active and center role in classroom learning.

Teachers should instruct their students to find solutions to problems on their own. For

example, she said, "When my students are learning a new word, I will encourage them to find their own ways to internalize it and share their ways with each other."

Thinking of how to establish relationship with students, Emma thought being open, trustworthy, and respectful were most important. In her classroom, she encouraged her students to be open and share problems directly with her. She preferred that her students find solutions to problems themselves. Equally, she was open to sharing her daily life with her students. Emma let her students know that she was not only a teacher in classroom, but she might also have similar daily life experiences. She treated each student as an independent individual to show her respect. In this way, her students could know more about her, trust her, and feel more comfortable in classroom learning.

Emma's integration of language, identity, and culture into teaching. Emma used the Chinese textbook from Singapore. She found that this textbook series fit U.S. students' learning needs because Singaporean Chinese textbooks are more focused on second language acquisition. She explained that in Singapore, Chinese and English were equally important and provided a good example of bilingual education. Using the Singaporean Chinese textbook, students learn Chinese gradually. Emma integrated the language teaching content and literacy with Chinese culture. She said, "As a Mandarin teacher, I preferred my students to learn more about China. So, I had to spend extra time explaining the differences between Singaporean Chinese and Mainland China Chinese." Emma also integrated Mandarin to teaching math, social studies, and science. She found students could use Chinese well in speaking, listening, reading, and writing if they

followed the instruction. Emma pointed that a limitation of the curriculum was the lack

of reviews during the transition from one grade to the next grade. The teachers had to

spend more time reviewing. Because teachers were different, it was hard for some

teachers to support the transition between grades. In addition, teachers used different

teaching materials: some prepared the content themselves and others found materials

online. Thus, students had to adapt constantly to different teaching approaches as they

transitioned between grades.

Thinking about instruction, Emma reflected that she placed her students at the

center of classroom learning. She used different tools to teach Mandarin and scaffolded

her students' learning. She provided students with an entire Mandarin immersion

learning environment. Emma also applied a task-based pedagogy to her classroom

teaching encouraging her students to learn to make choices and complete learning

projects.

Emma's students are from diverse cultural background including Hispanic,

Korean, Japanese, and Chinese Taiwan. So, she encouraged her students to share their

culture in every unit. She also guided her students to read books about African

American, Native American, and LGBT cultures. She wanted to open students' minds

about cultures in this world; she thought teachers should lead students to embrace

differences and avoid judging people. Emma took efforts to guide the culturally

minoritized students to integrate themselves into the diverse classroom. She explained

that because many students in her classroom had mixed identities, she encouraged her students to read books about people of different cultures.

Emma identified that parents' backgrounds had a positive influence on students' classroom learning. Most of her students were from wealthy families, and their parents had harmonious relationships with each other. So far, none of her students had traumatic problems or dropped out of school because of family problems. This was a big difference between public and private schools. Emma also incorporated parents' positive influence into her curriculum and instruction. For example, she invited parents who had professional knowledge and expertise in some field to be guest speakers in her classroom. She also invited parents to be chaperons and support students' speeches about the cultural field trip.

Emma found that life experience was helpful for students' language learning. Because her students were from wealthy family, they had more cultural experiences that helped their Mandarin learning. For example, parents used holidays to take their children traveling around the world to experience different cultures. In addition, parents had wide networks to support their children's Mandarin learning. They exposed their children to a Mandarin immersion environment outside school time. Emma explained that rich life experiences were important to students' Mandarin learning. She shared, "Once we were learning the Greek fairy tales, one student volunteered to tell a Greek fairy tale because he has been to Greece, and his parents told much about Greek culture and fairy tales to

him." Emma said these life experiences broadened students' horizons and extended their understanding of the world.

Emma identified how people in her school dealt with cultural differences influenced her understanding of her identity. First, she explained that she was an introverted person, who did not like to social or communicate with the principal or school leaders. She shared, "My principal asked me what I was doing when I was printing in the workroom. I would give him a short answer rather than explain it in detail. Thus, he still did not understand what I was doing in my classroom teaching and learning." Emma thought the leaders misunderstood her work attitude; in the leaders' eyes, she did not work much. However, Emma did work hard and considered the needs of her students. Second, Emma felt a sense of distance from her White male principal; she did not feel his intention to be close to Chinese female teachers. Thus, she stopped sharing whenever the principal was around. The principal's dealing with cultural differences had hurt her feelings. She described:

> I don't like the principal's way of communication…he was easy to judge me
> whenever I wanted to share something with him. Once when I told him how
> much I loved my students this year, he replied 'You should not say like that. You
> should not just mention you love your students this year.' His words hurt me, that
> is why I did not want to share anything with him anymore. I found he did not try
> to understand me and give me support and appreciation in school. He just only
> dealt with administration or communication with me in his own cultural way.

Emma thought that cultural differences led to the misunderstanding between her and her principal. Her principal's direct expression of judgement made her feel badly and uncomfortable. Thus, she chose to limit communication with the principal.

Emma had good relationships with other Mandarin teachers from Chinese mainland which helped her establish a learning community about teaching and learning with them. Yet, Emma felt some conflicts between teachers from Mainland China and Taiwan. She found that Taiwan teachers were not friendly with teachers from Mainland China. Emma did not like this kind of relationship and hoped people would respect each other and understand their different perspectives. Regarding her connections with U.S. colleagues, Emma said she had not established any deep relationship with them. In her mind, U.S. colleagues were friendly but distant; they would just say "hello" and briefly greet her. After school, Emma did not attend gatherings with her U.S. colleagues.

Emma agreed that positive relationships between teachers and parents supported Mandarin teaching and learning. When parents understood what the teacher and children were doing in school, they could supervise their children's homework. In addition, parents could communicate with their children about what they were learning in school. To support her teaching practice, Emma sent weekly newsletters to parents. She also used an online portfolio for every student to upload their Mandarin work. Thus, parents could view what their children had produced in the classroom and their use of Mandarin.

Emma worked to establish learning communities in her school including a learning community among teachers, school-oriented fieldtrips and cultural trips, teacher-

oriented homework club, and parent-oriented profit organization. First, Emma described

that due to her good relationship with Mandarin teachers in her school, their students had

more opportunities to learn from each other inside and outside the school. Second,

Emma felt that the field trip was one more opportunity for her students to participate in

learning community. She explained:

> In one unit, we are learning "how we organize ourselves?" Then, we integrated
>
> that unit into students' learning in the fieldtrip. We usually would bring our
>
> students to visit various government institutes. This year, our students are
>
> expected to understand how our school organize ourselves. In this fieldtrip, the
>
> principal introduced everything to our students including different positions, jobs,
>
> rules, and regulations. The purpose was to let our students understand how a
>
> community work[s].

Emma described that fieldtrip was an important way for students to learn things together

in a community. Their school had the tradition to integrate their teaching content with

the fieldtrip learning experience.

Emma considered that the fifth-graders' cultural fieldtrip with students in Suzhou

China was a big event for the learning community. She described that every year,

students from Suzhou would spend one week visiting the fifth graders' classroom

learning. In addition, the fifth graders would have an experience to travel to Suzhou and

have homestay in Suzhou for several days. That experience was very helpful for the fifth

graders' Mandarin learning. She suggested that students at every grade should have the opportunity to experience this cultural field trip.

Emma also reflected that some profit-oriented organizations helped support students' Mandarin community learning. For example, one Chinese parent owned a travel agency. She helped parents in the school to find homestays and facilitate their travels in China. Emma had run a profit-making Mandarin learning homework club. Its purpose was to help students to do their homework in Mandarin. Parents appreciated her work in the homework club where students reviewed learning and completed homework. However, more recently, Emma's school decided not to shoulder any responsibility for the homework club. This was a concern for Emma.

Katerina: Confucius Classroom Teacher

Katerina, a Confucius classroom teacher in a public middle school in Riverton, earned her bachelor's degree and master's degree in Teaching Chinese as a Second Language in China. Though Katerina did not need a U.S. teacher license to work as a Mandarin teacher in a Confucius classroom teacher, she did have a teacher license for Chinese teaching in high school in China. She mainly acquired her knowledge about learning and teaching from Mainland China.

Katerina described her English proficiency as a medium high level. She thought having a higher-level English proficiency was helpful for teaching Chinese to speakers of other languages.

Katerina had taught Mandarin in different countries like in the Confucius Institute in Malang State University in Indonesia for nine months and in Durban University in South Africa for nine months. She also taught briefly in the Language Institute in Guangxi Normal University (China). All these experiences familiarized her with teaching Mandarin to people from different countries from diverse cultures.

As a Confucius classroom teacher, Katerina taught in a talented and gifted program in a public school with 160 students. She was the only Mandarin teacher teaching Mandarin to 50 students in Grades 6–8 who were learning Mandarin as their second language. Because she did not have a designated textbook, she gathered Mandarin teaching content and materials from different resources such as online and other textbooks.

Katerina received professional development mainly from the Confucius Institute with which her Confucius classroom was affiliated regarding classroom management. Specifically, how to deal with students' behavior and how to earn students' respect.

Katerina as a Bridge

Katerina used the metaphor a bridge to describe her experience of being a Confucius classroom teacher. She reflected:

> … I am like a bridge between students in the United States and China. I always have an idea that I should let my student understand what China looks like in the modern time rather than their stereotyped impression about China. I will introduce the real-life resources to my students. This means that I should choose

the appropriate resources from the one side of the bridge (China)and transport it

to the other side.

Katerina said she loved this metaphor as a bridge because she thought she could let her

students understand how China looked.

Katerina's Felt Stress, a Sense of Mission, and Responsibility

Katerina felt stress as well as a sense of mission and responsibility as an early

NCMT in a Confucius classroom in the United States. Though teaching was stressful for

her, she felt a strong sense of mission and responsibility (see Figure 4).
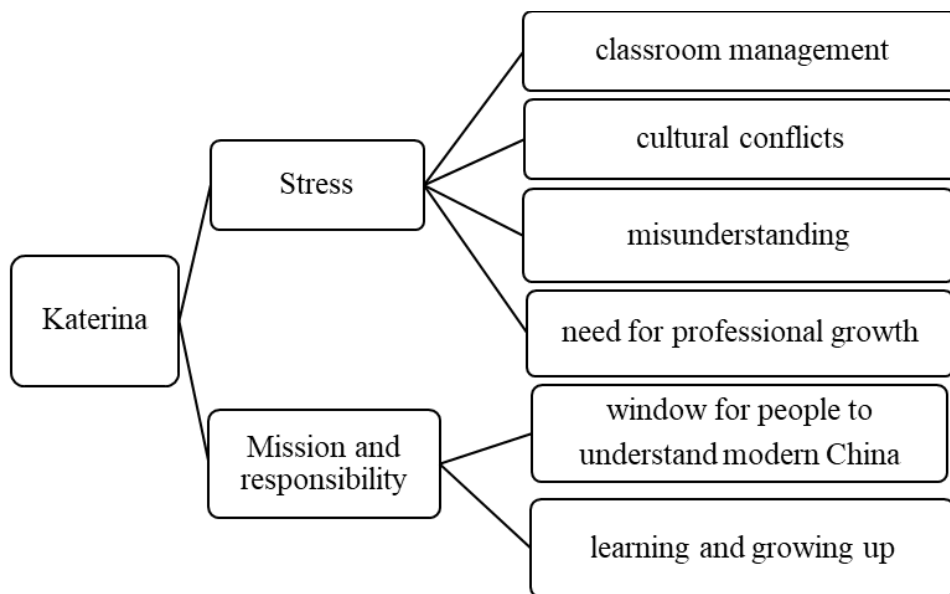

Figure 4. Katerina's feelings of being an early NCMT in a U.S. classroom.

Stress. Working as a Confucius classroom teacher, Katerina felt stressed because

she met with challenges in classroom management, cultural conflicts, and

misunderstandings between U.S. and Chinese people. She also needed professional development.

Challenges in classroom management. Katerina found that Mandarin teachers had many stresses in their first-year teaching in the United States. She said the biggest challenge for her was classroom management. She described an impressive experience in her first days of teaching:

> …in my first week of teaching, because I did not set up the classroom policy and rules with my students, they did not listen to me in classroom learning. I could not endure the chaos and banged the desk of the student who was making trouble. So, the first week was very hard for me. Although I read many books about classroom teaching and management, but [I] still needed time to adapt to the real-life teaching here.

Katerina's first days of teaching were the hardest because of classroom management. She learned that she needed to set up the classroom policy and rules at the very beginning of teaching.

Katerina felt frustrated when no matter how hard she was trying to manage the class discipline her students keep talking or ignoring her existence. She felt sad whenever she did not complete her teaching goals, or the outcomes were bad. She felt disappointed when her students found excuses to avoid doing homework.

Cultural conflict. Katerina described her feeling of stress when dealing with cultural conflicts at her work. She found teachers in U.S. schools needed to work

extremely hard and prepare many materials for classroom teaching, but they did not have equal pay for their work.

In addition, Katerina felt that U.S. people have different attitudes toward teachers from China. Their understandings of the relationship between teachers and students were also different. Thus, U.S. teachers did not get as much respect as teachers in China. However, Katerina supported the idea that students needed to show respect to their teachers. Therefore, she still needed time to learn the U.S. way of dealing with the relationship between teachers and students.

Katerina recalled that on her first day of teaching in a U.S. school she felt extremely nervous and at a loss. Not only had the school started before her arrival, but she also did not feel fully prepared to teach Mandarin. She revealed:

I was so nervous that day when I arrived. One teacher in the school district brought me to the school and introduced me to the principal and the secretary and then she left me alone there. I planned to get prepared for the classroom teaching by observing the substitute teacher for a couple of days. However, the substitute teacher was a Japanese teacher, who felt it hard to teach Mandarin. Thus, she passed the role for me to teach immediately. Although I have thought of the first day teaching many times, I still felt so unprepared and my mind went blind in such a rush.

Katerina described feeling in a rush and unprepared for her first day of teaching. She felt nervous and at a loss at the sudden transition from China to the United States.

Katerina also felt helpless whenever her students did not behave well in classroom learning. She did not know how to manage her students in an appropriate way within the U.S. context. She recalled banging on the desk of her students when they behaved in a bad way. She was surprised to know that parents could sue her for these behaviors. Thus, she needed to learn more culturally appropriate ways to treat her students.

Misunderstanding. Katerina reported that sometimes she felt stress because of misunderstandings between people in the United States and in China. As the relationship between China and the United States grew tense, the government and people challenged Confucius classroom teachers' roles and purpose of teaching Mandarin. Thus, support from districts and schools were important for Confucius classroom teachers' survival in U.S. schools. The biggest support was the recognition that Confucius classroom Mandarin teachers could facilitate the cultural communication between the two countries rather than engage in any political purpose. Without this support, she would have felt a lower sense of existence, increased pressure, and more anxiety. This misunderstanding would also damage her feeling of self-esteem and recognition. Personally, she felt distressed and afraid as the relationship between the two countries became tenser.

Katerina also felt stress when she met with misunderstandings from people in China. She described:

One day, as I went to hospital to get the vaccination to prepare to teach in Indonesia, I was hurt to hear two people's dialogue about Confucius classroom teachers. They said: 'Confucius Institutes spend so much money overseas, I

cannot understand its meaning.' At that time, I just graduated from University, having no knowledge of the society. I felt that I was hurt because even my own country fellow could not understand what we are doing. They did not understand how hard our life would be in a foreign country… I felt great loneliness from my inner heart.

Katerina felt hurt and lonely when she recognized the misunderstanding coming from people from her own country.

Need for professional growth. Katerina responded that the annual professional development organized by Confucius Institute was a great support for her. It was a great opportunity for Confucius classroom teachers in the city to know each other and exchange ideas. However, she thought that the professional development in Confucius Institute was not enough for Mandarin teachers' professional growth. As a Mandarin teacher, she needed more training about hands-on teaching. In other words, how to apply theories in practice. For example, she learned theories in classroom management, but she needed to know how to use them in classroom teaching practice. Thus, experienced Mandarin teachers' presentations of cases to deal with the real-life classroom management in schools were more important in professional development.

Katerina suggested that Mandarin teachers should have more opportunities to observe classes across schools and districts learning from each other in a larger landscape. She hoped that she could have any opportunities to observe other teachers'

classroom teaching. She wanted to see how classroom learning and teaching differ across schools and districts.

Katerina mentioned that it was necessary for Mandarin teachers to develop their intercultural communication competence and awareness to understand the cultural differences. Though she had read a lot of books related to cultural differences, she still felt stuck in dealing with real-life experiences in the United States.

Working as a Confucius classroom teacher, Katerina thought there were some limitations for her to thrive in profession. First, the two-year term was too short for a Mandarin teacher to understand teaching and learning in U.S. schools. Mandarin teachers needed time to learn to teach and live in a new society. Second, Katerina reported that there was limited opportunity for her to develop her profession and make progress in her career. She had theoretical knowledge about teaching Chinese to speakers of other languages in both her bachelor's to master's degree. She also had teaching practice in Confucius classrooms in different countries. Thus, she did not feel any challenge in teaching practice. At her age, she felt it was important to take time to grow and develop different skills. Therefore, she decided to give up working as a Confucius classroom Mandarin teacher in the future when her contract ended. She explained that she wanted to take time to seek more space to develop and grow.

A sense of mission and responsibility. Katerina felt a strong sense of mission and responsibility for two reasons. First, she thought it was her responsibility and mission to be a window for U.S. people to understand modern time China. Second, she

felt with this mission and responsibility, she had learned and experienced growth in the United States.

    A window for people to understand modern China. Katerina used to regard being a Confucius classroom teacher as a tool for her to explore cultures around the world. However, as she travelled to more countries, she felt more sense of mission and responsibility for teaching. Katerina hoped that she could be a window for people in other countries to understand modern China. She found that most people's impressions about China were image from the 1980s rather than from current times.

    Katerina tried to avoid any misunderstandings that occur because of her teaching performance. Thus, it was a challenge for her to guide her students and colleagues to understand and accept a real image of China. When teaching in Indonesia and South Africa, Katerina did not feel this same challenge. She found U.S. people were more curious and caring about sensitive topics relating to politics and religion. Thus, whenever students asked her questions about politics and religion, she would be very cautious. Because English was her second language, she worried that her words could mislead her students to misunderstand China. She would respect different perspectives about China; however, she thought that people had limited impressions of China. Katerina was happy to help people gain a real understanding of China. Working as a Confucius classroom teacher, she felt a strong sense of achievement when her students started to have a good understanding and feelings about China.

Learning and growing up. Katerina learned by working as a Confucius classroom teacher in the United States. It was hard to become a Confucius classroom teacher in the United States because the standards were high. She explained that teachers in U.S. schools had to handle multiple roles and responsibilities. They needed to manage to balance family and work, and maintain good relationships with colleagues, students, and parents at a fast pace and with high efficiency.

First, she learned about teaching and learning in the U.S. classroom. Students in U.S. schools were different from other countries; they were creative and had their own view of the world. Thus, they would constantly question or challenge rather than listen to teachers or parents in their learning process. Because her students were deeper thinkers, she spent more time getting answers for them. She mentioned that U.S. students learned from hands-on activities; they understood by doing. This teaching approach required Katerina to spend more time and energy to prepare lessons. She was still learning how to keep the classroom teaching interesting within her limited time.

Second, Katerina shared that this was her first experience teaching students in special education and teach students using individual plans (e.g., 504 plan, IEP plan). At the beginning, she did not understand these educational policies. Later, she understood that in the United States, disabled people and non-disabled people alike lived in the same community. They used the same resources such as the bus or other public facilities. She thought establishing good living environments for non-disabled and disabled people was

a good example for China. However, supporting special needs students was new for

Katerina. She recalled:

> I remembered that once the school counselor came to inform me that one student
>
> was in 504 plan and he needed longer time to finish his test than other students. I
>
> had to leave him longer time to complete the test because he was upset with it. I
>
> could not understand this because I thought everyone was expected to complete
>
> the test within the same timeline.

Katerina's school had a talented and gifted program, thus, every student studied at

different pace. So, she learned how to teach students by different individual plans and

strategies.

Third, Katerina learned by exploring the cultural differences between the United

States and China. In the United States, people regarded one another as equal. In U.S.

schools, people did not regard the principals as superior to other staff, so they shared

responsibilities with the school staff. She enjoyed this atmosphere of freedom and equity

in the teaching landscape. She applied this idea of freedom and equity to her classroom

teaching. Katerina explained:

> I think language learning need a lot of practice and drills. However, due to lack
>
> of Mandarin learning community in local place and the intense course
>
> requirement, I had to encourage my students to complete a lot of drilling exercises
>
> in class. Concerning this would make my students feel bored in classroom
>
> learning, I also learned from other teachers by organizing some activities to make

my classroom teaching more fun and attractive. I think that in the United States teachers should return classroom learning to their students, and make their students feel that they are the master of the classrooms.

Katerina learned to apply the idea of freedom and equity to her classroom teaching practice and understand that students should be the master of their classroom learning.

As a teacher from another culture, Katerina had some unique experiences in her school such as learning from her students. She explained that English was her second language, so her students helped her learn whenever she had difficulty expressing ideas in English. She also learned from her students in other ways. She recalled:

Once there was a fire drill in our school. I knew nothing about it and felt stuck. My students gave me directions and said 'teacher, hide, hide, stop talking.' I was greatly touched at that moment. I could never forget this experience because I felt my students loved me and treated me well even though I was a foreigner and my English level was not so good.

Katerina reflected that this was an unforgettable experience for her—learning from her students. Her students helped her fit better into the school. Teaching was also a process for her to learn; by teaching, she learned how to get along with teenagers. She recognized that the key to getting along with students was to treat them with sincerity.

For Katerina, the process of language learning was also a process of making comparisons. She learned by making comparisons between Chinese and English language (e.g., expression of time), Chinese and U.S. cultural concepts and values (e.g.,

collectivism vs. individualism), and language expressions (e.g., the ending part of a letter), and so on. From her unique perspective, she found these comparisons interesting.

Given the cultural differences, she understood that U.S. and Chinese teachers apply different grading strategies. She thought that test scores were a tool to guide students to learn from their mistakes, thus she would not allow students to earn a second grade after correcting test mistakes. She considered that students could learn better and understand their weakness more from the test results. However, she recognized that her understanding was different from her students and her U.S. colleagues' understandings. She found that U.S. students felt they could get higher scores if they corrected their mistakes; it was a serious problem if they did not get an A in a test. Katerina decided to apply this grading strategy, so she gave her students higher scores whenever she thought they were making progress compared to their own learning. While Katerina did not agree that this grading strategy was good for students' learning, she compromised to fit in her school's culture.

Katerina learned many skills in social life and achieved personal growth as she transitioned to teaching in U.S. schools. For example, she improved her English proficiency after she started to teach in the United States. Her colleagues and students helped her to improve her English. Katerina spent a lot of time taking notes and learning to speak English better, so she felt satisfaction with her progress in English expression. After her English improved, Katerina was more efficient in learning to solve problems.

She found it easier to make decisions, and she preferred trying something new and stepping out of her comfort zone. She described:

> Before I came to the United States, I heard that the labor force was expensive, and that people should learn to solve problems by themselves. I preferred to solve problems by myself instead of crying whenever I met with difficulty. Now I had a kind of ability to anticipate some difficulties and think about the solutions before they occurred to my life. I think this ability is important for people to think about solutions to whatever problems in life.

She explained that learning important skills and finding effective ways to solve problems helped her meet challenges in life as a U.S. teacher.

Katerina learned to be a better bicultural individual as she handled the transition between the two cultures—Chinese and U.S. mainstream cultures. She explained that although people enjoyed the freedom and equity in the United States, they also had some taboos in their daily communications.   For example, U.S. people would avoid talking about appearances, privacy, and any sensitive topics. In her daily communications, she learned to keep alert and be careful of boundaries whenever establishing relationships with people from different cultural backgrounds. She summarized that if individuals could use English and Mandarin well, and deal with the relationship between people from western and eastern cultures, it would be easier for them to make the transition between the two cultures and approach communication. Katerina found it was helpful to develop her intercultural communication skills and competence in her work and life experience.

She learned to respect different perspectives and individuals as well as avoid judging other people by imposing her values on them.

Katerina thought that it was hard to become a Confucius classroom teacher in the United States because the standards were high. She explained that teachers in U.S. schools had to handle multiple roles and responsibilities. They needed to manage to balance family and work, and maintain good relationships with colleagues, students, and parents at a fast pace and with high efficiency.

Katerina's Social Cultural Experience in Teaching

First, I described Katerina's beliefs and values of teaching and learning in U.S. schools. Second, I discussed her teaching practice to understand how she responded to the interactive relationship among language, identity, culture, and her teaching.

Katerina's understanding of teaching and learning. Katerina attributed her understanding of teaching and learning to Confucius' thought "teaching is learning." "Among any three people walking, I will find something to learn for sure." In Mandarin, she could teach her students in many ways, but she could also learn from her students and get support. Katerina found that teaching and learning transformed her and her teaching practice. She shared an experience that impressed her:

> One day, we were talking about describing a teacher. One student asked: "a
> teacher? What teacher I should describe?" One student next to him said: "You
> can describe Katerina." That students answered: "Is she our teacher? I thought
> she is our classmate." The other student said: "Yes, she is teaching us." I was so

pleased that they have regarded me as one among them. I found that my role as a

teacher and student might transform from each other any time in classroom

learning and teaching …I felt grateful for their [students] willingness to share and

help me.

Her students' dialogue revealed students' impression of her and her role as a teacher. She

felt good when students regarded her as both a teacher and student in the classroom. Her

teaching experiences made Katerina believe strongly that teaching is learning, and that

people learn from each other.

Katerina tried to provide her students with a respectful, friendly, safe, and

comfortable learning environment. She gave students more freedom to make decisions

about their learning. Plus, her students felt pleased when they could teach her any

English word. She thought teachers should stand in their students' shoes to understand

learning. Thus, she was patient with her students and allowed them to feel comfortable to

make mistakes in learning. She described:

One day, I found one of my U.S. colleagues sit[ting] crying silently in the

learning center because of one student's bad behavior in classroom learning. She

asked the counselor to bring the student in and extended her apology to the

student. I realized the student felt shocked and apologized to the teacher for his

behavior. He said: "I am sorry. I am not confident in drawing, so I yelled out

loud and made you mad when you asked us to do some drawing.

Katerina's colleague's experience with this student showed that students need an environment to feel safe and comfortable. She suggested that teachers should understand their students' need to avoid appearing weak or vulnerable in the classroom.

Katerina's integration of language, identity, and culture into teaching. Katerina was the only Mandarin teacher in her school. She taught students from sixth grade to the eighth grade. For her seventh and eighth graders, she taught using the district required textbook, *Huanying* (Howard & Xu, 2012) because students earn credits in these two grades.

Katerina did not use a textbook to teach sixth graders. Instead, she designed 'a journey around China' curriculum in which students learned to use Mandarin by pretending to travel to different cities in China. Students learned to engage in conversations based on the geography, holidays, history, and culture of each city. For example, she said: "Now, we are in Shanghai, how shall we celebrate our Lantern Festival?" In this way, she taught Mandarin by integrating the knowledge related to the geography, history, culture, and language. Her students liked this way of teaching because they learned language by imitating real life experience when using Mandarin.

The limitation in her current curriculum for sixth graders through eighth graders was it did not provide a systematic and content-cohesive curriculum for students with different levels of Mandarin proficiency. Mandarin teachers worried that students could not learn as much as possible when they had to spend too much classroom time managing students' behaviors or introducing a new culture. Thus, she would focus on language

learning by using culture to facilitate the learning. She wanted students to communicate in Mandarin in classroom.

Katerina had some difficulty in handling the seventh and eighth grade curriculum because the district requirement for the learning outcomes were not clear. She was responsible for assigning students' credits, but she did not have rubrics for Mandarin assessment or know the criteria to assess Mandarin learning. She said:

> For example, in the parent-teacher conference, one student's parents came to inform me that their child had problems in hearing, and he had barriers in learning. They asked me to write a note of explanation for him to learn sign language in high school. …I felt I need some expert or mentor to give me instruction. I did not know how to deal with issues like this. I did not know whether I needed to give him credit or not while he studied in my classroom. Based on his own ability, he has completed the task, he can get an A. But compared to other classmates, he cannot get an A.

Katerina's students had different Mandarin proficiency levels and she had difficulty in assessing her students' Mandarin learning because there were no criteria for assigning credits.

One principle Katerina followed in her Mandarin instruction was giving more classroom time to her students. In other words, students were at the center of the classroom learning. She encouraged her students to spend more time practicing Mandarin because she thought language was an effective communication tool. She

emphasized the use of Mandarin in real life interactions. For example, she said: "After my students learned to speak 'have a good weekend' in Mandarin, I would stand out of the room-gate to express that to my students every Friday afternoon until they could express it to me very naturally." Katerina was pleased to see her students responding to Mandarin expressions in real life. She preferred to communicate with her students in a Mandarin immersion classroom environment. However, she needed to use English to manage her students because her students' Mandarin proficiency was not high enough to understand everything and some students were not patient enough to listen to her. So, she used the pedagogy—Totally Physical Response—to link Mandarin language with the actions. She explained that U.S. students preferred to learn by doing actions. So, Katerina encouraged her students to learn Mandarin by making body movements to express words in song; this was a helpful practice for teaching Mandarin to U.S. students. It was also helpful to link word learning with the Chinese characters' evolution using cartoons. She suggested that understanding Chinese characters' evolution was important for students learning the Mandarin writing system because there were connections between words with Chinese history and culture. However, Katerina noted the limitation of this teaching practice was the lack of a standard assessment to evaluate student learning and possibility of losing instructional time. Eventually, Katerina understood that U.S. teachers designed many cohesive classroom activities to motivate students to learn. She thought Mandarin teachers could learn from U.S. teachers about the use of activities to inspire students' learning.

Katerina found that students from different cultural background often had different learning style. For example, she described that students from Asian culture tended to listen closely to teachers' instruction and had solid learning achievement. She disclosed:

>Among my seventh graders, I had two Vietnamese heritage students and one Japanese heritage student. They were highly engaged in classroom learning and never questioned the validity and reasonability of any homework. They did very well in learning to write Chinese characters. I also had a U.S. student who always had a lot of questions. He questioned me why we should learn to write some words, why we should write a word in a certain way. I thought I would find a good example for him in learning to address this problem. Thus, I said to him "Look at Mary and Jane, they have got their work done so fast." Then he replied, "They are Asian Americans; they should have learned it fast." I realized that setting up a good example in China worked well but did not work well in the United States. Then, I changed my approach to motivate them to engage in learning.

Katerina's students had different academic performance due to their cultural backgrounds. She concluded that students from Asian cultural heritage may have less difficulty in learning Mandarin than students from the dominant U.S. culture. For this reason, she wanted to use students' preferred learning approaches.

The coexistence of different cultures complicated Katerina's classroom teaching. She worried whether she had offended her students from different cultural backgrounds. For example, she said, "When I teach my students to sing the song 'Ten Little Indian Boys,' I had to think about avoiding offending the American Indian students. So, I deleted the words Indian in the song." She was conscious of the American Indian students' feelings and worked to respond to their expressions during their classroom learning. She gave another example, saying:

> Once my students learned words to express colors. I asked my students to point out the colors in classroom when they are learning to speak the words for colors. One student pointed at a White student to speak 'White.' This reminded me of the situation when students might point at an African American student to speak word for 'Black.' I stopped that activity immediately.

Katerina realized that teachers should pay attention to their students' skin color and ethnicity to avoid hurting them during classroom learning.

Katerina compared her experience with diversity in classroom teaching with her prior teaching experience. In China, she only used Mandarin in classroom learning because her students' home languages were different from each other. She thought speaking only Mandarin was a good approach to deal with issues related to students of different colors, ethnicities, and cultural backgrounds.

Katerina also integrated family background and students' life experience. She described that in Chinese culture, family was a very important emphasis in people's life.

Thus, in any Chinese textbook, a unit related to the topic of family included the family

members' relations. In the United States, people had different family values. Students

had diverse families with some students coming from a family with two fathers, two

mothers, or a single parent. Students had concerns about their privacy in the classroom;

so, Katerina suggested that teachers needed to respect their students' privacy and allow

students to choose what they share about their family's background. She described:

> For example, one student from a single parent family was concerned about her
>
> uncovering her family to me because her parents had conflicts with each other.
>
> So, she hesitated to turn her homework in. I explained to her that the learning
>
> objective of this unit was to learn to use Mandarin to introduce their family. I let
>
> her understand that I have no intension to learn anything about the privacy of her
>
> family.

Katerina dealt flexibly with the cultural differences related to the family values in

Chinese culture and U.S. culture.

Katerina found that students' life experiences were motivating factors for her

students to learn Mandarin. For example, students who were from Chinese home culture

had a strong engagement and interest in learning Mandarin. They have lived in China

and spoken Mandarin well, so they were ahead in their classroom learning. One

Vietnamese student with Chinese relatives had a strong motivation to learn Mandarin as

well. A Jewish student who had experience in learning different languages like Spanish,

Russian, and Arabic learned Mandarin quickly. Katerina thought it was important for

teachers to understand their students and integrate their life experiences into their Mandarin learning. Based on her understanding of individual students, she felt a strong sense of achievement in guiding and supporting her students to learn.

Katerina identified that parents' care and support for Mandarin teaching were helpful for their children's Mandarin learning. Some Chinese American parents paid more attention to supporting Mandarin teaching; they helped their children to bring and share the Chinese tea culture with their Mandarin classmates. When parents cared about Mandarin learning, their children did very well in learning Mandarin. Not only did they complete the assigned work, but also did extra work. Nevertheless, Katerina found that most parents did not emphasize Mandarin as much as other subjects like language arts, social study, math, and science. Thus, Katerina communicated less with parents except to report on her students' Mandarin learning or homework completion.

Katerina worked to establish learning communities within her classroom and school; however, she still needed time and support to establish learning communities in the larger context. First, she served to bridge her U.S. students and students in Mainland China to communicate as pen pals. The students wrote letters in Mandarin and English to each other every week. Because they communicated with students of their own age, Katerina found this learning community was a good approach for her students to learn about modern life in China. The U.S. students' Mandarin proficiency improved, and the Chinese students' English proficiency improved. Some students wanted to travel to China to meet their Chinese pen pals, other students suggested their Mandarin teachers

organize field trips to China or experience Chinese culture locally. She also worked with

her colleague in a Chinese middle school to pioneer a path for students to learn Mandarin

and English together. With parents' approval, Katerina and the Chinese teacher recorded

their classroom learning and teaching and shared it with their students. They showed

videos related to each country's culture including Chinese holidays like Spring Festival,

Mid-autumn day, and U.S. holidays like Halloween and Christmas holiday.

Katerina planted cultural seeds in the hearts of the U.S. students and Chinese

students. They wished to understand their peers and their cultures, and Katerina was a

bridge between the two groups of students. Her U.S. students learned that Chinese

middle schoolers liked hip-hop and reading Harry Porter. The Chinese students wanted to

know more about life in the United States, so they invited Katerina to be a guest speaker

when she returned to China. Katerina attributed all these changes to her collaboration

with her colleague in China to establish the pen pal learning community. This community

successfully opened opportunities for her U.S. students to Chinese students to learn

languages and understand the cultural differences.

Second, Katerina planned to invite Confucius Institute teachers to perform

Chinese traditional music and introduce Chinese performing arts to her U.S. students.

She hoped to establish Mandarin corner for her students to practice Mandarin at

afterschool time. However, she found it difficult to establish a Mandarin corner for

different reasons including funding, students' afterschool schedule, transportation, and so

on. In addition to the Mandarin learning community, Katerina found ways to be a part of

the school learning community. For example, she observed other teachers' classrooms (e.g., science, physical education, fine arts) to learn about U.S. teachers' classroom teaching. She was also active in school activities to become a part of the school learning community; she would do anything for her students.

Katerina admitted it was hard to find larger scale learning communities. She felt a kind of "invisible wall" that separated her from her colleagues, students, and their parents. Though everyone was nice, friendly, and supportive, she did not have a close friend. She reflected that this lack of closeness was the same for the Chinese American community within the local U.S. communities.

The social political context also made it hard to establish larger learning communities. Katerina explained the tense Chinese–United States relationship had a negative influence on her classroom teaching. As a new Mandarin teacher, she needed support and coaching from district mentors and TOSAs (teachers of special assignment). Two experienced Chinese American teachers in the Chinese immersion program had given Katerina support such as organizing trainings, observing her classroom teaching, and giving her feedback. However, these teachers could no longer support her because their partnership with the Confucius Institute Mandarin teaching program ended. Afterwards, the school district established a new department to oversee the Confucius classroom teaching. Yet, the new department staff had little or no experience in Mandarin teaching, so Katerina had little contact with the school district. She felt

hesitant to establish networks and communicate with larger communities about learning Mandarin. She reported:

> I understood that there was a lot of activities to learn Mandarin in many libraries in Portland. Every Sunday, there will [be] Mandarin classes, but I have never been there because I worried that people would not welcome me because I am a Confucius classroom teacher.

Katerina explained that social political context was a big influence on Mandarin teaching. Recently, she felt insecure and stress about her teacher identity in the school district. She was concerned about people's attitude and understanding of the Confucius Institute Mandarin teaching program. Katerina thought that a peaceful social political context would facilitate foreign language learning and lead to appreciation of different cultures. She encouraged her students to be open to learning Chinese culture as she was open to understanding and accepting U.S. culture.

Sophia: Charter School Teacher

Sophia, a charter school teacher in Riverton, had graduated from Chinese and U.S. universities. She completed a master's degree in Teaching Chinese as a Second Language to undergraduates in China, and she completed a second master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction in the United States. Before working as a Mandarin teacher in the charter school, she had earned a Chinese Teacher License of Secondary Education and a U.S. Teacher License in K-12 World Language: Chinese.

Sophia's early learning experience (K-16 education) were in mainland China. Because she had taught Chinese as a Second Language to undergraduates in China, when she started teaching in the U.S. classrooms her English proficiency level was high.

Sophia's charter school was in a Riverton school district. According to Sophia, the charter school received 60% funding from the school district and was responsible for the other 40% funding. Her salary is 95% of a public school teachers' salary in the same school district. In her school, 235 students were learning Mandarin (50%) and English (50%) as their primary languages. Fifteen Mandarin teachers were teaching Mandarin from preschool to middle school.

Sophia's school sponsored teachers to take part in professional development and conferences. Thus, she has many opportunities for professional development such as the Star Talk Teacher program, CAL StarTalk performance, and assessment training as well as professional conferences (e.g., National Council of Teaching Foreign Languages).

In addition to being teachers, every teacher in the charter school had some administrator roles to fill. Sophia's role was a milestone program coordinator. In this role, she was responsible for the Chinese Cultural Field trip to the sister school in China every year and the junior's field trip to the state capital.

Sophia as a Cultural Ambassador and a Servant

Sophia's experience as a Mandarin teacher in a charter school was like being an ambassador and a servant. She said:

I feel that I am like a cultural ambassador on the one hand. Through my work, I am introducing my home country's language and culture to this new country. On the other hand, I think I am like a servant in the teaching landscape. I do not think teachers in the United States are receiving the same respects as teachers in China. Working as a teacher, I feel more like serving for the society. I should meet any demand from parents, students, schools, and other stakeholders.

She understood her roles of being a cultural ambassador in teaching Mandarin in a new country, and her responsibility as a general teacher to serve the U.S. society.

Sophia's Sense of Being Overwhelmed, Achievement, and Satisfaction

Sophia talked about her experience of being a Mandarin teacher in a charter school, and she shared her personal and professional feelings. Sophia felt overwhelmed yet felt a sense of achievement and satisfaction about being an early-career NCMT in a U.S. Charter school (see Figure 5).
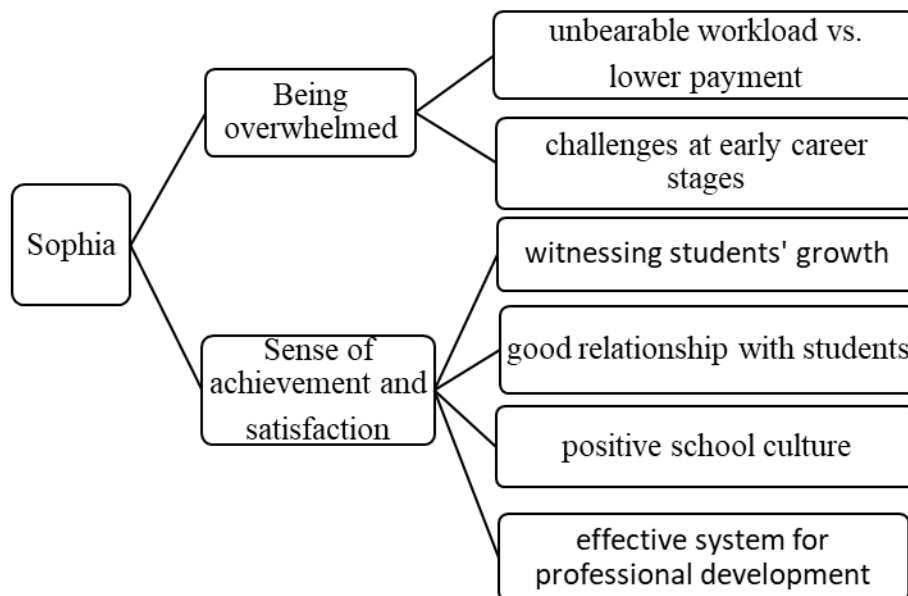
Figure 5. Sophia's feelings of being an early-career NCMT in U.S. classroom.

Being overwhelmed. Sophia felt exhausted about being a Mandarin teacher in a charter school. She experienced being burned out and overwhelmed because of the large workload and challenges at her early-career stage.

Unbearable workload. She had an unbearable workload, and received lower pay compared to teachers in public schools. She had to teach multiple subjects: Mandarin, science, math, fine arts, and physical education. Her teaching was 75% of her total work. Besides her role as a teacher she had to work as a milestone program coordinator who was responsible for three field trips and the StarTalk program for summer camp every year. She explained:

> Sometimes, I was thinking why I was always so fatigued to break down. After
>
> my work was done every day, I did not want to do anything. Compared to

teachers in public school, I had to do more work and had more administrators'

responsibilities. …in a charter school, teachers are regarded as the owners, thus,

we must cover any work when we are in need. I was so busy every day but got

lower payment… This was to my dissatisfaction of the job. I started to doubt my

decision to be a Mandarin teacher.

Sophia was overworked and underpaid which damaged her passion for teaching and her

sense of job satisfaction. It was her second year of teaching, but she was already feeling

depressed. During her first year, she completed her edTPA and her teaching portfolio;

plus, she looked for a job and taught in two summer camps. She was tired of working so

hard and needed a break. She did not want to work as hard or fight for survival during

her second year of teaching. She lost her creativity and passion for teaching.

Challenges at early-career stage. Sophia met with challenges at her early-career

stage. She felt upset and frustrated when she understood that her H1B visa application

was not a smooth process due to the human resource administrator's mistakes. She

waited a long time and worked so hard to get her school's willingness to apply H1B visa

in the competitive job market in Riverton. It was unfair that she had to work so hard to

get her legal status (e.g., H1B visa, green card). As foreigner, she was confused by the

meaning of being a Mandarin teacher in this country.

As a new teacher, Sophia felt a conflict between her desire to grow as fast as

possible in work and pursue perfection. She would rather grasp every opportunity to

work for no payment, but she had limited time and energy. She did not feel competent

and confident in leading many field trips because she had no experience. For example, she felt nervous when she had to be responsible for leading the seventh graders to visit the state capital and have an overnight camping trip. She had little knowledge of U.S. policies as a foreigner, and she had no experience in leading outdoor overnight camping. Plus, she had difficulty in coordinating the cultural field trip to China including (a) planning the student pairs and their homestays, (b) managing both students and parents, (c) dealing with follow-up issues, (d) gathering surveys, and (e) making a presentation about the trip. She described her first experience to lead the trip to China:

> ...The parents were much demanding and challenging in the experience of touring to China in our international field trip. For example, some parents challenged our school policy to pick up the best students to take part in the field trip. They made efforts to let their children to go even though their children broke the behavior system to qualify themselves. Some parents just wanted to change students' homestay experience to an optional experience in China. Some parents demanded connecting rooms for twins… All these demands and challenges added my anxiety and nervousness…

Sophia felt nervous and anxious in her first experience of leading the cultural field trip to China because parents were much demanding and challenging.

In addition, Sophia felt confused about U.S. parents' double standards in making judgments. They assumed that their children would not have any misbehaviors in school

because they were perfect in their parents' eyes. Instead, they assumed that something

must be wrong with teachers whenever problems occurred. She shared:

> Once, I found that four students managed to steal the cookies I had prepared for
>
> my class activities. I placed it in a big transparent container under my desk.
>
> Students were usually not allowed to step into the teachers' area, but they
>
> succeeded to get it out of the teachers' area by distracting my attention. The
>
> students finally admitted that they committed the stealing. As I wrote a letter to
>
> their parents, some parents responded: 'Those are cookies, they are kids.' I could
>
> not understand these parents' values of educating their children. I couldn't
>
> understand their mindset.

Sophia felt challenged when she could not get support from parents to help their children

to behave well in school. Whenever students broke rules in the school, teachers had to

make the compromise.

Having a sense of achievement and satisfaction. Though meeting with

challenges and stress, Sophia had a high sense of achievement and satisfaction as a

Mandarin teacher. This sense of achievement resulted from her witnessing her students'

growth, good relationships with students and parents, understanding the differences in

education between the United States and China, the positive school culture, and the

effective professional development system in her school.

Witnessing her students' growth. Sophia felt extremely excited whenever her

students could use Mandarin to express their ideas well. She used various effective

teaching pedagogies to teach her students different subjects in Mandarin. For example, she composed raps to teach Mandarin. She instructed her students to connect what they were learning with their life experiences and to learn from each other in using Mandarin in their real life. She felt proud of being a Mandarin teacher when her students developed their imagination and creativity. She learned from them in many ways.

Sophia felt pleased to see the fifth graders' growth in the process of participating in the intercultural field trip to China. She described:

> I was impressed by the students' performance in their cultural field trip to China. …I anticipated that they would show no interest in anything in the trip to China. However, they were beyond my expectations. They were highly engaged in any activity in this cultural journey. …They were willing to take part in the square dance, ask direction, and write journals. I thought it was the best approach to expose our students to an environment where they could understand the application and meaning of learning. I was lucky to witness their growth in the process of the cultural field trip and the change of their attitude toward learning Mandarin…

Sophia felt highly esteemed when she witnessed her students' growth and transformative attitudes toward learning Mandarin in this unique cultural experience. She felt proud to see that her students and their parents started to love and appreciate Chinese culture. She also felt moved by her students' journal that described their experiences. Because Sophia

recognized her students' growth and enhanced enthusiasm, she had more confidence in leading cultural trips to China in future.

Good relationship with students and parents. Sophia felt satisfied with her students' preference to call her "a school Mommy." In her eyes, she had 26 children in her classroom. She was happy to teach in this nice environment because the children were loving, and the parents were supportive. She still remembered one student went to hug her after her demonstration teaching during her job interview. She knew that she got the job offer because of this hug. The principal appreciated her work because she earned the student's love. Sophia also appreciated parents' generous support to donate more money to address the school's special needs such as applying for H1B visa or green card and salary increases when they recognized teachers' work.

Understanding the different educational systems in the United States and China. Sophia felt a sense of achievement because she had the opportunities to understand the different educational systems in the United States and China; this was one of her goals coming to the United States. Understanding the advantages and disadvantages in the two educational systems, Sophia wanted to integrate the teaching values and beliefs of the two countries in her future teaching. She had a perfect teaching scenario: students would behave well due to their awareness and positive attitudes toward learning while developing critical and creative thinking skills. Plus, Sophia developed her understanding of teaching and learning and improved her teaching techniques as a Mandarin teacher. She became more flexible in teaching practices and used various

activities to build up the Mandarin curriculum instead of focusing on grammar, vocabulary, and textual analysis only.

Positive school culture. Sophia appreciated the positive school culture because it was her big motivation to get through many hardships. Students' good behaviors, supportive leadership, and a wonderful work team made the school culture very supportive and satisfying. First, Sophia felt it was easier to handle the classroom management because most students were good at academic learning and classroom behavior.

Second, Sophia appreciated the supportive leadership in her school. The principal was nice and ready to give her wise advice whenever she was in need. As mentioned, the visa issue was a big challenge for Mandarin teachers to stay in the United States. The principal raised money and funded her application for H1B visa and promised to apply for her green card in the future.

Third, Sophia enjoyed having a good work team in her school. This faculty team were very supportive and productive. They worked hard to seek professional growth. They established a learning community like a family for supporting, sharing, loving, and growing with each other. This work team contributed to the school's development and their students' education. Sophia exemplified:

…I forgot to bring lunch to school several times because I was busy, but my coworkers remembered to bring food for me even though we had not informed each other… My coworkers took turns to attend professional development and

shared what they learned with each other. …In this supportive climate, we could

shout out with each other when we wanted to relieve from stress. Whenever I

suffered from my work, my coworker had conversations with me, supported me

and helped me to relieve from any stress. In this way, I would not feel so tired

and hard in my work. The team was very supportive and productive.

Sophia's feeling of big support came from the supportive team of her coworkers. The

sharing culture of the faculty work team filled her with motivation and strength

regardless of any difficulty she met with at work. They grew as a collective whole unit.

Sophia expressed her good fortune to have an experienced teacher as her

coworker to teach kindergarteners. Her coworker was generous to share everything in

teaching which facilitated her transition into the teaching context. She was well prepared

to teach and grew fast in profession. The principal rated her excellent in any walk-in

observations and lesson plans; she appointed her to be a milestone program coordinator at

the beginning of her second year of teaching.

Effective system of professional development. Sophia attributed part of her

professional growth to the effective professional development system in her school. New

teachers had many opportunities to take part in professional development. For example,

her school registered her in the districts' new teacher training program. She had a mentor

to support her development. She described:

As a new teacher, I could participate in the new teacher training program in the

school district for two years… I was benefited a lot. My mentor took me to

observe the classroom teaching in other teachers' classroom in the school

district.   He helped me to set my goal in teaching. Whatever I hoped my

classroom teaching to be, he could give me suggestions and ideas to help me

design the teaching and deal with the classroom management.

She benefited from the new teacher training program because her mentor was so supportive.

Sophia reported that the school funding system was another support for her professional growth.   Her school provided funds for teachers to participate in high quality professional development at national conferences and workshops. She shared, "…it was expensive to participate in the National Chinese Language Conference, but our school would fund five teachers to participate it every year." This support facilitated teachers' professional growth in a consistent and sustaining ways. As Sophia concluded, "Thus, teachers in our school were capable and powerful in many ways."

Sophia thought she could have an open mind and internalize new ideas in teaching if she could participate in quality training and conferences.   She preferred opportunities to observe immersion programs in other schools and communicate with teachers: cross-grades, cross-schools, cross-districts, cross-city, and even cross-state. She shared:

Once, I attended a learning community in secondary education. In this workshop,

with one teacher facilitating the discussion, other teachers shared their thoughts

with each other. Teachers talked about how to apply focused questions to

classroom teaching. This workshop was good. I was teaching kindergarteners, but I kept attending this secondary education learning community because I thought I should understand the linear development of Mandarin teaching in K-12 education in the United States.

Sophia understood the importance of Mandarin teachers attending cross-grade and cross-school workshops because they gained an integrative framework of Mandarin teaching in K-12 education in Riverton. In addition, she recognized the middle schoolers' Mandarin proficiency and their capability to use the language. She said, "… they were capable of talking about issues about the early Chinese immigrants in [the]United States, and why Chinese people use chopsticks." Thus, she agreed that cross-grade, cross-district, and cross-city professional development was helpful and important for Mandarin teachers to develop their professional growth.

Sophia's Social Cultural Experience in Teaching

In this section, I describe Sophia's understanding of teaching and learning in U.S. schools. Then, I discuss her teaching practice to understand how she responded to the interactive relationship among language, identity, and culture in her teaching.

Sophia's understanding of teaching and learning. Sophia thought that teaching could not be separated from learning. Teaching and learning complemented and reinforced each other. She thought teachers not only teach, but also learn from their students, colleagues, and others in the teaching landscape. For example, they can learn based on their students' feedback and reflections on their teaching. In addition, they can

integrate what they have learned in any professional development (i.e., workshops, conferences) into their teaching.

Sophia understood teachers' role as a facilitator while students are at the center of classroom learning.   Learning and teaching would be easier and more productive if students could engage themselves in classroom learning under their teachers' instruction. Plus, Sophia thought that classroom learning would be successful and effective if teachers and students established relationships. She succeeded in establishing an ideal relationship with her students as she understood how to be a good friend and a gatekeeper of classroom policy. She could be a good friend at recess and afterschool time. She said, "At recess, I played crazily with the kids. They made a circle around me. They climbed onto me and hugged me…They were so cute." She was also a serious gatekeeper of the classroom policy. Sophia explained, "In classroom learning, whenever I had serious looks, my students would stop talking and be quiet soon and engage themselves in learning." This was an ideal effect of Sophia's expectations. She suggested, "In daily teaching, we should spend time making effort to watch and observe our students. What are their interests? What do they care? Then we can keep a good balance in being a good friend and a gatekeeper." In this way, Sophia felt it was easy to manage classroom learning. Her students could behave well whenever she gave a signal.

Sophia's integration of language, identity, and culture into teaching.
Sophia's school used a textbook, *Huanle Huoban*, produced in Singapore for teaching Mandarin to speakers of other languages. This textbook series focused on grammar and

cultural understanding. Teachers classified the teaching content into different themes.

Each theme was the major content for classroom learning, integrated with grammar

focus, sentence patterns, and cultural understanding. For example, in "hour about

school," students learned how to express pens, erasers, schoolbag, and so on in Mandarin.

In "hour about me," students learned how to express the names of their body parts, their

family, and their hobbies.

Sophia used backward design to plan her classroom instruction. This backward

design enabled her to think clearly of what to teach and how to teach it. For example, if

today's learning objective was to learn several words, then she would design activities to

learn the words, like some games of learning words. If today's learning objective was to

learn sentences, then she would design some activities for students to practice arranging

sentences. If today's learning objective was to make conversations, she would design

activities to involve her students to play roles in practicing real life Mandarin.

Sophia expected her students to learn Mandarin flexibly, imaginatively, and

creatively. She encouraged her students to create songs to learn the words or connect the

words with their imaginative images. For example, she said, "When I mention the word

'中' (center)， some students will imagine that they cut a watermelon in half. When I

mention the word '半圆体' (semicircle) some students will think of turtles' shell …" She

encouraged her students to use jingles themselves to sing out the stroke compositions of

each word as well. This approach enabled her students to remember more easily what

they have learned about writing for a long time. She preferred to teach flexibly instead of repeating one fixed approach. Her students loved her teaching.

Sophia avoided making her Mandarin class boring for beginners. Thus, her students liked to learn Mandarin. However, she found difficulty in finding a balance in students' output and her input strategies. Her kindergarteners could not make 100% output because they had limited vocabularies in English and Mandarin. Nevertheless, she could not stop exploring and trying different teaching pedagogies in her classroom. Sophia encouraged her students to use mixed language in her classroom learning and repeat their classmates' expressions. In addition, she invited veteran teachers to help her modify her teaching for her students' beginning abilities.

Sophia agreed about the importance of integrating her student's culture and identity into her teaching, but spent little time on this integration. She mainly focused on Mandarin learning embedded with Chinese culture. She explained that her teaching content had little emphasis on cultural differences because her students were kindergarteners. She anticipated that students would have more opportunities to make cultural comparisons and deal with cultural differences when they moved to higher grades.

Sophia reflected that her students came from different family and cultural background. She found that families with Asian cultural background were more supportive, active, and generous in support of Mandarin teaching and learning. Their recognition of her work enabled Sophia to understand the meaning and worth of being a

Mandarin teacher. In comparison, families from other cultural background had less commitment and involvement. They did not take their children's Mandarin learning seriously.

Sophia made efforts to connect her students' life experiences with her teaching content. First, she encouraged her students to share their life experiences and learn from each other in the classroom. For example, she said, "… my students shared what their parents and siblings like and dislike to eat, what they themselves like and dislike to eat." This enabled her students to link their prior knowledge and experience with their learning and to learn from each other by sharing. Next, she scaffolded her instruction with students who had different life experiences regarding Mandarin learning. For instance, Sophia gave Chinese cultural heritage students more challenges because they had an advantage in oral communication skills and more confidence in learning Mandarin. Their engagement and commitment could reinforce the classroom learning atmosphere. She provided her students with extra support to prevent them from feeling bored. Then, Sophia encouraged her students to learn to solve real life problems. This motivated her students to understand the practical meaning of what they have learned. She noted:

> In my Math classroom learning, I asked my students to write a life story to interpret the math problem. For example, they wrote 'I and my mom went to buy some ice cream today. My mom got two, I got one. In other words, my Mom got more, I got less.'… In this learning process, they understood what 'more and less' mean and knew it was real in practical life. This approach is more useful and

effective than just teach them to compare three apples with five pears in

pictures. …They might draw a boat in the ocean which was what they saw in

their vacation. This showed that they brought what they experienced in life into

their daily learning. When they shared with each other, they brought input into

the whole classroom learning.

Sophia presented her practical approach to integrate her students' real-life experiences

into their daily learning. She thought her students learned content better by combining

their life experiences with solving problems. By sharing, they transmitted to each other

their real-life experiences rather than some language points like ruler, pen, and eraser.

Working as a teacher and administrator, Sophia established good relations that

were helpful for her Mandarin teaching. For example, she was active to seek solutions to

any problem in work. She shared, "…when I gave suggestions to my principal. I will

think out options for her to look at. In this way, our communications are more effective

and practical." Plus, she earned parents and students' trust and love because they felt her

commitment and devotion to teaching. In return, students committed and devoted to their

Mandarin learning. She explicated:

Whenever any parent reaches out to me, I will look seriously into our

communication and try my best to respond to them. For example, one parent

knew me in my aftercare classroom last year. He found that I committed a lot to

my teaching, so he requested to our school that he preferred his son to be my

student this year. This year, he donated much money to the school to help me

apply for the H1B visa.

Sophia also explained that as parents and students understood how much she committed

to the classroom teaching and learning, they returned support and fondness to her. Due to

her students' closeness to her, their parents had intentions of establishing close

relationship with her, too. They invited her to participate their children's' birthday

parties or hang out with them.

Sophia thought learning community was an effective approach to motivate

students' learning. Her school established different Mandarin learning communities.

First, her school has established the sister school community with one school in Suzhou

China. She described:

> …we had various activities for students between the United States and China to
>
> communicate in English and Mandarin. For example, students in the two sister
>
> schools will write to each other and share their experience of celebrating
>
> traditional holidays or cultural events in both countries. … Teachers will shoot
>
> videos of living classroom learning in English here to students in China, and they
>
> will share their living classroom learning experience in Mandarin to students in
>
> the United States. In May or June, classrooms in these two sister schools will also
>
> have an opportunity to communicate online through Skype with each other in two
>
> languages related to some topics like favorite food and subjects in learning.

Sophia thought this sister school learning community supported Mandarin learning in her school. Students in these two sister schools improved their language learning through writing letters, sharing learning experience, and direct online communication.

Then, Sophia's school established "buddy classes" across the grades. The school buddied up students at low grades and high grades. In assembly, the upper graders sat with the lower graders, thus, they got to know more about each other. In addition, the upper graders shared their works to the lower graders. For example, the fifth graders shared their travel journals about their cultural fieldtrip to China as a motivation for both the upper graders and the lower graders. On one hand, lower graders could anticipate their own future growth by observing the upper graders' achievements in Mandarin learning. On the other hand, upper graders would feel more encouraged to perform well in their learning to set good examples for their class buddies.

Then, Sophia made her own efforts to establish an interschool learning community through her social network. Due to her prior working experience, she had close relationships with the Mandarin faculty in one Mandarin immersion program and the Confucius Institute. They were resourceful and supportive of her Mandarin teaching. She explained:

> In my cultural series curriculum and instruction, I often invited faculty in the
> Confucius Institute to give guest speaking. In the meantime, I and my colleagues
> also presented speeches in the conferences that the Confucius Institute organized.

Our students also contributed a lot to many activities in the Confucius Institute.

This learning community was very important and mutually beneficial.

She also found other opportunities to work with the community. She reported:

We also had the community conversation in our school. We invited various

professionals in different field outside our school to have conversations with our

students. This was very helpful to our students' classroom learning because they

could have access to recognize and understand different perspectives other than

their teachers. For example, people from Information Technology or a medical

doctor from a local hospital gave presentations to our students. A Chinese

traditional musical instrument player gave a music lesson in Mandarin. These

experiences helped our students to better understand language and culture and feel

more interest in learning Mandarin.

Sophia explained that this effective learning community reinforced her students'

understanding of language and culture and increased their interest in learning Mandarin.

Sophia shared that social political and cultural contexts deeply influenced her

Mandarin teaching. Sophia was surprised when people did not attach much importance

to education in the U.S. social context. This led to the less recognition of teachers' work.

Besides, she thought some of the federal government's new policies caused the rise of

racism and racial divisiveness. Thus, some parents' racial discrimination and prejudices

hurt her feelings of being a Mandarin teacher. She was frustrated when she found some

Chinese immigrants had prejudice against her home country. Their negative thoughts

brought undesirable impact on the school learning context. Sophia shared:

> Once, a Jewish family said they did not feel comfortable when they saw a sign
>
> board with a Mandarin letter posted on appeared at the highway exit. They felt
>
> that this was a very unsafe condition for their kids because they worried some
>
> people would target at the school because it was a Chinese school. I could
>
> understand their perspective as parents. However, from my own understanding, I
>
> felt that my home culture was excluded. I felt very conflicted in this social
>
> context. I felt that I could be a powerful person at one time and vulnerable at
>
> another time… I felt that I was discriminated [against racially] and [felt]small
>
> suddenly. I felt vulnerable and helpless because I could not keep any control of it.

Sophia thought that the rise of racism and racial divisiveness in this social context

brought her feelings of confusion and conflict.

Sophia suggested that Mandarin teachers use Chinese cultural immersion in their

teaching practice. Chinese cultural immersion includes respect for teachers, students'

code of conducts, students' recognition of Chinese culture, and understanding of the

Chinese mindset. Mandarin teachers should know how to deal with the cultural conflicts

between Chinese culture and the U.S. dominant culture. She explained that

communication was important. Mandarin teachers should speak their minds, letting their

students, parents, and the school understand their thoughts and feelings. She also thought

the best scenario of cultural immersion was when people from different cultures could

understand how different values influence people's lives and decision making. Specifically, bilingual individuals could build their intercultural communication and cultural immersion by traveling to other countries. She described:

> …when my students travelled to China in their last field trip, they felt cultural shock. They felt hesitant to use the bathroom and take shower in their homestay family. They thought they would have disturbed the host, but the host did not feel that way. I did not think my students develop their awareness of cultural immersion. In Chinese culture, hospitality was a good virtue. The hosts anticipated them to feel at home. This is a big concern for U.S. people to understand the value of Chinese people.

She continued:

> …I encouraged my students to show their respects for their teachers. This is very important in Chinese culture…I instructed them to be respectful and thankful for their teachers. I showed them how to behave by my own conduct. In the big environment, it was harder to realize, but we can practice it with parents, teachers, and any people around us.

She explained that integrating cultural immersion into classroom learning were effective approaches to handle cultural conflicts and develop the intercultural communication skills for bilingual individuals. Given her own experience coming to the United States, she decided to model intercultural communication skills in her classroom teaching practice. In addition, she wanted students to understand that people from different cultures might

solve problems in different ways. To reach this goal, Sophia suggested that Mandarin teachers need to develop their curriculum and instruction continually. She proposed that professional scholars should joint this effort to make cultural immersion a part of Mandarin teaching.

In the next section, I describe the results from the Bicultural Identity Integration Scale-Version 2 (Huynh et al., 2018). Next, I interpret the scores and discuss the variation in scores.

Bicultural Identity Integration Scale-Version 2

As bicultural individuals, the four early career NCMTs had "been exposed to and internalized two cultures" (Huynh et al., 2011, p. 828). Huynh et al (2018) revealed that Bicultural Identity Scale-Version 2 yielded reliable and stable scores after they refined BII measurement and then tested the construct in a diverse sample of bicultural individuals. They claimed that BII was a meaningful individual difference construct that captured how bicultural individuals affectively and cognitively organize their dual identities.

I used the Bicultural Identity Integration Scale-Version 2 (Huynh et al., 2018) to collect the data related to the four early-career NCMTs' bicultural identity integration. Their BII scores measured the extent to which they maintained their ethnic culture and got involved in the dominant culture in their experience as early-career NCMTs in U.S. schools. Specifically, their bicultural harmony scores captured their affective component

of managing the two cultures while their bicultural blended-ness scores captured the more cognitive and behavioral aspects of their bicultural experience.

Using the scoring guide (Huynh et al., 2011), I calculated the BII scores for the four NCMTs: Snowy, Emma, Katerina, and Sophia (see Table 5). Then, I interpreted their BII scores regarding their perception of their cultural identity. Next, I described the variations in their BII scores. Finally, I explained how their bicultural identity integration process developed as NCMTs in U.S. schools.

Table 5

NCMTs' Bicultural Identity Integration (BII) Scores

BII Categories	Snowy	Emma	Katerina	Sophia
Bicultural Harmony VS Conflict	2.73	3.36	3.09	3.82
Bicultural Blended-ness VS Compartmentalization	3.78	3.67	3.44	3

Bicultural Identity Integration Score Interpretation. In this section, I interpret the Bicultural Identity Integration Scale score for each case: Snowy, Emma, Katerina, and Sophia (see Table 5).

Snowy. Snowy's subscale score in bicultural harmony was 2.73; her relatively lower score in cultural harmony explained that she might have experienced less stable emotions, some perceived discrimination, stressful intercultural relations, greater language barriers that challenge her feelings of efficacy, and ability to maintain a

harmonious self-image. Snowy's bicultural blended-ness score was 3.78 indicating that she was relatively open to her new experiences and life in a less culturally isolated environment. Her scores suggested that she was somewhat culturally competent and identified strongly with her ethnic culture—Chinese culture, while being highly oriented to the U.S. culture.

I identified that Snowy's responses to the focused-life experience and social cultural interviews aligned with her lower bicultural harmony and relatively higher bicultural blended-ness scores. She described her feelings of frustration and loneliness in her U.S. teaching experience. She did not have the advantage of using English that led inadequate communication with her principal, colleagues, and students' parents in her school. Sometimes, she felt confused about her identity as a teacher from the non-dominant culture—an indication of lower bicultural harmony.

Regarding her bicultural blended-ness, Snowy described how everything related to her teaching and her school was new; however, she never missed any opportunity to learn. Thus, she obtained a lot of growth. Her sense of belonging increased as she developed community and interpersonal relationships either outside or inside her school. Snowy's BII scores in bicultural harmony and blended-ness revealed that she did not find it easy to integrate both cultures in her everyday life; she felt some conflicts between the two cultures. Her BII scores aligned with her responses to the life-focused experience and social cultural interviews; she learned to identify and integrate both cultures in her classroom teaching practice.

Emma. Emma's subscale score in bicultural harmony was 3.36, which was higher than the average score of 3. Her bicultural harmony score indicated her perceptions of discrimination, culture related work challenges, and linguistic problems with English. Her score in bicultural blended-ness was 3.67. This relatively higher bicultural blended-ness score suggested that Emma was open to new experiences, felt culturally competent, and lived in a less culturally isolated surroundings.

Emma's responses to the life-focused experience and social cultural interviews aligned with her bicultural harmony score. She felt a sense of insecurity and lack of recognition in her job. She was hesitant to communicate often with the leadership and other colleagues. She was also reluctant to communicate with parents because she did not know how to communicate with them. Further, as an English learner, language was a barrier for Emma. She perceived discrimination against her and others from the non-dominant culture leading to somewhat strained intercultural relations. Thus, Emma's bicultural harmony scores were reflective of her personality, perceived discrimination, strained intercultural relationships, and language barriers.

Emma's bicultural blended-ness was evident in her work to overcome challenges; she wanted to come out of comfort zone and pursue more personal growth. Because Emma's students were from diverse cultural backgrounds, she encouraged them to embrace differences and avoid judging people. She integrated her students' diverse cultures into the language teaching, an indication of cultural competence.

In sum, Emma's scores for bicultural harmony and blended-ness suggested that Emma was making efforts to integrate the two cultures while still feeling some conflicts in orienting to the two cultures. She was becoming clearer about her cultural identity after transitioning to the United States. She respected others' perspectives, beliefs, and values; yet, she was inclined to maintain her traditional Chinese cultural values.

Katerina. Katerina's score in bicultural harmony was 3.09—an average level in cultural harmony—explicates that she might be less emotionally stable, engage in less harmonious cultural relations, and experience more culture-related work challenges. Katerina's bicultural blended-ness score was 3.44, a relatively higher score suggested she might be open to new experiences, be culturally competent, and live in culturally isolated surroundings.

Her responses to the life-focused experience interview and social cultural interview clarified her bicultural harmony score. She felt stress, frustration, nervousness, and helplessness because she had challenges with classroom management. She also met with many cultural conflicts in her work. In addition, she perceived misunderstandings from both U.S. people and Chinese mainland people. The tense relationship between the two governments brought negative influences on her perceived identity. However, Katerina grew a lot while teaching in the United States. She learned about the teaching beliefs and values in U.S. landscape. She paid attention to the social cultural, historical, and ethical issues in her classroom teaching. She applied equitable practices to her

classroom teaching practice and understood that students should be the center of the classroom learning. Katerina developed strong intercultural awareness and competence.

Her scores in bicultural harmony and blended-ness revealed that Katerina felt cultural conflicts and did not find it easy to harmonize the two cultures in her everyday life. She felt insecure and stress as a Mandarin teacher; she had trouble establishing Mandarin learning community. She felt bad and isolated in the current political context. Katerina identified strongly with her ethnic culture and modeled positive ways to look at cultural differences in her classroom teaching.

Sophia. Sophia's score in bicultural harmony was 3.82, which was considerably higher than the average score of 3. Her higher score explained her integration of the two cultures. She was more emotionally stable and had harmonious intercultural relations, fewer culture-related work challenges, fewer linguistic problems in English. Sophia's bicultural blended-ness score was 3.0 indicating that she placed less emphasis on integrating some cultures other than Chinese culture into her teaching.

Sophia's responses to her focused-life experience interview and social cultural interview indicated that she had higher bicultural harmony and relatively lower bicultural blended-ness. She felt a strong sense of achievement and satisfaction. She was proud to be a Mandarin teacher as she saw her students' growth in Mandarin learning. She appreciated her positive relationship with school leaders, administrators, students, and their parents. She benefited from the positive school culture and supportive work team. She had fewer cultural related challenges and fewer linguistic problems in English. All

these experiences explicate that she had undergone higher cultural harmony in her dealing with the two cultures.

Her scores in the bicultural blended-ness aligned with her perceived challenges of applying U.S. teaching beliefs and values to teaching Mandarin language embedded in Chinese culture. Because of the political and social context, she experienced feelings of racial discrimination and racism indicating her life in a more culturally isolated context. She felt people marginalized and ignored her ethnic culture in the U.S. context. Sophia learned to maintain her ethnic culture while using what she learned from the dominant culture. This enabled her to avoid cultural conflicts; however, she thought it was impossible for bicultural individuals to address completely cultural conflicts. She thought that people could not avoid conflicts in their intercultural communication given their different cultural values; yet people could learn to understand and respect others' culture.

Variations in BII Scores. Individuals' high BII scores indicated their higher biculturalism. Nguyen and Benet- Martínez (2013) identified the strong positive association between biculturalism and adjustment which commonly referred to the psychological adjustment (e.g. life satisfaction, positive affect, and self-esteem, as well as [low] alienation, anxiety, depression, loneliness, negative affect) and social cultural adjustment (e.g. academic achievement, career success, social skills). This relationship also showed that people have greater biculturalism may have better adjustment, and it is possible that people who are better adjusted may have greater biculturalism. They also

implied that other variables like demographic characteristics (e.g., gender, age, race, socioeconomic status), personalities, and contextual factors relating to the host culture (e.g., ethnic composition of community, national policy, dominant group's attitudes toward acculturating individuals, similarity to heritage culture) may influence the biculturalism-adjustment relationship.

As visible in Table 5, the BII scores in bicultural harmony vs conflict and bicultural blended-ness vs compartmentalization for the four NCMTs were different. The NCMTs as bicultural individuals did not compromise a homogeneous group and did not integrate their two cultures "in the same way, in the same contexts and for the same reasons" (Huynh et al., 2011, p. 828). Each NCMT had different experiences related to bicultural identity and the integration of two cultures. In this study, the NCMTs taught in different school contexts with diverse social cultural communities. They had unique personalities and attitudes, and they faced different socioemotional factors in their teaching contexts. They also had distinctive experiences as they underwent the bicultural integration process. Given these differences, it was not surprising that their BII scores varied.

Specifically, I noticed that in the category of the bicultural harmony, Snowy and Katerina had relatively lower scores compared to Emma and Sophia. According to their responses to their focused-life experience and social cultural interviews, I understood that the four NCMTs' BII scores variations reflected their different work experience, personalities, and teaching context. First, the four Mandarin teachers' work experience

indicated their bicultural harmony scores variations. Among the four Mandarin teachers,

Emma worked for three and half years and Sophia worked for two years, while Snowy

and Katerina worked for seven months and six months. Emma and Sophia's longer work

experience seemed to empower them to handle classroom management and teach

students from diverse cultural background. They presented more stable emotions in their

Mandarin teaching experiences. Sophia understood how to balance her relationship of

being a good friend and a policy gatekeeper. She developed better relationship with

students' parents. In comparison, Snowy and Katerina's lack of work experience led to

fewer stable emotions when they met with challenges in dealing with classroom

management, addressing problems related to cultural differences and conflicts, and

establishing relationship with U.S students and parents. Snowy shared that she had not

established a good relationship with her students and did not have good communication

with them. She described that as a new Mandarin teacher, she usually felt inferior to her

students and was afraid of discipling them strictly. Katerina explained that she still

needed time to learn the U.S. way of dealing with the relationship between teachers and

students. Her unpreparedness led to her feeling nervous and at a loss at the sudden

transition from China to the United States. In addition, the four Mandarin teachers'

different personalities indicated their bicultural harmony scores variations. For example,

Snowy explained that because she was an introverted person; she did not know how to

strengthen the relationship between her students and herself when she began teaching.

Emma also mentioned that she was an introverted person who did not like to socialize

and communicate with her principal and school leaders that made her perceive more discrimination and influenced her developing intercultural relationship with her colleagues. This might be the reason that her score in harmony is lower than Sophia's score though she worked longer than Sophia in the United States. Next, different school contexts also indicated the four Mandarin teachers' bicultural harmony score variations. Sophia had the highest score in bicultural harmony that aligned with her description of her positive school culture. Due to the good school leadership, the supportive faculty team, the effective professional development system, Sophia had higher sense of achievement and job satisfaction, less culturally related work challenges, and lower language barriers.

I also noticed that in the category of bicultural blended-ness, Snowy had the highest score while Sophia had the relatively lowest score. According to Huynh et al. (2018), cultural blended-ness was negatively associated with separation acculturation strategy and having culturally limited surroundings. Cultural blended-ness also predicted perceiving the members of the ethnic and mainstream cultural in-groups as more similar to each other and to the self. Snowy described that in her classroom teaching, she used strategies to integrate her ethnic culture and the dominant culture. Her school was a public school where students were from different cultural background. Conversely, Sophia used the strategy to maintain her ethnic culture more than integrating the two cultures in her Mandarin teaching practice. She shared she did not integrate students' identity and culture into her Mandarin teaching. She initiated the cultural immersion

approach to teach Mandarin. Sophia's school was a Chinese charter school where students were mainly from White families or Chinese Asian families, a relatively culturally limited surrounding. In addition, Sophia strongly felt the difference between her ethnic cultural values and the dominant cultural values. She disagreed that people could address the differences related to their cultural values, thus, she chose to blend the two cultures.

In the next section, I present a cross-case comparison of the four cases based on my analysis of the demographic survey, focused-life experience interview, the social cultural interview, and their bicultural identity integration.

Cross Case Comparison

The four NCMTs—Snowy, Emma, Katerina, and Sophia—and their teaching contexts were unique. At times, these early-career Mandarin teachers shared similar perceptions and common experiences; they also had different perceptions and distinct experiences.

Commonalities. The four early NCMTs had strong credentials, educational background, good language proficiency and prior teaching experience as early-career NCMTs. These early-career NCMTs also shared positive and negative experiences while developing their professional identity within the U.S. socioeconomic, political, and cultural structure.

Strong credentials and educational background. All four NCMTs held master's degrees. Specifically, Snowy and Sophia had two master's degrees from higher

education institutions: one from China and one from the United States. Emma earned her master's degree from a U.S. university, and Katerina earned her master's degree from a university in China. In addition, all four NCMTs had teaching licenses in China, and three of the four had teaching licenses in the United States.

Good language proficiency and prior teaching experience. The four NCMTs had good English language proficiency. Specifically, three of four evaluated their English proficiency as medium, while one evaluated her proficiency as high. These teachers did not have much difficulty when communicating in English. In addition, all four NCMTs had prior teaching experience ranging from elementary students to undergraduates in higher education. They taught Mandarin or English before starting to teach Mandarin in the United States. Specifically, Snowy taught in a short-term Chinese program for Princeton University's visiting students in China. Emma taught English in an elementary school in China. Katerina taught at universities in China, Indonesia, and South Africa. Sophia taught Chinese as a second language at a Chinese university. Their language proficiency and prior teaching experiences added their competence of becoming Mandarin teachers in the United States.

Conflicted feelings of being a Mandarin teacher in U.S. schools. Each of the four NCMTs felt conflicted about their experiences as Mandarin teachers in U.S. schools. Snowy described the hardships and growth she underwent to become a Mandarin teacher in a public school. Emma explained feeling a lack of recognition in the private school, yet still felt being important in society. Katerina shared feeling both stressed and a sense

of mission and responsibility in her Confucius classroom. Sophia reported feeling

overwhelmed but also a sense of achievement and satisfaction.

Challenges experienced at the early-career stage. These four early-career

NCMTs met with challenges in their early years of teaching in U.S. schools. Snowy's

major challenges were classroom management as well as curriculum and instruction

reform. She was uncertain about establishing classroom rules and fearful of managing

the students as a newcomer in the different culture. She had difficulty adapting the

changes associated with educational reform (i.e., adoption of new curriculum, instruction,

and assessment systems). Emma struggled with her own lower sense of self-identity

given teachers' lower social status, and felt less recognized in the societal context.

Katerina felt pressure and responsibility for introducing her students and colleagues to a

more realistic view of modern China. The demands of teaching students in special

education with individual plans as well as teaching Talented and Gifted program

strategies challenged her. For Sophia, the major challenge was balancing her workload

as a new teacher and a program coordinator. While she seized every opportunity to learn

and grow professionally, her demanding workload with low pay damaged her passion for

teaching and reduced her job satisfaction as well as confidence as a Mandarin teacher.

Social political context caused strong sense of insecurity. As mentioned, the

four Mandarin teachers felt insecure about their professional identity development.

Snowy felt uncertain about her future. She needed legal social status (i.e., H1B visa,

green card) so she could teach and stay in the United States, yet she felt less certain of job

market in China. In addition, the change of school or government policies influenced her teaching as a Mandarin teacher. She worried to lose her job if their Mandarin pioneer program ends because of the change of government policy.

Emma was also insecure about her job because of fewer opportunities to teach Mandarin in the United States. She felt the growing competition between private school and public school in establishing Mandarin immersion programs. In addition, the tense relationship between China and the United States would lead to her loss of job as a new immigrant.

Katerina felt stressed and insecure about her teaching identity because of the strained relations between the United States and China. The U.S. government had begun to challenge Confucius Institutes' role and function in the United States. The Confucius classroom teachers suffered misunderstandings about their teaching purpose from the government and people in the United States. So, Katerina felt uncertain and worried about losing the opportunity and her legitimacy to teach Mandarin in the United States. She felt she would need to leave the United States at any time.

Sophia also felt insecure about her job regarding her legal social status (i.e., H1B visa, green card). She could not understand working so hard in the United States while worrying about her legitimacy to teach as a foreigner. The federal government's new policies brought negative impact on the social context. In addition, she felt a rise of racial discrimination and divisiveness in her teaching context. She felt confused and conflicted about her own professional identity.

Sociocultural factors were barriers to professional identity development. The four NCMTs agreed that social cultural factors including cultural differences and conflicts were immense barriers for them. These factors challenged their thinking about the meaning of being a Mandarin teacher in U.S. schools and brought negative influences to their classroom teaching practice.

In Chinese culture, people emphasized academic education and respected teachers. In the classroom, teachers held the authority in dealing with their teaching practice and classroom management. Parents paid attention to their children's learning and supported teachers to facilitate their children's journey in their academic learning. However, living in a different social cultural society, these four early-career NCMTs experienced barriers in developing their professional identity.

Snowy mentioned that her students lack respect for Mandarin teachers because they are not native English speakers. As a second language learner of English, she felt incompetent to use English appropriately in classroom teaching or management. She felt inferior to her students, and she feared managing her students too strictly. She did not know the boundary or bottom line because she was a foreigner. Snowy explained that in her classroom teaching, she felt inexperienced in handling issues like historical and social justice issues. Without her TOSA's help, she would not know how some historical problems could hurt her underrepresented students' feelings. Snowy also found that parents reduced or lack of involvement in their children's learning was also a barrier for

teaching Mandarin. Their lack of support added to her difficulty in dealing with classroom teaching and management.

Emma was surprised by the lack of emphasis on education in U.S. society. Comparing her sense of being a teacher in China, she did not get much respect from her students or other people in the U.S. society as she did in China. Emma agreed that cultural conflicts were a huge barrier for Mandarin teachers' professional identity development. Given this barrier, she was reluctant to communicate with the school leader; she also isolated herself from colleagues from other cultures and reduced her social networking. Because U.S. parents had different understanding of teaching and learning, Emma struggled to handle classroom teaching with students from western cultural background. Thus, she felt a dilemma in teaching. On one hand, she wanted her students to progress quickly learning Mandarin. On the other hand, parents complained that she taught too much and gave too much homework. Her problems resulted from different cultural values about classroom teaching. As a teacher, her voice sounded inaudible. In addition, Emma worried that Mandarin teachers had less job opportunities, less access to leadership positions because White people marginalized them in the U.S. social cultural context.

Katerina felt frustrated about teaching because of U.S. people's attitude toward teachers. She found teachers in the United States did not get as much respect as teachers in China. She understood that U.S. parent-teacher and student-teacher relationships were extremely different from China. She was still working to establish relationship with her

students and their parents. She worried about miscommunication with her students and their parents because she was a non-native English speaker. This miscommunication would impact her teaching outcomes and U.S. people's impression of China.

U.S. parents seemed to have double standards for their children and the teachers: this difference challenged Sophia's understanding of education. Their lack of support for teachers impacted her thinking about teaching and learning. She could not understand why teachers had to compromise when students broke the classroom rules. As a foreigner, she also felt nervous and incompetent to lead cultural trips related to the local history and culture.

Positive experiences. Although meeting with many challenges, barriers, and negative feelings early in their careers, all four NCMTs achieved positive feelings related to their growth, a sense of achievement, and job satisfaction.

Growth. Snowy had an opportunity to develop her abilities though she experienced challenges related to school district reform efforts. During the reform process, her identity as a Mandarin teacher was dynamic and changing. She grew quickly and was more capable in solving problems in her teaching practice. She understood the U.S. society better and learned to integrate the two cultures in her classroom teaching and real life. She achieved a sense of belonging and addressed her difficulties in developing her professional identity after she established community and interpersonal relationships.

Emma's experience showed that she shaped different perspectives to understand teaching and learning. She understood the teaching beliefs, values, and practice in U.S.

schools, which were different from her prior teaching experience in China. Next, she learned to teach students in individual way. She gained insights into classroom issues and developed her own strategies to address them. In this way, she achieved her own professional growth.

Katerina's experience was a process of learning about U.S. culture as well as teaching and learning. She understood the differences between schools in the United States and other countries like South Africa, Indonesia, and China. She internalized the hands-on learning style that empowered her to teach in the U.S. school and learned how to grade her students' work. While teaching in special education and the talented and gifted programs, she learned to meet students' different needs. She also developed intercultural competence as she learned to deal with cultural differences between the two cultures. She established relationships with school leaders, colleagues, her students, and their parents. In addition, Katerina's personal skills developed. As her English proficiency improved, so did her ability to deal with real-life problems. She became a stronger bicultural individual as she handled the transition between the two cultures.

Sophia built her understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of the Chinese and U.S. educational systems. Sophia developed the skill to integrate the teaching beliefs and values of the two countries into her teaching practice. She thought about scenarios in which students would be highly engaged and well-disciplined while developing strong critical and creative thinking skills. She could manage her workload as a Mandarin teacher and a program coordinator. Winning supports from school leaders,

faculty team, learning community, parents, and students, she thrived in her profession. Her professional identity grew consistently and continually.

Sense of achievement and satisfaction. In their responses to the focused-life experience interview, all four teachers expressed a sense of achievement and satisfaction. Specifically, Snowy's sense of achievement and satisfaction resulted from her students' love of her teaching and her ability to engage students in classroom learning by using effective teaching strategies. Emma felt happy and pleased to see her students' growth and transformation in learning Mandarin. Establishing good relationship with some parents also strengthened her self-esteem of being a Mandarin teacher. Katerina felt proud of being a Mandarin teacher whenever she saw her students' growth in Mandarin learning and their increased interest in understanding her ethnic culture. She was pleased to know that more U.S. people wanted to understand the real image of China. Sophia felt a high sense of achievement and satisfaction when she saw her students' growth and transformed understanding and attitudes toward learning Mandarin. She also had a high level of job satisfaction because of the positive school culture, supportive faculty team, and effective professional development.

Transformation regarding teaching beliefs, values, and practice. As they transitioned to the U.S. teaching landscape, the NCMTs' teaching beliefs, values, and practice transformed. They developed their awareness of student-centered teaching beliefs; they altered their Chinese mindset of a teacher-centered teaching philosophy. They grew to believe that teachers and students learned from each other and that teachers

were the facilitators of students' learning and growth. They became more skillful in dealing with teaching Mandarin by using pedagogies and instructional strategies they learned in U.S. schools. Their development and transformation brought positive outcomes including (a) success in handling classroom management, (b) achievement and satisfaction in teaching, (c) students' increased interest and engagement in classroom learning, and (d) students' motivation to create and re-create knowledge.

Snowy made a lot of changes in her classroom teaching practice. For example, she used hands-on activities in classroom teaching. She integrated music, games, and body movements into instruction, and she used flexible but effective strategies in managing classroom behavior. She finally achieved a sense of achievement after a period of struggle and frustration.

Emma believed that students developed their skills to learn and solve practical problems when teachers guided and facilitated their classroom learning. She encouraged her students to establish connections and networks in their own learning system. She worked to establish an open, trustful, and respectful relationship with her students. In her classroom teaching, she provided her students with an entire Mandarin immersion learning environment.

Katerina combined her understanding of the practical meaning of Confucius' educational theories and U.S. teaching and learning. She understood that teachers should create an environment where students feel comfortable and secure. Thus, students could be more open and devote themselves to learning. With her students at the center of

classroom learning, she applied Total Physical Response pedagogy into her classroom teaching because U.S. students preferred to learn by doing actions. She linked Mandarin learning with songs, body movements, and visual objects. She agreed that cohesive hands-on classroom activities could motivate students to create and learn.

With her transformed teaching philosophy, Sophia played the role of good friend and a gatekeeper of policies with her students. This empowered her to deal with classroom management and teaching with greater efficiency. Based on her deep understanding of her students, she encouraged them to learn flexibly, imaginatively, and creatively. This transformation led to her successful use of instructional strategies in classroom teaching as well as her students' greater interest in learning Mandarin and having good relationships with her.

Developing an emergent culturally responsive teaching philosophy. All four teachers agreed that agency/co-constructed learning, experience, identity/ hybridity, context, and community should be the important concerns in classroom teaching practice. They integrated themselves into the U.S. dominant culture when they brought these concerns in their classroom teaching practice. They were trying to apply the approaches to handling the classroom by respecting their students' identity, understanding their students' needs, and building relationships with them. They developed emergent strategies to integrate language, culture, and identity into teaching. However, they still need more examples to learn how to integrate their students' identity within the context and community of their teaching practice. They noted that students' identity, context,

and community brought either positive or negative influence to their Mandarin teaching and learning. Thus, they needed supports from educational stakeholders to improve their skills at transforming the curriculum by highlighting their students' identity. This included providing models of bringing students' lives, talents, skills, family and cultural heritage, contextual and community culture into classroom teaching and learning.

To address the influences involved with her students' identity, Snowy chose to deal with problems with individual students rather than making changes to her curriculum. For example, she established individual relationships with students who had potential emotional problems and handled their learning through understanding and additional individual support. She spent more time communicating with parents whose family issues impacted their children's learning. She also gave special care and support to students who came from non-dominant culture. However, Snowy admitted that her personal strength was weak. Though she attached importance to weaving cultural similarities and differences in her Mandarin teaching, she needed to strengthen her awareness of social cultural teaching and learning. Snowy shared that her school and district played an important role in supporting social cultural teaching and learning approaches. For example, the increase of immersion programs in the district enhanced the value of diversity. Many supports from school and district (e.g., TOSA, mentorship, professional learning community, dual language teaching community) empowered her to develop her social cultural teaching philosophy. Thus, she relied on district, school, and parents' supports to improve her integration of student's identity and culture into her

curriculum and instruction. She expected the joint efforts among educational and social stakeholders would help her to realize social cultural education effectively and successfully.

As mentioned, Emma was developing her emergent culturally responsive teaching philosophy individually. In her teaching practice, she worked to create a classroom environment where students shared their ethnic culture in daily classroom learning, embraced differences, and integrated themselves into her diverse classroom culture. Teaching in a culturally isolating school context, Emma depended more on herself to integrate language, culture, and identity into teaching. She highlighted her students' life experiences, skills, family, culture, and community by inviting parents' positive involvement in her classroom teaching and learning. Later, her students' identity development improved because of parents' supports and contribution to her students' cultural immersion enrichment in Mandarin learning and teaching.

In Katerina's teaching practice, she has taken students' identity and culture into consideration. She worked to avoid hurting any students in her teaching about their culture or identity. She also worked to create an environment that any speaker has equity in Mandarin classroom learning. As mentioned, she tried various strategies to respond to the interaction between language, culture, identity and teaching. However, when teaching in a tense political context, she lost the positive support from the school and district. The loss of support was a barrier for her to develop a culturally responsive teaching philosophy and for her students' identity development during Mandarin

learning. She needed more support to construct an effective large-scale community to help her integrate students' language, culture, and identity into teaching.

Sophia practiced teaching strategies to integrate her students' life experience, culture, and identity into her classroom teaching, which empowered her students and improved their learning. Her efforts to establish supportive and trusting relationships with stakeholder led to a good context and community. The school-oriented learning communities increased opportunities to immerse students in Chinese culture and played an important role in integrating language, culture, and identity on a larger scale. In sum, her culturally responsive teaching philosophy relied on the supportive school context.

Experiencing the BII (Bicultural Identity Integration) process. In their responses to the focused-life experience interview, social cultural interview, and the BII scale, I found that all the four teachers were going through the bicultural identity integration process. As bicultural and bilingual individuals, they have met many social, political, historical, and cultural factors that interrelate with their Mandarin teaching. Those factors brought either positive or negative effect on their understanding of the meaning of Mandarin teaching. Their BII scores in Table 5 showed that in their bicultural identity integration process, they met with challenges and barriers as they integrate their ethnic culture into the dominant culture in their early-career stage. They need supports in their journey to increase their scores in both their cultural harmony and blended-ness as they develop their professional identity.

Differences. Though the four NCMTs shared many commonalities regarding their professional identity development, I identified some differences including school context and community, professional development, and various bicultural identity integration experiences.

Different school context and learning community. The four NCMTs played different roles in working as Mandarin teachers in different school contexts. Snowy's school context was more supportive for her professional identity development. Her school's academic environment valued diversity and embraced difference by providing a space for the integration of language, culture, identity, and teaching. The Mandarin teaching staff, the parent teacher association, regular cross-subject staff meetings, and the dual language immersion department provided her with many opportunities to establish a Mandarin learning community. Accordingly, her school context and community empowered her professional identity and strengthened the integration of language, culture, identity, and teaching.

Working in a private school, Emma had many negative experiences relating to her professional identity development. For example, the White administrators' power and privilege, divisiveness among faculty from different ethnic cultures, the faculty and staff's social distancing made an isolating atmosphere for Emma. In this school context, she had to rely on herself and individual parents to establish a learning community and identify effective strategies regarding the integration language, culture, identity, and teaching.

Katerina felt an invisible distance between her and other people in her school context including the principal, the administrator, the faculty, the students, and parents. Given people's misunderstanding of the Confucius classroom teachers' identity interfered with her ability to establish a learning community in a larger framework. Thus, she relied on herself and the Confucius Institute's supports to create opportunities for the integration of language, culture, identity and teaching as well as her professional identity development.

Working as a Mandarin teacher and a milestone program coordinator, Sophia shouldered more responsibilities than the other three NCMTs. She had the best school context to develop her professional identity and establish learning communities that integrated language, culture, identity, and teaching. In her school, every stakeholder played a role in contributing to the Mandarin immersion education. The supportive principal and leadership, the Mandarin faculty team, the supportive parents and students with the Asian cultural heritage, the positive relationship between parents and teachers helped to construct a context where individuals could display their talents and potential. In this situation, the school-oriented learning communities (i.e., sister school partnership program, cultural trip to China every year, buddy classes across grades, networking in Mandarin learning community) supported Sophia's integration of language, culture, identity, and teaching as well as her professional identity development.

Different opportunities and access to professional development. Professional development was important for early-career teachers to get accustomed to the U.S.

teaching context and develop their professional identity. The four NCMTs had different

opportunities and access to obtain professional development. The public school and

charter school appeared to pay more attention to early-career NCMTs' professional

development and growth in teaching than the private school and Confucius Institute did.

Thus, Snowy and Sophia had more opportunities for professional development that

prepared them to teach and thrive in a U.S. school. In contrast, Emma and Katerina had

fewer opportunities for professional development and relied mainly on themselves to

achieve professional growth.

Specifically, Snowy received guidance and support from her school district

mentors and TOSA; she had opportunities to participate in a learning community with

other Mandarin teachers, teachers of other languages or subjects in her school and

district. She received funding and support to attend conference and workshops at state

and national levels. Similarly, Sophia enjoyed the professional development in her

school and achieved more professional growth. She had a mentor to provide guidance,

support, and feedback in teaching. She was eligible to participate the school district

training as a new teacher; plus, she had supportive funding to attend high quality

professional conferences and workshops. With these supports, Snowy and Sophia had

high job satisfaction and commitment to grow in the teaching profession consistently.

As a Confucius classroom teacher, Katerina mainly had access to the professional

development that Confucius Institute provided for Confucius classroom teachers. The

limited opportunities for professional development did not meet her professional growth

needs. Likewise, Emma had few opportunities and little access to professional development in her school. According to her description, she only had the IB training and the non-discrimination training. She reported that she needed more communication and interactions with Mandarin teachers in other schools or districts as well as demonstration classes from experienced teachers. Both Katerina and Emma needed more support regarding profession development to achieve job satisfaction and professional growth.

Different experiences in the BII process. According to the BII scores measuring their bicultural harmony and bicultural blended-ness, the four NCMTs had different experiences to integrate their bicultural identity. As bicultural individuals, they had variations in their bicultural identity integration. In other words, they did not integrate their two cultures "in the same way, in the same contexts and for the same reasons" (Huynh et al., 2011, p. 828). They had unique experiences and understandings of their bicultural identity in the process to integrate the two cultures in their journey to develop their professional identity.

Interpretation of Findings

In this section, I present the four themes developed by interpreting the findings to respond to the three research questions in this study.

Shifts, Development, and Transformation in Professional Identity

I found that all the four early-career NCMTs' professional identity experienced shift, development and transformation as they transitioned from their home country to the United States.

First, the NCMTs' professional identity was shifting and changing. They met with many challenges and difficulties at the beginning of their profession. For example, Snowy encountered challenges in classroom management and the reforming curriculum. Emma had a lower sense of self-identity as she engaged in a new and non-supportive educational context. Katerina was not ready for the special education and talented and gifted programs because she had no prior knowledge or experience. Sophia found it hard to balance her workload and her expectations to grow quickly. The sociopolitical, historical, and cultural contexts brought about barriers and led to negative experiences and feelings. For example, all the four NCMTs felt insecure about having their jobs in the United States because of the political situation. A lack of knowledge of ethnic history led Snowy to feel unprepared to handle classroom teaching. Many differences between the two cultures (e.g., people' attitude toward teachers and education, understanding of teaching and learning, communicative skills and approaches, lack of support for non-native English-speaking teachers, values) added to their confusion about understanding the meaning of being Mandarin teachers in U.S. schools. These were shifts and changes in their professional identity as they transitioned to the U.S. educational landscape.

Second, the NCMTs' professional identity was developing. Though meeting with many challenges in the U.S. teaching landscape, these Mandarin teachers survived and

achieved growth in their professional identity. For example, they survived in the competitive job market and developed their teaching career. They improved their English language proficiency. They developed their own emergent Mandarin curriculum and instruction. They also managed to address problems in the classroom that resulted from historical, political, or cultural issues. They became more capable in dealing with problems in life. They strengthened their intercultural communication competence in the two cultures. They responded cues and motivating factors (i.e., students' growth, transformation, and love of Mandarin learning; NCMTs' development of effective curriculum and instruction; other peoples' development of interest and love of Chinese culture; good relationship with students, parents, leaders, staff, and coworkers) to develop their professional identity and thrive in the U.S. teaching landscape.

Third, the NCMTs' professional identity was being transformed. I found that all four early-career Mandarin teachers experienced professional identity transformation. Their teaching beliefs, values, and practices were undergoing transformation based on the changing social cultural context. They developed their teaching beliefs that students should be the center of classroom learning. They understood that teachers were facilitators of their students' development of knowledge and skills. They realized that standing in their students' boots was important to engage their students in classroom learning. They identified that the teacher and students learn from each other; they are co-constructors of knowledge. In addition, the NCMTs developed an emergent teaching philosophy with a social cultural lens. The four teachers had developed effective

strategies to integrate into the U.S. dominant culture. They could handle teaching

Mandarin content by using pedagogies and instructional strategies that were acceptable to

students in the United States. They had emergent ideas and explored some effective

ways to bring students' identity, context, and community into their curriculum and

instruction. In other words, they took actions to develop culturally responsive teaching

approaches to some extent. They made use of the context and community to improve

their Mandarin teaching and found more opportunities for cultural immersion. They

either relied on themselves, the school, or the parents to establish Mandarin learning

communities for their students to improve the integration of language, culture, identity,

and learning. However, they were still on their way and needed more support from

schools, districts, parents, and society.

In sum, these Mandarin teachers' professional identity was dynamic and not

static. Their professional identity changed continually as they interacted with people in

the teaching landscape and the whole society.

Multifaceted Professional Identity

Researchers noted that identity is multifaceted (Schwartz et al., 2012). This was

also applicable to discuss Mandarin teachers' professional identity. I found that each

early-career NCMTs' professional identity has multiple facets: individual identity,

relational identity, and collective identity. Their professional identity was interrelated

with their personal understanding of who they were as Mandarin teacher in U.S. schools

and how they interacted with people in the teaching landscape. It was also related to their

belonging to a collective or group (e.g., cultural cohort, religious group, learning community). Their individual credential and educational background, their individual capabilities and skills, their individual teaching and life experience helped to determine their competence in teaching Mandarin. In addition, how their students, colleagues, school administrators, leaders, and parents looked at them influenced their understanding of being a Mandarin teacher—what they teach and how they teach. The social, political, historical, and cultural contexts including school context and community influenced their understanding of their relational identity and collective identity. I found that as their professional identity developed, their relational identity and collective identity progressed and vice versa. Specifically, Snowy developed her spiritual beliefs as a member of the community. This community empowered her spiritually to solve problems in her daily life and her teaching experience. Her participation in different professional development communities (e.g., Mandarin teachers, foreign language teachers) in her school and district facilitated her understanding of Mandarin teaching in U.S. schools. Sophia had strong job satisfaction and commitment because she developed positive relational and collective identities with her supportive and loving faculty team and school community. Emma had personal relationships with some Mandarin teacher in her school and established a learning community for both herself and her students. Katerina relied on the Confucius Institute to establish learning communities. Thus, I concluded that people need to understand that Mandarin teachers' professional identity is an integrative process and their professional identity is multi-faceted.

Interaction of Professional Identity and Cultural Identity

  I found that the four Mandarin teachers' professional identity and cultural identity interreacted and influenced one another. In the process of their professional identity development, the teachers shaped and reshaped their cultural identity. Similarly, their cultural identity development influenced their professional identity development. Their understanding and identification of their cultural identity enabled them to find strategies to address problems in their classroom teaching prompted by cultural differences and conflicts.

  As noted, the four Mandarin teachers identified with their Chinese cultural identity along with their professional identity as teachers. Snowy described herself as "an American teacher in a U.S. school." Snowy identified strongly with her ethnic culture while learning to integrate into the U.S. culture because she was living and teaching in the United States. She encouraged new Mandarin teachers to spend more time learning from colleagues in the dominant culture. Snowy said: "As I taught my student how to understand politeness, I could not use the teaching belief and values in China. Instead, I should lead them to think about how to establish relationship, how to set up class expectations and rules." She agreed with one experienced Mandarin teacher's words, "Mandarin teachers should spend half of their time dealing with classroom management in U.S. schools. It is impossible to be successful if they just copy their Chinese ways to teach Mandarin in U.S. classrooms." Snowy also worked to maintain her cultural identity in her classroom teaching. She practiced teaching Mandarin embedded in Chinese

culture. She valued her students' understanding of the essence of learning and developing their respect; she understood her beliefs, values, and attitudes in teaching and learning as a bicultural individual.

After a couple of years of marriage into a U.S. family, Emma firmly maintained her traditional Chinese cultural values as she negotiated her understanding of cultural identity in the two cultures. She finally summarized that she was Chinese living in the United States. This identification of her cultural identity made her more confident to share her home culture with her students in school. She had a strong sense of cultural belonging. By sharing her cultural values with students who were mostly Chinese Americans, she exemplified being Chinese while living in the United States.

As a foreigner in the United States, Katerina worked to understand and accept the U.S. dominant culture and addressed problems relating to cultural differences and conflicts in classroom teaching. Likewise, she encouraged her students to be open to understand her home culture. In her teaching practice, she performed like a bridge to bring students from the two cultures to know more about each other. She succeeded in opening opportunities using pen pals for her U.S. students and the Chinese students to improve their language proficiency and understand the cultural differences. So, Katerina's cultural identity played a positive role in her professional identity development.

Sophia thought of herself as Chinese living in the U.S. dominant culture. She worked to maintain her values in her ethnic culture while applying what she learned from

the dominant culture to communicate with people in her teaching landscape. Given her cultural identity, she thought that cultural immersion was the best approach for integrating language, culture, identity, and Mandarin teaching. She encouraged her students to develop intercultural communication competence to deal with cultural conflicts (e.g., values) between the two cultures.

To conclude, the four NCMTs' cultural identity shaped and reshaped as they developed their professional identity. The negotiation of their understanding of their own cultural identity made their professional identity transform as well.

Connection of Professional Identity and Bicultural Identity

Huynh et al. (2018) identified that "bicultural individuals face the challenge of negotiating between multiple, and sometimes conflicting, cultural identities and value systems in their everyday lives" (p. 2). I found that as bicultural individuals in the U.S. dominant culture, the four Mandarin teachers have undergone a negotiation of their cultural identities and values systems while developing their professional identity. In this study, I interpreted how the four teachers' bicultural identity integration scores serve as indicators of bicultural harmony and bicultural blended-ness. These scores help to explain the connection between their professional and cultural identity development. If they have high scores in their bicultural harmony, they tended to perceive more harmony when endorsing only one set of cultural values between the dominant culture and the ethnic culture. If they have high scores in blended-ness, they tended to have blended identities when engaging in behaviors associated with both cultures. With high cultural

harmony, the Mandarin teachers could (a) be more inclined to be emotionally stable; (b) have harmonious intercultural relations; (c) undergo fewer culture-related work challenges, (d) experience fewer linguistics problems in English; and (e) live in culturally diverse areas. With high cultural blended-ness, the Mandarin teachers tended to be more open to new experiences, have lower language barriers, live in a less culturally isolated surroundings, and identify with their ethic culture. Thus, I understood that if NCMTs had high BII scores, they tended to develop stronger professional and cultural identity.

In addition, their BII scores could help interpret the interaction and interdependence between professional identity and cultural identity. If the NCMTs had high BII scores, their professional identity and cultural identity could be in alignment. If they had low BII scores, their professional and cultural identity could be in conflict. In this study, I only focused on the induction stage of the early-career NCMTs' experiences and the intertwining and interdependence of NCMT's professional identity and cultural identity.

Because the four teachers' professional and cultural identity was dynamic, their BII scores could change over time and address social cultural issues. As their BII scores increased, their professional identity and cultural identity would develop further.

Limitations of the Study

According to Yin (2014), "Case studies provide little basis for scientific generalization" (p. 9), so I agree that my findings in this case study are not generalizable. One limitation is that my findings cannot be generalizable to understand all Mandarin

teachers' life experiences and professional identity development in U.S. schools. On one hand, Mandarin teachers have personal differences (e.g., personality, background, prior experience, personal skills, abilities). On the other hand, Mandarin teachers in the United States have contextual differences. They are living in different cultures and contexts (school, district, community) as they develop their professional identity. My findings only reveal how these four early-career NCMTs experienced life and developed their professional identity as they transitioned into teaching in four school contexts: public school, private school, Confucius classroom, and charter school.

Another limitation is the potentially confirmatory voices in the study. I only interviewed four teachers, not other stakeholders (e.g., school and district administrators, parents, students) who may corroborate the Mandarin teachers' view of their development as Mandarin teachers. For example, students in Mandarin classrooms could offer their views of learning in a Mandarin classroom to support the teachers' voices. Adding students and other major stakeholders' voices could provide insights into Mandarin teachers' professional identity development.

A third limitation is the use of the BII construct to understand the professional identity development of Mandarin teachers. To my knowledge, my study is the first to use BII scores to interpret the connection between bicultural individuals' professional identity and cultural identity during their bicultural identity integration process.

A fourth limitation is my bias as a Native Chinese Mandarin speaker. While I attempted to bracket my identity as a Native Chinese Mandarin person, it is possible that

I did not avoid potential bias regarding my interpretation of my participants' perceptions and experiences as Native Mandarin Chinese teachers in the United States. Sharing a similar cultural identity may have influenced my perspectives and interpretations of their professional identity development.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

In this study, the problem was that early-career NCMTs needed support regarding the development of their professional identities to fit with the contexts, norms, and expectations of U.S. schools or districts. The purpose of this study was to describe and explain the early-career NCMTs' experience and their professional identity development as bicultural teachers. Examining how early-career NCMTs' professional identity development can add to the literature about how bicultural language teachers respond to the interdependence and reciprocity of language, culture, and identity. Three research questions guided my study:

1. How do NCMTs experience being Mandarin teachers in a local educational school context in the United States?

2. What do the NCMTs identify as influences in their teaching and learning?

3. How do NCMTs' experiences relate to their professional and cultural identity?

In this section, I review the major findings of this study. Then, I discuss how the major findings link to the theoretical framework and situate in the larger context. Finally, I present implications, recommendations, and suggestions for future research.

Synthesis of Findings

In this section, to address the three research questions, I synthesized the findings related to my problem. First, I described the early-career NCMTs' challenges and growth as they landed in the U.S. teaching landscape. Their professional identity development was dynamic (i.e., shifting, developing, and transforming). Based on the four Mandarin

teachers' metaphors of being Mandarin teachers in U.S. schools, I understood that Mandarin programs were emergent in Riverton. Mandarin teachers in this context went through the journey like crossing a river by feeling the rocks inside, meeting and overcoming barriers ahead, being uncertain of the future, and obtaining professional achievements and growth.

Next, their life experiences tied closely to their professional identity. Social cultural factors influenced their teaching and learning. Thus, their professional identity was multi-faceted. Their professional identity included personal identity, relational identity, and collective identity. Their identity was interrelated and tied to personal factors regarding their profession (i.e., social, political, historical, cultural), and institutional factors (i.e., political context, school/district context, cultural context).

Next, their professional identity intertwined and depended on their cultural identity in their Mandarin teaching practice. On one hand, how they understood teaching and learning and what strategies they practiced in curriculum and instruction resulted from their understanding of being Mandarin teachers—bicultural individuals—who interacted with people in new social cultural contexts. How they understood the differences between two cultures and addressed the interrelations and conflicts in the two cultures influenced directly what they taught and how they taught. On the other hand, as bicultural individuals, they shaped and reshaped their understandings of their cultural identity as they developed and transformed their teaching beliefs, values, philosophies, and applied them into practice.

Throughout their teaching, they realized that their bicultural identity was a major factor in their Chinese Mandarin teaching practice. They were exploring effective approaches for social cultural teaching as bicultural teachers. By strongly identifying with their ethnic culture in Mandarin teaching, they worked to integrate their ethnic cultures with the U.S. dominant culture. In addition, they modelled for their students how to negotiate the meaning of learning Mandarin and develop their intercultural communication competence.

Finally, their BII scores indicated the connection between their professional identity and cultural identity development. The four teachers' scores in bicultural harmony and bicultural blended-ness varied from each other because they had unique experiences and understandings of their bicultural identity integration. Their scores in bicultural harmony revealed the extent to which they tended to perceive harmony when endorsing one set of cultural values—the dominant culture and the ethnic culture. Their scores in BII blended-ness indicated to what extent they tended to combine identities when engaging in behaviors associated with both cultures. Notably, Mandarin teachers' BII scores were not static as their experience enriched in the bicultural identity integration.

Situated in the Larger Context

In this section, I discuss the connections between my findings and the theoretical framework (social cultural theory in education, BII construct) and research literature.

First, I found that Nieto's (2002) social cultural theory in education can be an effective tool to understand the four early-career NCMTs' professional identity development. Based on this social cultural lens, I understood how these four NCMTs' teaching beliefs, values, and practices developed and transformed as they interacted with people in the new social and cultural context.

Nieto (2002) articulated that to understand education through a social cultural theory lens was very significant because teachers' views on learning can impact their decisions about curriculum, instruction, expectations, and their relationships with colleagues, students, and families. Based on my analysis of the four early-career NCMTs' responses to the focused-life experience and social cultural interviews, I identified how they (a) developed their understanding of learning and teaching, (b) transformed their teaching beliefs, values and philosophy, (c) used the pedagogical approaches acceptable to their U.S. students, (d) understood how to deal with relationship with their students and families, and (e) achieved self-esteem and satisfaction.

Nieto (2002) emphasized:

 Sociocultural and sociopolitical perspectives are the first and foremost based on the assumption that social relationships and political realities are at the heart of teaching and learning. That is, learning emerges from the social, cultural, and political spaces in which it takes place, and through the interactions and relationships that occur between learners and teachers. (p.5)

Thus, she proposed five interrelated concepts that undergird the sociocultural and sociopolitical perspectives: agency, experience, identity, context, and community. These five concepts could be the basis for people to understand their experience as they challenge traditional deficit views of learning.

Nieto (2002) proposed "whether and to what extent teachers realize the influence social and political context have on learning can alter how they perceive their students and consequently, what and how they teach them" (p. 15). In their social cultural interviews, the NCMTs reported the development of their social and political consciousness regarding their students' learning. They agreed that students' identity (agency, experience, and culture) interrelated with context and community and should be a concern in classroom learning and teaching. Therefore, they applied their transformed beliefs, values, and philosophies into their teaching practice. For example, Snowy thought that most of her students were from low income families. Thus, the family problems brought negative influences on their children's learning. She understood that her students' problems resulted from the sociopolitical and cultural context. She agreed that this was not her students' individual problem, but a social and cultural problem in the whole society. Thus, she gave her students more care, support, and love in classroom learning and teaching. Similarly, Emma understood that wealthy families could provide more resources for their children to become successful in academic learning. She invited parents' involvement in her multicultural education and created a cultural immersion environment for her students. Thus, she developed her curriculum and instruction based

on multicultural education. Given her negative experience with racial discrimination, she encouraged her students to embrace and respect diversity and difference and students from non-dominant culture to learn to assimilate into the dominant culture.   Likewise, Katerina realized that teachers should be cautious of the issues of ethnicity and gender in their classroom teaching in U.S. schools. Thus, in her teaching practice, she managed to create an environment in which her students feel safe and comfortable. She functioned as a bridge between U.S. students and Chinese students to learn from each other. She set an example for her students to embrace differences and diversity in classroom learning and teaching by being open to understand and accept U.S. mainstream culture. Finally, Sophia realized that some government's policy stimulated the rise of racism and racial divisiveness, which brought negative influence to her school context. Therefore, she believed that cultural immersion could be a key approach to integrating language, culture, identity into teaching.

As mentioned in Chapter two, Nieto's (2002) theory in education mainly focused on discussing how teacher should teach in the multicultural educational context in U.S. schools. She emphasized that teachers need to know how to use their students' cultural and linguistic diversity as an asset in the service of their learning. However, as Curry (2002) critiqued, Nieto focused only on how White women teachers taught students from various ethnic and cultural background. She did not discuss how foreign language teachers as bicultural individuals integrate their own cultural identity into their language teaching in social, political, and cultural contexts. Unger (2012) argued, "Cultural

identity shapes people's understanding of the physical and social world and their role in it" (p. 813). That said, cultural identity shaped bicultural teachers' beliefs and values about learning and teaching.

As noted, the four NCMTs' cultural identity connected closely to their experience in their teaching and learning, shaped their understanding of learning and teaching, and influenced their professional identity development. In their professional identity development, they faced two key issues: the extent to which they are motivated and/or allowed to (a) maintain their ethnic culture, and (b) be involved in the dominant culture. Therefore, I used the construct of BII (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005; Huynh, Nguyen, & Benet- Martínez, 2011; Huynh, Benet-Martínez & Nguyen, 2018) to understand how the four NCMTs developed their cultural identity by addressing the issues between the two cultures. Each NCMT's scores in bicultural harmony and bicultural blended-ness revealed their different experiences as they went through the bicultural identity integration process. Their scores indicated that they are on their way to integrate the two cultures in their bicultural identity integration process. Their scores in bicultural harmony ranged from 2.73 to 3.82. This indicated that they experienced different emotional issues, intercultural relations, cultural-related work challenges, linguistic problems in English and lived in culturally diverse areas. Their scores in bicultural blended-ness ranged from 3 to 3.78. This indicated that they had different tendencies to (a) be open to new experiences, (b) meet language barriers, (c) live in less culturally isolated surroundings, and (d) identify strongly with their ethnic culture.

Xu's (2014) generally accepted concepts about understanding identity were applicable to my findings about the four NCMTs' professional identity development. First, their professional identity was dynamic and socially constructed. The four NCMTs experienced shifts, development, and transformation of their professional identity. They constructed professional identity through their interaction with people in the social, political, and cultural context. The development of their professional identity occurred through interpretation and reinterpretation of their experiences (Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2013) and evolved over time (Kelchtermans,1993).

Second, because individuals' identity was multifaceted (Schwartz et al., 2012) and composed of sub-identities, the NCMTs' professional identity was closely associated with their individual, relational, and collective identities (Sedikides & Brewer, 2001). There are unavoidable interrelationships and connections between the four NCMTs' sub-identities (individual identity, professional identity and cultural identity). I identified how the four NCMTs' professional identities were interdependent and interacted with their cultural identities. They were in conflict or alignment with each other, constructing identity was like harmonizing voices in a chorus (Mishler, 1999). When there was harmony, the multiplicity of voices singing together, made listeners feel comfortable and appreciative. Likewise, when there was harmony in the development of the NCMTs' professional identity and cultural identity, they felt more comfortable and a sense of greater self-esteem as Mandarin teachers in U.S. schools. They understood more clearly how to interact with people in schools, districts, and social contexts. If there was a lack

of harmony, discordant voices, conflicts, and personal discomfort could appear. Therefore, people need to understand identity in an integrative view (Mishler, 1999; McCarthey, 2001; Vignoles et al., 2012). In other words, when sub-identities exist in harmony, the stronger one's identity develops.

Third, the process of identity formation was complex (Tsui, 2007) as was the four NCMTs' professional identity development. They experienced identity conflicts as to the interplay of identification and negotiation of meanings. They shaped and reshaped their professional identity.

Researchers (Barkhuizen, 2017; Varghese et al., 2005) proposed that people need to identify language teachers' identity through different perspectives. My study of early-career NCMTs' professional identity contributed to research on language teachers' identity because it was an emergent topic in language teacher education and teacher development. On one hand, my study added a new lens (i.e., social cultural theory and BII construct) to understand language teachers' identity. On the other hand, notably, the NCMTs' professional identity developed in an integrative and dynamic way. Their professional identity was interrelated with other sub-identities all the time. My research was extension to other and recent research (Gao, 2010; Hsiao, 2014; Xiang, 2017) studying Chinese teachers' profession identity through figured world theory (Gao, 2010) and transformation theory (Xiang, 2017).

Implications

As noted, a case study is a method that explore a problem in a real-world situation or context. A multiple-case study allows researchers to examine multiple individuals or multiple real-life contexts. In this section, I discuss the implications of my multiple case study of four early-career Mandarin teachers in four school contexts.

Implications for Mandarin teachers. Based on the theoretical framework for my study, I identified implications and recommendations for early-career NCMTs and those who want to be Mandarin teachers or language teachers in U.S. schools.

Fostering culturally responsive teaching. Teachers should apply a culturally responsive approach (Nieto, 2002) to teaching, which is in the broadest sense questions racism and injustice (Ladson-Billings, 1994). It is more than simply incorporating cultural practices of students' families into the curriculum or replicating stereotypical ideas of learning styles.

The four NCMTs in my study applied approaches to integrate language, culture, identity, and teaching. To some extent, they increased their social cultural consciousness and developed more affirming attitudes toward students from culturally diverse backgrounds. In other words, they used a multicultural education approach in their teaching practice. However, they still needed support or models for integrating language, culture, identity, and teaching. They were still exploring effective strategies to teach in U.S. multiculturally educational context. For this reason, I recommend that Mandarin teachers foster culturally responsive teaching in their classrooms. I also recommend that Mandarin teachers find more effective strategies to address political, social, and cultural

factors influencing their professional identity development. In doing so, NCMTs might tend to experience (a) better adjustment in their psychological well-being, (b) lower cognitive complexity in their representations of culture, and (c) more engagement with the social cultural society. In return, these experiences might strengthen and support their professional identity development.

   Establish constructive connections with key stakeholders. According to Villegas and Lucas (2002), "Teachers need to know their students in order to establish the types of relationships that will help them feel connected to school" (p. 80). In other words, teachers need to reach out to their students and establish good relationships with them.

   The NCMTs in this study agreed that by establishing good relationships with their students, their students were more engaged and committed to learning Mandarin. Their students also had better behavior in the classroom. They experienced success in their teaching after building positive relationships with students.

   The NCMTs also noted the importance of establishing relationships with all key stakeholders (students, principal, colleagues, parents). For example, Sophia felt a stronger sense of achievement and job satisfaction when she established good relationship with her principals, faculty team, staff, parents, and students. She found a productive and efficient way to communicate with principal. She enjoyed being part of the faculty team because they supported her and grew professionally with her. She devoted herself to teaching her students, so the parents appreciated her work and felt closer to Sophia.

I recommend that NCMTs need to reach out to key stakeholders (students, principal, colleagues, parents) and establish effective communication and positive relationships with them. Effective communication might expand opportunities for amplifying the Mandarin teachers' voices. Positive relationships among stakeholders may help to bridge cultures and strengthen mutual cultural understanding. In addition, I suggest that these constructive connections with the principal, colleagues, and parents might ease Mandarin teachers' transition to the U.S. teaching landscape.

Getting involved in school service. Mandarin teachers' participation in school service might enhance their professional identity especially at the earlier stage of their career. For example, Snowy began to understand important school issues beyond her teaching when she joined her school's data team. During her service, she gained experience in a social cultural context not covered in school district training. Similarly, when working as a Mandarin teacher and a program coordinator in a charter school, Sophia adapted more quickly to the new sociocultural society. She also became aware that cultural immersion was an effective strategy for Mandarin teaching. As she tried to combine Mandarin teaching with cultural immersion, Sophia made fuller use of resources and networks to establish a learning community for her students. Snowy and Sophia's experience showed that getting more actively involved in the school community helped them adjust to U.S. teaching contexts and grow quickly.

I recommend that Mandarin teachers seek opportunities to participate actively in their schools through service beyond teaching. When engaged more fully in the school's

initiatives, they become more integrated within the school's context. Accordingly, the Mandarin teachers might learn more about the broader goals of their schools and become part of the school's collective.

Implications for schools and districts. Schools and districts mirror the social cultural context for teaching and learning. Schools provide the site where stakeholders interact with each other. Thus, it is important for schools and districts to play an active role in (a) creating a supportive community culture for diversity, (b) facilitating networks for teachers, (c) fostering cross-district and cross-school communications, (d) establishing connections between schools and communities, and (e) providing teachers with supports such as academic resources (e.g., mentors, TOSAs, workshops, professional development trainings, teaching resources) and funding (e.g., registration and travel costs associated with attending conferences, budget for program development).

Creating a supportive school culture for diversity. Nieto (2002) pointed out, "It is not possible to separate learning form the context in which it takes place, and from an understanding of how culture and society influence and are influenced by learning" (p. 17). Educators cannot separate their growth from the school culture and context. In a supportive school culture for diversity, teachers and students from different cultural backgrounds would feel safe and comfortable when sharing their ethnic culture; they would be able to integrate ethnic culture as part of school culture. For instance, despite her overwhelming workload, Sophia felt strongly supported and achieved success in

teaching. In contrast, Emma felt frustrated and isolated in her school because of less support from school administrators and weaker relationships among faculty and administrators. This non-supportive school context discouraged Emma to make her voice heard and reach out to other colleagues.

I recommend that schools work intentionally and continually to build a supportive school culture for teachers and students from diverse backgrounds. Administrators and school leaders need to collaborate with teachers to provide a safe and comfortable school climate and culture.

Establish effective Mandarin teaching and learning communities. Villegas and Lucas (2002) suggested, "By becoming involved in a collaborative community working, teachers can forestall some of the despair, bolstering optimism and sustaining commitment" (p. 63). For example, Sophia hoped that she could attend learning communities from different schools, districts, and cities. She hoped that school and district could be bridges for Mandarin teachers to establish Mandarin teaching communities in cross-school, cross-district, cross-city, and even cross-state situations. In this way, Chinese learning would be more connected and less isolated from the larger community.

The four NCMTs agreed that establishing an effective Mandarin learning community can foster students' learning of Mandarin. For example, Sophia's school was an exemplar of establishing an internationally sister-school learning community. This learning community provided opportunities for students to learn in a cultural immersion

approach. The cultural field trip to China advanced her students' understanding of Mandarin learning and helped them develop intercultural communication competence.

In two cases, Sophia and Emma found that establishing a learning community for students from different grades could help those students form a collaborative identity and learn from each other. They thought that students in the lower grades would benefit from interactions with the students from upper grades; likewise, students from the upper grades would experience motivation when working with students from the lower grades.

The NCMTs also agreed that establishing an effective teaching community can support Mandarin teachers' professional identity development. For instance, at Sophia's school, the international sister-school community brought teachers from two different school cultures together; they established routine networks and platforms to communicate with and learn from one another. In Sophia and Emma's case, teachers in different grades inspired each other, which empowered their understanding of teaching and learning. They also learned how students in the upper grade perform and understood what they needed to prepare for the lower grade students to be successful in the upper grades.

First, I recommend that schools and districts initiate cross-culture learning communities to ensure culture immersion education. Second, I suggest that schools and districts establish intra-school (cross-grade) learning communities. Third, I propose that schools and districts construct inter-school teaching communities. In a larger Mandarin

community, teachers and students would share resources, learn from each other, and construct a collaborative Mandarin learning culture.

Provide effective professional development. Improving professional learning and providing effective professional development for teachers is a crucial step in transforming schools and improving academic achievement (Darling-Hammond & Mclaughlin, 2011; Wei, Darling-Hammond, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009). According to researchers and practitioners, if novice Mandarin teachers are to be successful in U.S. schools, they require "professional development and training in instructional strategies, assessments, school policies, and parent relations" (Xu et al., 2010, p. 2). Professional development is especially necessary for novice native Mandarin teachers because it enhances "their knowledge and teaching skills related to Mandarin instruction, but also facilitated their career pathway including providing job opportunities and developing a network among teachers in the field" (Xu et al., 2010, p. 17)

The four NCMTs reflected that they need high quality professional development to achieve professional growth (e.g., curriculum design, instructional strategies). Sophia's experience explicated that effective professional development system in her school fostered her professional development effectively. Snowy received many benefits and achieved growth from the effective professional development that her school and district provided. In contrast, Emma did not have enough access to quality professional development as she only attended IB and non-discrimination trainings. Katerina only

received annual professional development that was not enough for her professional growth.

I agree that effective professional development programs should "allow teachers to share what they know and what they want to learn and to connect their learning to the contexts of their teaching." (Darling-Hammond & Mclaughlin, 2011, p. 89). For this reason, I recommend that Mandarin teachers receive professional development based on their interests and needs as early-career teachers. Schools could conduct surveys about the topics that teachers want to discuss in their professional development. This needs-based professional development may foster their professional growth and success in U.S. teaching contexts.

I also suggest that the schools provide professional development focused on classroom management for novice Mandarin teachers as they transition to the new teaching landscape.

Encourage parents' involvement in students' learning. Cheung and Pomerantz (2011) reported, "Parents' heightened involvement in their children's learning predicted their children's enhanced engagement and achievement and their enhanced perceptions of competence and positive emotional functioning" (p. 932). The four Mandarin teachers in my study also valued parents' involvement in their children's Mandarin learning. They realized that parents' positive involvement in their students' Mandarin learning helped support classroom management, curriculum embedded with cultural diversity, learning community establishment, and the home-school collaboration. For example, one parent

provided Katerina with artifacts to support the integration of Chinese ethnic culture into

her Mandarin teaching. In Snowy's case, the PTA (parent teacher association) provided

newsletters about Mandarin learning and teaching in her school that spotlighted the

Mandarin program to larger community. These positive parent-teacher communications

helped the Mandarin teachers to develop their professional identity in multicultural

education.

However, according to the four NCMTs, most parents did not participate or

involve themselves in supporting their students' learning. This lack of communication

limited teachers' access to their students' family life experiences and their ability to

integrate their students' identity into their curriculum and instruction.

I recommend that school leaders provide extensive opportunities from genuine

dialogue between teachers and parents in support of teaching and learning. In addition to

the Mandarin teacher reaching out to parents, I suggest that parents initiate

communication with their children's teachers about Mandarin learning. The parents

could also establish and participate in school learning communities. I also propose that

teachers and school leaders continue their efforts for sustaining home-school

communication by way of newsletters and blogs as well as hosting cultural events for

parent participation and networking.

For policy makers. Policy makers are like the conductor of the chorus. Because

they direct policies about how students are educated, policy makers need to help link

teaching practice, research, and policy.

In my study, the four Mandarin teachers expressed their need for supports from educational and social stakeholders to develop their professional identity in this new sociopolitical, socioeconomic, and sociocultural society. Because of the barriers associated with being language teachers in the U.S. social cultural context, these NCMTs experienced limitations regarding their professional growth.

Further, language teachers experienced marginalization from the dominant culture and "their program have been marginalized and maligned from their colleagues" (Téllez & Varghese, 2013, p. 133). In Emma's case, she found that Asian people have few or no opportunities to become leaders and administrators.

First, I recommend that policy makers listen to language teachers' voices and consider the sociopolitical and social cultural factors influencing language teachers' professional identity development. Second, I propose that policy makers rethink policies relating to curriculum and instruction. They need to focus on building supportive educational framework for Mandarin and language teachers who teach in a multicultural context. Third, I suggest that world language teaching policy makers revise the guidelines regarding scaffolded instruction and language proficiency. Fourth, I strongly suggest that policy makers should seek the voices and involvement of people of color when making policy decisions because inequities and racism still exist in the teaching landscape. Finally, I recommend that policy makers should take the initiative to encourage and fund research about the practical needs of language teachers and

classroom learning. I contend that the joint efforts among policy makers, researchers, and teachers can promote language teaching in U.S. multicultural educational context.

For teacher educators. Teacher educators shoulder the responsibility to prepare teacher candidates to land in the teaching landscape. I argue that my study has implications for teacher educators in higher education.

For example, Snowy shared that because she was a new teacher, she met with many difficulties in her classroom management practice. In her teacher preparation program, she took classroom management course; however, she was not able to link her university learning with her teaching practice. She did not have prior knowledge about classroom management as a foreigner, so it was hard for her to understand the theoretical frameworks. Plus, she did not have resources from the course discussions to use in her clinical field experience.

First, I propose that teacher educators rethink how to arrange their curriculum synchronously with the teacher candidates' clinical experiences. It is imperative that teacher candidates' university learning links with their clinical teaching practice. Second, I recommend that teacher educators need to provide language teacher candidates with more opportunities to observe in-service classroom learning and teaching. This would help prospective teachers to gain valuable insight into teaching in the new social cultural context and develop their understanding of multicultural education. Third, I suggest that teacher educators need to improve university-school interactions. They need to facilitate the connections between teacher candidates and in-service teachers. This

interaction would help both teacher candidates and in-service teachers to construct learning communities or networks for their teaching practice. In addition, teacher educators' interactions with in-service teachers could provide teacher educators with insight into current teaching practice and integrate in-service teachers' practices into university coursework. Fourth, I advocate for teacher educators applying innovative theories and research findings in culturally responsive approaches to foster language teachers' social cultural teaching. Thus, teacher educators serve as models for teacher candidates to internalize culturally responsive teaching practices.

Future research. The combination of social cultural theory in education and the BII construct could advance understanding of Mandarin teachers' professional development. In future studies, I suggest that more focus be on discussing language teachers' professional identity development through the lens of social cultural theory. In addition, I recommend that more scholars conduct research to interpret the specific BII scores for individual's bicultural harmony and bicultural blended-ness.

I also propose that researchers conduct studies about the interplay between the self and identity as well as the role of the context in the formation of individuals' professional identity (Beijaard et al., 2004). I suggest that more researchers examine language teachers' identity in an integrative way because of the interaction among individuals' sub-identities. Too few studies focus on examining the language teachers' bicultural identity and the interplay of language teachers' bicultural identity and their professional identity. Thus, I recommend more researchers focus their investigations on

the interaction between language teachers' bicultural (or multicultural) identity and professional identity.

Concluding Remarks

Ruohotie-Lyhty (2013) highlighted that teachers in their first years of teaching generally met with many difficult challenges (e.g., understanding teachers' work, insufficient expertise to deal with changing situations, assuming the same duties as more experienced teachers, going through the socialization process). In my case study, I learned that the four early career NCMTs as bicultural teachers experienced more severe challenges and achieved growth as they transitioned to a new social cultural society. I understood the complexity of their forming and developing their professional identity intertwined with their cultural identity at their early career stage as bicultural teachers. I saw these NCMTs 'juggling' all the 'plates' in the air—their own understanding of being teachers, their understanding of U.S. social culture, their understanding of U.S. school culture, knowing what U.S. parents want and need, and understanding their U.S. students well. In the process of developing their professional identity, they tried to have all the 'plates' stay in the air without them to crash together. They explicated how much they wanted to succeed and how much they cared about their students in this new social cultural context. Thus, they were caught in a paradox: feeling the pain of trying to understand what was going on, and at the same time, feeling the joy of seeing their students' success.

Therefore, educators (e.g., the school and district personnel, school leaders and administrators, policy makers), parents, and students need to: (a) hear and respond to the voices of Mandarin teachers; (b) support Mandarin teachers' efforts to become part of the multicultural educational context; and (c) honor the assets that bicultural teachers bring to classroom teaching and learning. I believe that the joint efforts of all stakeholders in education will lead to more harmonious voices in U.S. education and society.

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Appendix A

Demographic Survey

1. What is your preferred pseudonym?

2. What is your gender?

3. What is your education background (e.g., Bachelor's degree, Master's degree)?

4. Do you have a U.S. teacher license or certificate? If so, what type of license or certificate?

5. Do you have a Chinese teacher license or certificate? If so, what type of license or certificate?

6. How would describe your English language proficiency (i.e. low, medium, high)?

7. Please describe the type of school where you are teaching (e.g., public, private, charter).

8. At what grade level are you teaching?

9. Please describe your professional development experiences in the United States.

10. How many years have you been teaching in the United States?

11. What are your previous experiences with teaching Mandarin before coming to the United States?

Appendix B

Demographic Information Grid

NCTM		Educational Background	Credentials	School Setting	U.S. Teaching Experience	Prior Teaching Experience
Kate		Bachelor's (China) Master's in Teaching Mandarin (China) Master's in Curriculum & Instruction (U.S.)	K12 World Language: Chinese High School Teacher License of Chinese	Public school Grades 3	2.5 yr.	Chinese Immersion Program (China)
Mary		Bachelor's (China) Master's in Applied Linguistics (China)	K12 World Language: Chinese High School Teacher License of Chinese	Public school Grades 9-12	3.5 yr.	College Chinese Instructor at university (China)
Snowy		Bachelor's (China) Master's in Teaching Mandarin (China) Master's in Curriculum & Instruction (U.S.)	K12 World Language: Chinese High School Teacher License of Chinese	Public school Grades 4-5	7 mo.	Chinese Immersion Program (China)
Emma		Bachelor's (China) Master's in Teaching English as a Second Language	K-5 Teacher License High School Teacher License of Chinese	Private school Grade 2	3.5 yr.	English in elementary school (China)

		(U.S.)			
Wenwen		Bachelor's in Chinese (China)	Elementary Teacher License of Chinese	Private school Grade 1	1yr.	Chinese in a public elementary school (China)
Glenda		Bachelor's (China) Master's in Applied Linguistics (China)	Middle School Teacher License of English	Confucius classroom Grades 3-5	6 mo.	Confucius Institute (Thailand)
Katerina		Bachelor's (China) Master's in Teaching Chinese as a Second Language (China)	High School Teacher License of Chinese	Confucius classroom Grades 6-8	6 mo.	Confucius Institutes (Indonesia, South Africa) Chinese Language Institutes (China)
Michael		Bachelor's (China) Master's in Applied Linguistics (China)	Middle School Teacher License of English	Confucius classroom Grades 9-12	2yr.	Confucius Institute (Cambodia)
Zeze		Bachelor's (China) Master's in Applied Linguistics (China)	Middle School Teacher License of English	Confucius classroom Grades 6-8	3yr.	Confucius Institute (Mozombique) English in a Middle School (China)
Sophia		Bachelor's (China) Master's in Teaching Chinese as a Second	K12 World Language: Chinese Middle School Teacher	Charter school Grade K	2 yr.	Chinese as a Second Language at university (China)

		Language (China) Master's in Curriculum & Instruction (U.S.)	License of Chinese			

Appendix C

Interview 1: Focused-life Experiences

The first interview seeks to understand how the participants in my study understand themselves as being teachers in American educational context.

Script for the beginning of the interview:

Thank you for volunteering to be a participant in this study. As you know, I am interested in how early-career Native Chinese Mandarin Teachers develop their professional identity as they transition to a new socioeconomic, political and cultural society from their home country or culture. I will ask you to describe your experiences of working as Mandarin teachers in U.S. schools and describe how you establish and develop your professional identity. In two weeks, I will interview you again about how you teach in classroom and how you respond to social cultural factors that may influence your professional identity development. Each interview will be 30-45 minutes in length so that you have enough time to give me detailed descriptions of your experiences. After the interviews, you can email me or call me whenever you have something to add up to the list. I record the interview and transcribe them later. As I am writing the stories, I will check with you and to verify your meaning.

1. What do you think of yourself as a Mandarin teacher here?

2. Do you like your job? Why or why not?

3. What differences do you find between yourself and other teachers in your school?

4. Please describe the first day experience as you started to teach Mandarin in your school.

5. Please describe a positive day in your teaching experience.

6. Please describe a negative day in your teaching experience.

7. What difficulties do you find in teaching Mandarin in your school?

    a. Which one is most difficult?

Appendix D

Interview 2: Social Cultural Interview

This semi-structured interview seeks to describe how NCMTs understand learning and teaching and what pedagogy and curriculum they will teach in their daily teaching experiences.

It is so good to see you again. Today, we are going to talk about your understanding of classroom learning and teaching as well as the instruction and curriculum you use in your daily teaching experiences. This interview will be 30-45 minutes in length so that you have enough time to give me detailed descriptions of your experiences. After the interviews, you can email me or call me whenever you have something to add up to the list. I record the interview and transcribe them later. As I am writing the stories, I will check with you and to verify your meaning

1. What do you think of the roles of teachers and learners in the classroom?

   a. What relationship do you think they should have?

2. What do you think is the impact your students' family or culture on what you bring to your classroom learning and teaching?

3. How do you deal with your relationship with your school leaders, colleagues, students, students' parents, and other stakeholders?

4. What are the social factors or cultural factors which may influence your Mandarin teaching and learning in the educational context?

5. What do you think is the effect of community on students' Mandarin learning?

6. Please describe good experiences with your instruction in your classroom.

7. Please describe a bad experience of with the curriculum used in your classroom pedagogy and curriculum in your daily teaching.

8. What role do you think culture plays in your Mandarin teaching practice?

9. What professional development do you attend to improve your teaching practice?

Appendix E

Bicultural Identity Integration Scale—Version 2 (BIIS)

Que-Lam Huynh and Verónica Benet-Martínez

Instructions to be given to respondents: (Note: these can be adapted depending on the needs of the researcher and the cultural groups targeted e.g., text in italics).

As an *immigrant/ethnic minority/international student/expatriate* living in the U.S., you have been exposed to at least TWO cultures: your own heritage or ethnic culture (for example, *Japanese, Mexican, Kenyan, Armenian*) and the mainstream, dominant *American* culture. Thus, you could be described as a bicultural or multicultural individual.

The experience of having and managing two cultures (or more) is different for everybody, and we are interested in YOUR PARTICULAR EXPERIENCE.

Please use the scale below to rate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements by circling the appropriate number. Please rate all statements, even if they seem redundant to you. Try to avoid using "Not sure" if possible.

Before you begin responding to the items below, please take a moment to fill in all of the blank spaces with your heritage or ethnic culture. You must complete all of these blank spaces before responding to the items.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

In general, how much does each of the following statements describe YOUR experience as a bicultural individual?

BICULTURAL HARMONY VS. CONFLICT ITEMS

1. I find it easy to harmonize_____and American cultures.

2. I rarely feel conflicted about being bicultural.

3. I find it easy to balance both_____and American cultures.

4. **I do not feel trapped between the _____ and American cultures.**

5. I feel that _____ and American cultures are complementary

6. I feel torn between _____ and American cultures.

7. I feel that _____ and American cultural orientations are <u>in</u>compatible.

8. Being bicultural means having two cultural forces pulling on me at the same time.

9. **I feel conflicted between the _____ and American ways of doing things.**

10. **I feel like someone moving between two cultures.**

11. **I feel caught between the _____ and American cultures.**

BICULTURAL BLENDEDNESS VS. COMPARTMENTALIZATION ITEMS

12. I cannot ignore the _____ or American side of me.

13. I feel _____ and American at the same time.

14. I relate better to a combined _____-American culture than to _____ or

    American culture alone.

15. **I feel _____-American.**

16. **I feel part of a combined culture** that is a mixture of _____ and American.

17. I find it difficult to combine _____ and American cultures.

18. I do not blend my _____ and American cultures.

19. **I feel just like a(n) _____ who lives in North America** (that is, I do not feel "X-

    American").

20. **I keep _____ and American cultures separate** in my life (that is, I

    don't mix them).

Note: Bolded items are original items from the shorter Bicultural Identity Integration Scale

—Version 1.

Appendix F

Permission to Use Bicultural Identity Integration Scale

This protocol seeks to explore how NCMTs' bicultural identity integration process influences their professional identity development.

I have permission from scholars Huynh, Nuyen, and Benet-Martínez (2011) to use the measurement they created— Bicultural Identity Integration Scale -Version 2 to measure your bicultural integration identity. I will record this interview and code the data to understand how your bicultural integration identity may influence your professional identity development (See Bicultural Identity Integration Scale-Version 2).

I copied my communication with Dr. Benet-Martínez via email as follows:

From: Jing Chen [mailto:jing4@pdx.edu]
To: Benet-Martínez[mailto: veronica.benet@upf.edu]
Dear Dr. Benet-Martínez:

My name is Jing Chen. I am a doctoral student in the Graduate School of Education at Portland State University, Portland, OR. I am interested in how early-career Native Chinese Mandarin Teachers construct their professional identity as they transition to a new socioeconomic, socio-cultural context. For this reason, your research related to biculturalism and bicultural identity integration construct is particularly informative. Currently, I am developing my dissertation proposal to explore early-career Native Mandarin Teachers' process of bicultural identity integration and its relation to professional identity development. I wonder if individuals with high bicultural identity integration may find it easier to form their professional identity, while individuals with low bicultural identity integration may find it more challenging to form their professional identity. It would be helpful to have an instrument to measure my potential participants' bicultural identity integration. Specifically, I would like your permission to use the bicultural identity integration scale that you developed. If you grant me permission to use the scale, would you be willing to send a copy to me?
I would also appreciate your suggestions for other measurement tools that I could use in my study.
Thank you in advance for considering my request.
Sincerely,
Jing Chen
From: Benet-Martínez [mailto: veronica.benet@upf.edu]
To: Jing Chen [mailto:jing4@pdx.edu]

See attachment. And good luck!

Bicultural Identity Integration Scale—Version 2R

(BIIS-R)
Que-Lam Huynh and Verónica Benet-Martínez

Before the BIIS-2R is copied, distributed, or used, permission must be obtained from its authors. Contact:

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Appendix G

Bicultural Identity Integration Scale—Version 2 (BIIS): Scoring Instructions

Que-Lam Huynh and Verónica Benet-Martínez

Scoring instructions:

1. To calculate Harmony vs. Conflict subscale scores:
   - a. The Harmony items are # 1-5; the Conflict items are 6-11
   - b. Reverse score the Conflict items
   - c. Add Harmony and Conflict items
   - d. Divide the total by 11 to get subscale score

2. To calculate Blendedness vs. Compartmentalization subscale scores:
   - a. The Blendedness items are # 12-16; the Compartmentalization items are # 17-20
   - b. Reverse score the Compartmentalization items
   - c. Add Blendedness and Compartmentalization items
   - d. Divide the total by 9 to get subscale score

Note: The Harmony and Blendedness subscales of the BIIS-2 (and BIIS-1) should be treated as independent components. Thus, one should NOT calculate a total BII score by combining scores from these two subscales.

Alpha coefficients reported in Huynh & Benet-Martínez (2010):
Cultural harmony = .86, Cultural blendedness = .81 (N= 1049 multi-ethnic biculturals)